

Part II: Misconceptions About Particles and Spacetime

John Terning

Introduction

I'm going to start out Part II of the book with a review of some basic misconceptions: many people think of elementary particles as tiny little balls, they envisage atoms that look like tiny solar systems, and they also imagine that to see atoms they would need a very large microscope. After covering these basics, I'm going to move on to some topics that have been ripped from news headlines, such as "Collider Spawns Planet-Devouring Black Hole," "God Particle Could Wipe Out The Universe," "LHC Could Prove Existence of Star Trek's Parallel Universe," "Scientists Raise Concerns About Cell Phones," and "The Cold Fusion Race Just Heated Up." I'll try to examine the scientific ideas behind these hyperbolic headlines and give some more depth so that the reader can understand the real issues involved. For the mathematically comfortable reader, an extra chapter is included that discusses these topics using high school math.