Week 15 Worksheet
Cosmology

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April 30, 2025

The Robertson-Walker metric in spherical coordinates is given by

$$ds^2 = -d\tau^2 + a^2(\tau)\begin{cases} d\psi^2 + \sin^2\psi(d\theta^2 + \sin^2\theta d\varphi^2), & K = 1 \\ d\psi^2 + \psi^2(d\theta^2 + \sin^2\theta d\varphi^2), & K = 0 \\ d\psi^2 + \sinh^2\psi(d\theta^2 + \sin^2\theta d\varphi^2), & K = -1 \end{cases},$$

where $a(\tau) > 0$ is a positive function of proper time τ and K is the sectional curvature.

Exercise 1.

a) Let ρ be the average mass density of matter in the universe. Use homogeneity and isotropy to argue that for dust (i.e. matter which exerts no pressure)

$$T_{\mu\nu} = \rho u_\mu u_\nu.$$

b) Argue that the 10 independent equations which arise from Einstein's equation can be reduced to two by homogeneity and isotropy:

$$\begin{aligned} G_{\tau\tau} &= 8\pi\rho \\ G_{**} &= 0, \end{aligned}$$

and identify the terms $G_{\tau\tau}$, G_{**}.

c) Compute the Ricci tensor and Ricci scalar in i) a closed universe (i.e. constant curvature $K = 1$) and ii) in an open universe (constant curvature $K = -1$). The Christoffel symbols and Ricci tensor are

$$\begin{aligned} \Gamma^k_{ij} &= \frac{1}{2} g^{kl}\left(\partial_i g_{jl} + \partial_j g_{il} - \partial_l g_{ij}\right) \\ R_{ij} &= \partial_k \Gamma^k_{ij} - \partial_i \Gamma^k{}_{kj} + \Gamma^k_{ij}\Gamma^l{}_{kl} - \Gamma^k_{lj}\Gamma^l_{ki}, \end{aligned}$$

where e.g. $\Gamma^k{}_{jk} = \sum_k \Gamma^k_{jk}$ is the contraction.

d) Using

$$G_{ij} = R_{ij} - \frac{1}{2}\eta_{ij}R,$$

show that the differential equations from (b) become

$$\begin{aligned} 3\frac{\dot{a}^2}{a^2} =& 8\pi\rho - \frac{3K}{a^2} \\ 3\frac{\ddot{a}}{a} =& -4\pi\rho. \end{aligned}$$

It turns out that these also hold for the case of flat spacetime ($K = 0$).

Exercise 2. Hubble's Law. By analyzing the differential equations for a from Exercise 1, show that $\rho > 0$ implies $\ddot{a} > 0$. Thus, derive Hubble's law,

$$\frac{dR}{d\tau} = HR,$$

where R is the distance between two isotropic observers and $H(\tau) = \dot{a}/a$ is Hubble's constant.