

CORRESPONDENCE

*To the Editors of 'The Observatory'*

*Other Losses*

After the recent review<sup>1</sup> of a book by Steven Weinberg, a note was added pointing out that he had died between the writing and publication of said review. In addition to the points which Trimble mentions in that context, I note that, although many have worked on some combination of particle physics and astrophysics, Weinberg is one of the few to have worked on non-astronomical particle physics and non-particle-physics astronomy. Although probably best known for his work in particle physics (his 'A Model of Leptons'<sup>2</sup> having been cited over five thousand times and leading to a Nobel Prize), apart from his books on cosmology, relativity, and gravitation, Weinberg also wrote a few important papers in cosmology, such as, while based at the CfA, 'Apparent Luminosities in a Locally Inhomogeneous Universe'<sup>3</sup> which is still relevant (ADS lists eight citations in the past two years), and his classic paper on explaining the value of the cosmological constant *via* the weak anthropic principle<sup>4</sup>. In 2003 Weinberg noted "I've gone over completely to cosmology. ... Cosmology is fantastically exciting. So it was an obvious choice. I think I can go on making some interesting contributions in cosmology ... ."<sup>5</sup> He never stopped teaching even long after retirement age, teaching courses and writing books as a method of learning more, *e.g.*, his book<sup>6</sup> on the discovery of modern science, reviewed in these pages<sup>7</sup>.

Weinberg seemed to know almost everything about most of physics (not to mention other topics); that was also the case with Thanu 'Paddy' Padmanabhan (1957 March 10 — 2021 September 17), whom we also lost recently, at the age of just 64. I first encountered him via his review article 'Inflation for Astronomers'<sup>8</sup>. His books on the history of science<sup>9</sup>, quantum field theory<sup>10</sup>, theoretical astrophysics<sup>11-13</sup> (reviewed here<sup>14</sup>), structure formation<sup>15</sup>, and gravity<sup>16</sup> demonstrate the vastness of his knowledge. His way of looking at physics is well documented in a book<sup>17</sup> reviewed here<sup>18</sup>. He is one example of my impression that most really smart people are also very considerate human beings.

Trimble pointed readers to proper obituaries for Weinberg. One can also easily find many for Padmanabhan as well. My goal here is not to write yet another one, but rather to share with readers my own sense of loss of those from our community with whom, however tangentially, I had some contact. Many readers here are of an age at which the passing of those we have learned from will become more and more frequent; many will have noticed that, just four days before Padmanabhan, Antony Hewish also passed away, though at the ripe old age of 97.

Yours faithfully,  
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