

Chapter 8. Circular Orbits

1	
2	8.1 Step or Orbit? 8-1
3	8.2 Map Angular Momentum of a Stone from Maximal
4	Aging 8-3
5	8.3 Equations of Motion for a Stone in Global Rain
6	Coordinates 8-4
7	8.4 Effective Potential 8-6
8	8.5 Properties of Circular Orbits 8-13
9	8.6 Toy Model of a Quasar 8-17
10	8.7 Exercises 8-20
11	8.8 References 8-28

- 12 • *How do orbits around a black hole differ from planetary orbits around*
- 13 *our Sun?*
- 14 • *How close to a black hole can a free stone move in a circular orbit?*
- 15 • *Can a stone reach the speed of light in a circular orbit around a black*
- 16 *hole?*
- 17 • *Can I use a black hole circular orbit to travel forward in time? backward*
- 18 *in time?*
- 19 • *What is the source of the energy that the so-called QUASAR radiates*
- 20 *outward in such prodigious quantity?*

CHAPTER

8

22

Circular Orbits

Edmund Bertschinger & Edwin F. Taylor *

23 *How happy is the little Stone*
 24 *That orbits a Black Hole alone**
 25 *And doesn't care about Careers*
 26 *And Exigencies never fears –*
 27 *Whose Coat of elemental Brown*
 28 *A passing Universe put on*
 29 *And independent as the Sun*
 30 *Associates or glows alone*
 31 *Fulfilling absolute Decree*
 32 *In casual simplicity –*

33 —Emily Dickinson

34 *Line two in the original reads:
 35 *That rambles in the Road alone*

8.1.6 ■ STEP OR ORBIT?

37 *“Go straight!” shouts spacetime. The Principle of Maximal Aging interprets*
 38 *that command*

Nature shouts at the
stone “Go straight!”

39 A stone in orbit streaks around a black hole—or around Earth. What tells the
 40 stone how to move? Spacetime grips the stone, giving it the simplest possible
 41 command: “Go straight!” or in the more legalistic language of the Principle of
 42 Maximal Aging, “Follow the worldline of maximal aging across the next two
 43 adjoining local inertial frames.” From instant to instant this directive is
 44 enough to tell the stone what to do next, the next step to take in its motion.

This chapter:
circular orbits

45 This command for its next step is sufficient for the stone, but we want
 46 more: We seek a description of the entire orbit of the stone through
 47 spacetime—its worldline in global coordinates. The present chapter uses the
 48 global metric and the Principle of Maximal Aging to predict circular orbits of
 49 a stone around any spherically symmetric center of attraction. This prediction

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8-2 Chapter 8 Circular Orbits

Constants of motion:
map energy and
map angular
momentum

50 uses two map quantities that do not change as the motion progresses: map
51 energy and map angular momentum. In Query 7, Section 7.5, you derived the
52 map energy of a stone in global rain coordinates. Section 8.2 in the present
53 chapter derives an expression for map angular momentum in global rain
54 coordinates. Sections 8.4 shows how to use map angular momentum—together
55 with map energy—to forecast circular orbits. We find that a *free* stone can
56 move (a) in a *stable* circular orbit only at an r -coordinates greater than
57 $r = 6M$, or (b) in an *unstable* circular orbit from $r = 6M$ down to $r = 3M$. No
58 circular orbit for a free stone exists for $r < 3M$.

59 **Comment 1. Global quantities are unicorns**

60 Expressions for global quantities such as map energy and map angular
61 momentum are specific to the global coordinates in which they are expressed.
62 They are unicorns—mythical beasts—unmeasured by a local inertial observer,
63 except by some quirk of the global coordinates (Section 6.3).

64 The circular orbit is a special case of an *orbit*. We have not yet carefully
65 defined an orbit. Here is that definition.

66 **DEFINITION 1. Orbit**

67 An **orbit** is the path of a free stone through spacetime described by a
68 given set of global coordinates. The path of a radially-plunging stone,
69 with $d\phi = 0$ is a special case of the orbit.

70 **Comment 2. Orbit vs. worldline**

71 The *orbit* of a stone is different from its *worldline*. The worldline of a stone
72 (Definition 9, Section 1.5) is its (free or driven) path through spacetime described
73 by its wristwatch time. The description of a worldline does not require either
74 coordinates or the metric.

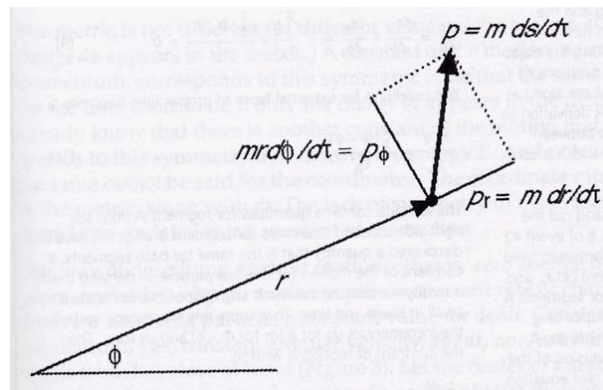


FIGURE 1 In flat spacetime, angular momentum L is the product of r and the ϕ -component of linear momentum $p_\phi = m r d\phi/d\tau$, which yields $L = m r^2 d\phi/d\tau$. Here $d\tau$ is the differential advance of wristwatch time of the stone. Box 1 shows that the same expression, written in global (either Schwarzschild or rain) coordinates, is a constant of motion around a non-spinning black hole.

Section 8.2 Map Angular Momentum of a Stone from Maximal Aging **8-3**

8.2.5 MAP ANGULAR MOMENTUM OF A STONE FROM MAXIMAL AGING

76 Vary the map angle of an intermediate event on a worldline to find map
77 angular momentum.

78 Here we derive the expression for map angular momentum using global rain
79 coordinates with its T -coordinate. The resulting expression for map angular
80 momentum is also valid in Schwarzschild coordinates. Why? Because both
81 global coordinate systems have the same r and ϕ coordinates, and the global t -
82 or T -coordinate—different in the two global coordinate systems—does not
83 appear in the expression for map angular momentum.

84 Start with the global rain metric, equation (15) in Section 7.4. Write down
85 its approximation at the average r -coordinate \bar{r} :

$$\Delta\tau^2 \approx \left(1 - \frac{2M}{\bar{r}}\right) \Delta T^2 - 2\left(\frac{2M}{\bar{r}}\right)^{1/2} \Delta T \Delta r - \Delta r^2 - \bar{r}^2 \Delta\phi^2 \quad (9)$$

86 Box 1 uses the now-familiar Principle of Maximal Aging to derive the
87 expression for map angular momentum in global rain coordinates. Box 1 tells
88 us that $r^2 d\phi/d\tau$ is a constant of motion for a free stone moving around the
89 non-spinning black hole. Can we recognize this constant as something
90 familiar? Figure 1 shows that in flat spacetime the angular momentum of the
91 stone (symbol L) has the form $L = mr^2 d\phi/d\tau$. So we identify our new
92 constant of motion as the **map angular momentum per unit mass** of the
93 stone: $L/m = r^2 d\phi/d\tau$.

Map angular
momentum

$$\frac{L}{m} \equiv r^2 \frac{d\phi}{d\tau} \quad (\text{map angular momentum}) \quad (10)$$

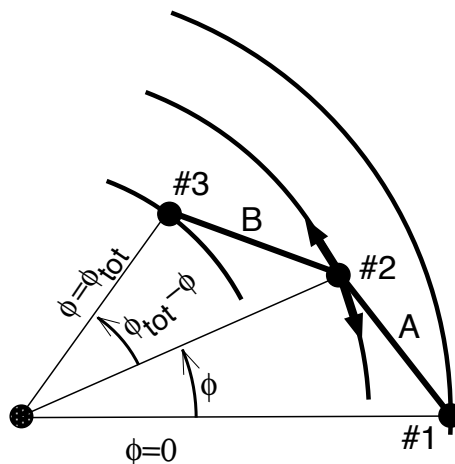


FIGURE 2 [Figure for Box 1.] Derivation of map angular momentum. Find the intermediate map angle ϕ that maximizes the stone's wristwatch time between Events #1 and #3.

8-4 Chapter 8 Circular Orbits

Box 1. Derive the Expression for Map Angular Momentum

Strategy: Apply the Principle of Maximal Aging to maximize the wristwatch time of a free stone that moves along two adjoining worldline segments labeled A and B—for Above and Below—in Figure 2. The stone emits flashes at Events #1, #2, and #3 that mark off the segments. Fix the global rain T - and r -coordinates of all three flashes and the ϕ -coordinates of flashes #1 and #3. Vary the ϕ -coordinate of Event #2 by sliding it along a circle (double-headed arrow in Figure 2) to maximize the total wristwatch time between flashes #1 and #3. Then identify the resulting constant of motion as the map angular momentum per unit mass of the stone. Now the details.

Set the fixed ϕ -coordinate of Event #1 equal to zero and call ϕ_{tot} the fixed final ϕ -coordinate for Event #3. To change the angle ϕ of Event #2, move it in either direction along its circle (double-headed arrow in the figure). Let \bar{r}_A and \bar{r}_B be appropriate average values of the r -coordinate for segments A and B, respectively, and let τ_A and τ_B be the corresponding lapses of wristwatch time of the stone moving along these segments. With these substitutions, and for a small value of τ_A , the approximate global rain metric (9) for higher Segment A becomes:

$$\tau_A \approx [-\bar{r}_A^2 \phi^2 + (\text{terms without } \phi)]^{1/2} \quad (1)$$

To prepare for the derivative that leads to maximal aging, take the derivative of this expression with respect to ϕ :

$$\frac{d\tau_A}{d\phi} \approx -\frac{\bar{r}_A^2 \phi}{\tau_A} \quad (2)$$

Similarly for lower Segment B,

$$\tau_B \approx [-\bar{r}_B^2 (\phi_{\text{tot}} - \phi)^2 + (\text{terms without } \phi)]^{1/2} \quad (3)$$

$$\frac{d\tau_B}{d\phi} \approx \frac{\bar{r}_B^2 (\phi_{\text{tot}} - \phi)}{\tau_B} \quad (4)$$

The total wristwatch time for both segments is $\tau = \tau_A + \tau_B$. Take the derivative of this expression with respect to ϕ , substitute from (2) and (4), and set the resulting derivative equal to zero in order to apply the Principle of Maximal Aging:

$$\frac{d\tau}{d\phi} = \frac{d\tau_A}{d\phi} + \frac{d\tau_B}{d\phi} \approx -\frac{\bar{r}_A^2 \phi}{\tau_A} + \frac{\bar{r}_B^2 (\phi_{\text{tot}} - \phi)}{\tau_B} = 0 \quad (5)$$

The condition for maximal lapse of wristwatch time becomes

$$\frac{\bar{r}_A^2 \phi}{\tau_A} \approx \frac{\bar{r}_B^2 (\phi_{\text{tot}} - \phi)}{\tau_B} \quad (6)$$

or in our original Δ notation:

$$\frac{\bar{r}_A^2 \Delta\phi_A}{\Delta\tau_A} \approx \frac{\bar{r}_B^2 \Delta\phi_B}{\Delta\tau_B} \quad (7)$$

The left side contains quantities for Segment A only; the right side quantities for Segment B only. We have discovered a quantity that has the same value for both segments, a *global constant of motion* for the free stone across every pair of adjoining segments along the worldline of the free stone. In deriving this quantity, we assumed that each segment of the worldline is small. To yield an equality in (7), go to the calculus limit in (7), for which $\bar{r} \rightarrow r$; the constant of motion becomes

$$\lim_{\Delta\tau \rightarrow 0} \left(\bar{r}^2 \frac{\Delta\phi}{\Delta\tau} \right) = r^2 \frac{d\phi}{d\tau} = \text{a constant of motion} \quad (8)$$

where r and τ are in units of meters. The text identifies this constant of motion as L/m , the map angular momentum of the stone per unit mass.

95 Since r and τ are in units of meters, therefore L/m is also in units of meters.

8.3. EQUATIONS OF MOTION FOR A STONE IN GLOBAL RAIN COORDINATES

97 *The stone’s wristwatch ticks off $d\tau$. From $d\tau$ find the resulting changes $d\phi$, dr , and dT .*

99 We now have in hand the tools needed to calculate the step-by-step advance of
 100 the free stone in global rain coordinates. Map energy and map angular
 101 momentum—global constants of motion—plus the global metric give us three
 102 equations in the three global rain unknowns dT , dr , and $d\phi$, expressed as
 103 functions of the advance $d\tau$ of the stone’s wristwatch. Starting from an
 104 arbitrary initial event, the computer advances wristwatch time and calculates

Equations
of motion

Section 8.3 Equations of Motion for a Stone in Global Rain Coordinates **8-5**

105 the consequent advance of all three map coordinates, then sums the results of
 106 these steps to plot the stone's worldline in global coordinates. We now spell
 107 out this process.

First equation
 of motion

108 The first equation of motion comes from (10):

$$\frac{d\phi}{d\tau} = \frac{L}{mr^2} \quad (11)$$

109
 110 The second equation of motion comes from the expression for E/m ,
 111 equation (35) in Section 7.5:

$$\frac{E}{m} = \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right) \frac{dT}{d\tau} - \left(\frac{2M}{r}\right)^{1/2} \frac{dr}{d\tau} \quad (\text{global rain coordinates}) \quad (12)$$

112 Solve (12) for $dT/d\tau$:

$$\frac{dT}{d\tau} = \left[\frac{E}{m} + \left(\frac{2M}{r}\right)^{1/2} \frac{dr}{d\tau} \right] \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-1} \quad (13)$$

113 Take the differential limit of (9), divide through by $d\tau^2$, and substitute into it
 114 from (11) and (13):

$$1 = \left[\frac{E}{m} + \left(\frac{2M}{r}\right)^{1/2} \frac{dr}{d\tau} \right]^2 \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-1} \quad (14)$$

$$- 2 \left(\frac{2M}{r}\right)^{1/2} \frac{dr}{d\tau} \left[\frac{E}{m} + \left(\frac{2M}{r}\right)^{1/2} \frac{dr}{d\tau} \right] \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-1} - \left(\frac{dr}{d\tau}\right)^2 - \left(\frac{L}{mr}\right)^2$$

Second equation
 of motion

115 Multiply out and collect terms. Solve the resulting quadratic equation in
 116 $dr/d\tau$ to yield our second equation of motion for the stone:

$$\frac{dr}{d\tau} = \pm \left[\left(\frac{E}{m}\right)^2 - \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right) \left(1 + \frac{L^2}{m^2 r^2}\right) \right]^{1/2} \quad (\text{stone}) \quad (15)$$

Third equation
 of motion

117
 118 The third equation of motion shows how dT varies with stone wristwatch
 119 time lapse $d\tau$. Substitute for $dr/d\tau$ from (15) into (13) and solve for $dT/d\tau$:

$$\frac{dT}{d\tau} = \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-1} \left\{ \frac{E}{m} \pm \left(\frac{2M}{r}\right)^{1/2} \left[\left(\frac{E}{m}\right)^2 - \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right) \left(1 + \frac{L^2}{m^2 r^2}\right) \right]^{1/2} \right\} \quad (16)$$

120
 121 **Comment 3. Plotting the orbit**

122 To plot any orbit of the stone—not just a circular orbit—you (or your computer)

8-6 Chapter 8 Circular Orbits

123 can integrate the derivative $d\phi/dr = (d\phi/d\tau)(d\tau/dr)$ using equations (11) and
 124 (15).

125 Taken together, equations (11), (15), and (16) are the *equations of motion*
 Equations of motion 126 *of the stone* in global rain coordinates. Their integration yields the worldline of
 in global rain 127 the stone in global rain coordinates T , r , and ϕ . Interactive software GRorbits
 coordinates 128 carries out this process, plots the orbit in r and ϕ , and outputs a spreadsheet
 129 of events along the worldline of the stone.

130 **QUERY 1. Crossing the event horizon in global rain coordinates.**

A first glance at equation (16) might lead to the conclusion that $dT/d\tau$ blows up at the event horizon,
 so that a stone requires an unlimited lapse in the T -coordinate to cross there. Set $r = 2M(1 + \epsilon)$ in this
 equation to show that as $\epsilon \rightarrow 0$ the right side does *not* blow up.

135 **8.4 ■ EFFECTIVE POTENTIAL**

137 *Grasp orbit features at a single glance!*

Effective potential:
 the r -component
 of motion

138 The orbit computation in Section 8.3 puts into our hands powerful tools to
 139 describe any motion of the free stone in the equatorial plane of a spherically
 140 symmetric center of attraction. Indeed, the wealth of possible orbits is so great
 141 that we need some classification scheme with which to sort orbits at a glance.
 142 One classification scheme uses the so-called **effective potential** that focuses
 143 on the r -component of motion. Clearer even than our computed orbits, the
 144 effective potential plot instantly shows many central features of our stone's
 145 motion.

Pit in the potential

146 Vicious gravitational effects close to a black hole dominate the effective
 147 potential there. In addition to the attractive potential of gravity at large
 148 r -coordinates and the effective repulsion due to map angular momentum at
 149 intermediate r -values, at still smaller r -coordinates Einstein adds a pit in the
 150 potential, shown at the left of Figures 3 and 4.

151 The potential? A pit in this potential? Can we get this potential from
 152 principles that are simple, clear, and solid? Yes, starting from map energy and
 153 map angular momentum, both of them global constants of motion.

154 To begin this process, square both sides of (15).

$$\left(\frac{dr}{d\tau}\right)^2 = \left(\frac{E}{m}\right)^2 - \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right) \left(1 + \frac{L^2}{m^2 r^2}\right) \quad (17)$$

Effective potential
 for a stone

155 Define a function $(V_L(r)/m)^2$ to replace the second term on the right side of
 156 (17). Call this function the square of the **effective potential**.

$$\left(\frac{V_L(r)}{m}\right)^2 \equiv \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right) \left(1 + \frac{L^2}{m^2 r^2}\right) \quad (\text{squared effective potential}) \quad (18)$$

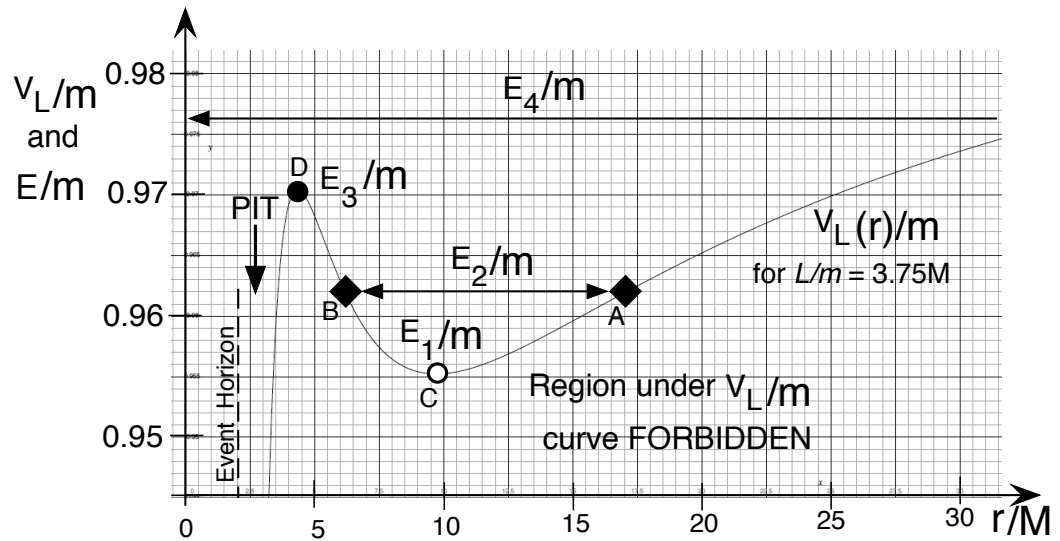


FIGURE 3 Effective potential for a stone that orbits the black hole with map angular momentum $L/m = 3.75M$. When the stone's map energy equals the minimum of the effective potential energy (little open circle at C), the stone is in a stable circular orbit. A stone with somewhat greater map energy, E_2/m , (line with double arrow) oscillates back and forth in r between turning points (little black rotated squares) labeled A and B. When the stone's map energy equals the maximum of the effective potential energy (little filled circle at D), the stone is in an unstable circular orbit. When the map energy E_4/m of an inward-moving stone is greater than the peak of the effective potential (upper horizontal line), the approaching stone crosses the event horizon and plunges to the singularity at $r \rightarrow 0$.

157 Subscript L on $V_L(r)$ reminds us that this effective potential is different for
 158 different values of the map angular momentum L . Substitute (18) into (17)
 159 and take the square root of both sides:

$$\frac{dr}{d\tau} = \pm \left[\left(\frac{E}{m} \right)^2 - \left(\frac{V_L(r)}{m} \right)^2 \right]^{1/2} \quad (19)$$

160 The squared effective potential $(V_L(r)/m)^2$ is what we subtract from the
 161 squared map energy term $(E/m)^2$ to obtain $(dr/d\tau)^2$. The plus sign in (19)
 162 describes increase in r -coordinate, the minus sign describes decreasing r .

163 Figure 3 plots effective potential $V_L(r)/m$ from (18) and shows the r -range
 164 for motion of stones with three different map energies.

165 Note that $dr/d\tau$ in equation (19) is real only where $(E/m)^2$ has a value
 166 greater than $(V_L(r)/m)^2$. This has important consequences: The stone cannot
 167 exist with a map energy in the region under the effective potential curve: that
 168 is the **forbidden map energy region**. As a result, the horizontal map energy
 169 line labeled E_2/m in Figure 3 terminates wherever it meets the $V_L(r)/m$
 170 curve. At these points, called **turning points** in r , the map energy and the
 171 effective potential are equal: $E/m = V_L/m$, so that $dr/d\tau = 0$ in (19). At a
 172 turning point the r -component of map motion goes to zero (while the stone

Forbidden map energy
 region; turning points

8-8 Chapter 8 Circular Orbits

continues to sweep around in the ϕ -direction). In Figure 3 the stone's r map position oscillates back and forth between turning points in r labeled A and B. Earth and each solar planet oscillates back and forth with an r -component of motion similar to that labeled E_2/m in Figure 3, each around a minimum of its own solar effective potential that depends on its map angular momentum.

DEFINITION 2. Forbidden map energy region

Definition: The **forbidden map energy region** is a region in a $V_L(r)/m$ vs. r/M plot in which equations of motion of the stone (Section 8.3) become imaginary or complex. Hence the stone cannot move—or even exist—with map energy in the forbidden map energy region.

QUERY 2. Demonstrate forbidden map energy regions

Verify the statement in Definition 2 that “In the forbidden map energy region, the equations of motion of a stone (Section 8.3) become imaginary or complex.” for *each* equation of motion in Section 8.3.

DEFINITION 3. Turning point, circle point, and bounce point

Figures 3 and 4 show little filled circles, little open circles, and little rotated filled squares, each one located on the effective potential curve. These points are called *turning points*. (Section 8.5 defines the meaning of the “half-black” circle numbered one in Figure 4.)

Definition: A **turning point** is a value of r for which $E = V_L(r)$. At a turning point, $dr/d\tau = 0$. Examples of turning points: points A through D in Figure 3 and points 1 through 5 in Figure 4. We distinguish two kinds of turning points: circle point and bounce point:

Definition: A **circle point** is a turning point at a maximum or minimum of the effective potential. At a circle point $dr/d\tau$ equals zero and remains zero, at least temporarily, so a stone at a circle point is in either an unstable or a stable circular orbit. We plot a circle point as either a little filled circle (at an unstable circular orbit r -value) or a little open circle (at a stable circular orbit r -value). Examples of bounce points: C and D in Figure 3 and points labeled 1 through 5 in Figure 4.

Definition: A **bounce point** is a turning point that is *not* at a maximum or minimum of the effective potential. At a bounce point, $dr/d\tau$ for a free stone reverses sign. We plot a bounce point as a little filled rotated square. Examples of bounce points: A, and B in Figure 3. A stone that moves between bounce points—such as the stone with map energy E_2/m in Figure 3, is in a bound orbit that is *not* circular (Chapter 9).

Three payoffs of effective potential Here are four important payoffs of the effective potential. First, it gives $dr/d\tau$ in terms of E , L , and r . Second, at every r it shows us the map energy region that is forbidden to the stone. Third, it fixes r -values of the turning points for given E and L . Fourth, and most important, it helps us to categorize—at a glance—different kinds of orbits, including circular orbits.

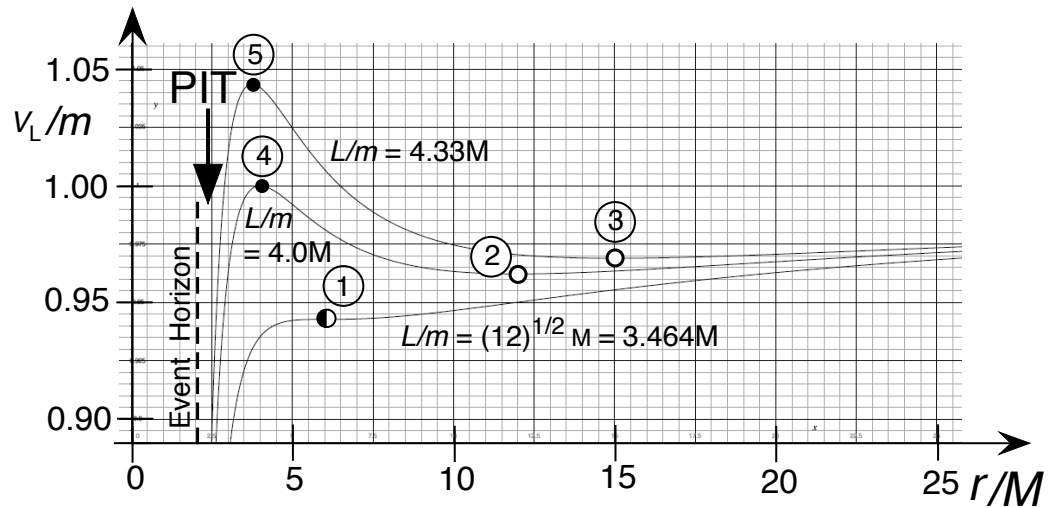


FIGURE 4 The r -coordinates of stable and unstable (knife-edge) circular orbits at points of zero slope of the effective potentials for three values of L/m . Unstable circular orbits (little filled circles numbered 4 and 5) lie between $r = 3M$ and $r = 6M$. Stable circular orbits, little open circles numbered 2 and 3, lie at r greater than $r = 6M$. Orbit numbered 1 (little half-black circle) is the limiting case, stable for increase in r ; unstable for decrease in r . Section 8.5 discusses this “half-stable orbit.” A forbidden map energy region (Definition 2) lies under the curve for each value of L/m .

QUERY 3. Compare Newtonian and general-relativistic orbital motion (optional)

The right side of (17) tells us a great deal about the difference between the stone’s global motion described in global rain coordinates and its motion described by Newton.

- A. Multiply out the right side of (17) and divide through by 2 to yield

$$\frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{dr}{d\tau} \right)^2 = \frac{1}{2} \left[\left(\frac{E}{m} \right)^2 - 1 \right] - \left(-\frac{M}{r} + \frac{L^2}{2m^2 r^2} - \frac{ML^2}{m^2 r^3} \right) \quad (\text{global rain coordinates}) \quad (20)$$

- B. Newton’s expression for angular momentum, with Newton’s “universal time t ” is:

$$\frac{L}{m} \equiv r^2 \frac{d\phi}{dt} \quad (\text{Newton, universal time } t) \quad (21)$$

Show that Newton’s expression for the square of the velocity of the stone is:

$$v^2 = \left(\frac{dr}{dt} \right)^2 + r^2 \left(\frac{d\phi}{dt} \right)^2 = \left(\frac{dr}{dt} \right)^2 + \frac{L^2}{m^2 r^2} \quad (\text{Newton}) \quad (22)$$

- C. Now, Newton’s expression for gravitational potential energy per unit mass (chosen to go to zero far from the center of attraction) is $U(r) = -M/r$. Write down Newton’s conservation of energy equation, solve it for the radial velocity, and show the result:

8-10 Chapter 8 Circular Orbits

$$\frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{dr}{dt} \right)^2 = \frac{E}{m} - \left(-\frac{M}{r} + \frac{L^2}{2m^2 r^2} \right) = \frac{E}{m} - \frac{V_{\text{NewtL}}(r)}{m} \quad (\text{Newton}) \quad (23)$$

where **Newton’s effective potential** is $V_{\text{NewtL}}(r)/m$.

- D. Sketch for the Newtonian case a diagram like that of Figure 3: a plot of $V_{\text{NewtL}}(r)$ with horizontal lines for different values of E . Describe the resulting orbits and contrast them to those for motion in curved spacetime.

Of course the general relativity expression (20) is not just another version of Newton’s equation (23). But look at the basic similarity of the right sides of these two equations: a constant term from which we subtract a function of the r -coordinate—the “effective potential”—that varies with the value of map angular momentum L .

Conclusion of this analysis: It is the negative third term in the effective potential on the right side of (20), with r^3 in its denominator, that drives the effective potential downward as r becomes smaller as it approaches the event horizon—thereby creating the PIT in the potential labeled in Figures 3 and 4. This third term is the child of spacetime curvature.

In a stable circular orbit the stone’s map energy rests at the minimum of the effective potential; the stone rides round and round the black hole without changing r -coordinate.

DEFINITION 4. Stable circular orbit

Stable orbit at effective potential minimum

A stone in a stable circular orbit has map energy E/m equal to the *minimum* of the effective potential $V_L(r)/m$, for example the map energy labeled 1 in Figure 3 and energies labeled 2 and 3 in Figure 4. Any incremental change in the r -coordinate at constant E/m puts the stone into the forbidden map energy region under the effective potential curve, where a stone cannot go.

We use a little open circle to locate a stable circular orbit on an effective potential energy curve. The point labeled 1 in Figure 4 is the stable circular orbit of minimum r -value analyzed in Section 8.5.

Einstein opens up a second set of r -coordinates where the effective potential also has zero slope, illustrated by point D in Figure 3 and points 4 and 5 in Figure 4. Each of these is a *maximum* of the effective potential curve; at this r -coordinate the stone experiences no tendency to move either to larger or smaller r -coordinate, so will stay at the same r -coordinate, riding round and round the black hole at constant r -coordinate. We call these **unstable** or **knife-edge** circular orbits, because slight departure from the knife-edge r -coordinate leads to decisive motion either to larger r , or else—horrors!—to smaller r that leads to the event horizon.

DEFINITION 5. Unstable (or knife-edge) circular orbit

A stone in an unstable (or knife-edge) circular orbit has map energy

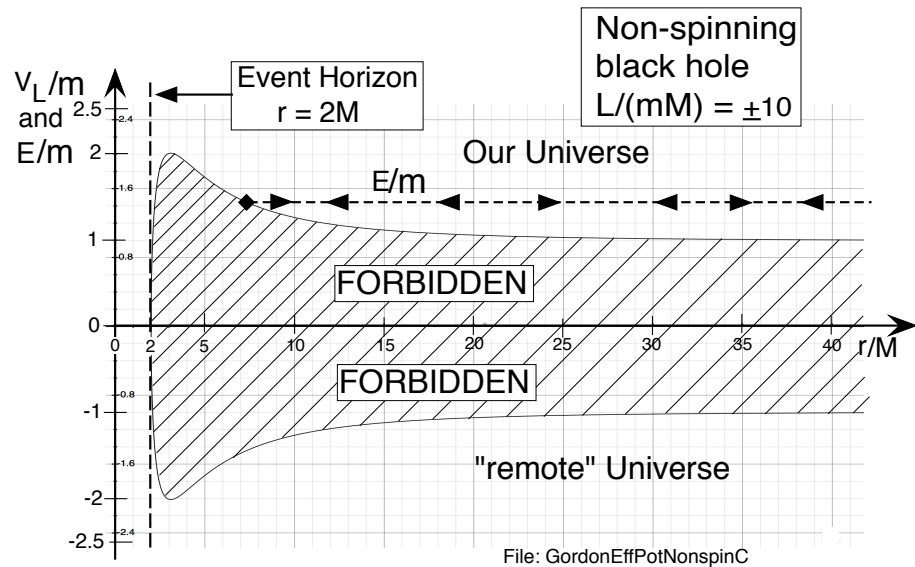


FIGURE 5 Plot of equation (17) for stone map angular momentum $L/(mM) = \pm 10$. In our Universe map energy is positive; it is negative in a “remote” Universe below the forbidden region. We cannot travel between our Universe and the “remote Universe” because the worldlines that connect them must pass inward through the event horizon, then back out again. (Diagonal lines emphasize impenetrability.) So where is this “remote” Universe? See Chapter 21.

Unstable (or knife-edge) orbit at effective potential maximum

262
263
264
265

E/m equal to the *maximum* of the effective potential V_L/m , so that any incremental r -displacement in either direction puts the stone into a region with a gap between E/m and V_L/m such that this displacement increases.

266 We use a little filled circle to locate an unstable circular orbit on an effective
267 potential energy curve.

268 **Comment 4. How long on a knife edge?**

269 Suppose that our spaceship is in a knife-edge orbit, technically an *unstable orbit*.
270 Slight cosmic wind, firing of a projectile, or ejection of the day’s trash may give
271 our spaceship a tiny r -motion. Once displacement from the effective potential
272 peak occurs, the slope of the effective potential urges the spaceship farther away
273 from the point of zero slope, either outward toward larger r -coordinate or inward
274 toward the event horizon. Sooner or later—who knows when?—a stone
275 inevitably falls off the effective potential maximum of an unstable circular orbit.

276 “Why, oh why,” our captain cries, “didn’t I carry along a booster rocket? A
277 tiny rocket boost to push us outward could have reversed our initially
278 slow inward motion and allowed us to escape. But now it’s too late!”

279 Strange results follow from equation (19), which requires that
280 $(E/m)^2 \geq (V_L/m)^2$ in order that $dr/d\tau$ be real. A consequence of this
281 condition is that either $E/m \geq +V_L/m$ or $E/m \leq -V_L/m$. Figure 5 shows this

8-12 Chapter 8 Circular Orbits

282 condition. A stone cannot move, or even exist, with E/m in the region
 283 $+V_L/m > E/m > -V_L/m$. This is a forbidden map energy region, because
 284 $dr/d\tau$ would be imaginary there. *Result:* The forbidden map energy region
 285 divides spacetime outside the event horizon into two isolated regions: one for
 286 positive map energy and the other for negative map energy. The stone cannot
 287 travel directly between them. This definition of a forbidden map energy region
 288 is consistent with that given in Definition 2.

289 Figure 3 shows only positive values of map E/m . This is the region we live
 290 in, where we carry out our measurements and observations, the upper region
 291 of positive map energy in Figure 5. What is the meaning of negative E/m in
 292 the lower region of Figure 5? Can we carry out measurements and observations
 293 there? Remember that map energy is a global map quantity, not a quantity
 294 that we can measure; its negative value tells us nothing about permitted
 295 measurements. In the exercises you show that we can construct local inertial
 296 frames in the negative map energy region, so we can carry out measurements
 297 and observations there, just as we can in the region above the forbidden map
 298 energy region.

299 Can we travel from the upper (positive map energy) region in Figure 5 to
 300 the lower (negative map energy) region? Our own worldline, just like the
 301 worldline of a stone, cannot pass directly through that forbidden map energy
 302 region. Figure 5 shows that the forbidden map energy region ends at the event
 303 horizon, $r = 2M$. Can we make an end run around the forbidden map energy
 304 region by moving in through the event horizon and back out again? No, sorry:
 305 Once inside the event horizon, we cannot come out again; instead we move
 306 relentlessly inward to the singularity. See exercise 11 in Section 8.7.

?

307 **Objection 1.** *Can light move between the upper and lower regions?*

!

308 Nope. Figure 11 in Section 11.8 shows that a corresponding forbidden
 309 region for light separates upper and lower regions. Both for stones and for
 310 light, the two regions are physically isolated.

?

311 **Objection 2.** *Wait! Where is this lower region? It has the same r -values as*
 312 *the upper region but you tell me that it lies "somewhere else," in a negative*
 313 *map energy region we cannot reach. Where is it?*

!

314 The answer is subtle and deep. Later we will understand that global rain
 315 coordinates do not include all of spacetime. We must find other global
 316 coordinates that include such regions. Chapter 21 treats these matters.
 317 Keep on reading!

318 Chapters 17 through 21 examine the spinning black hole. We will find that
 319 for the spinning black hole we may be able to travel between the

Section 8.5 Properties of circular orbits **8-13**

320 corresponding upper and lower regions by dropping through the event horizon
 321 from the upper region, using rocket thrusts while inside the event horizon,
 322 then emerging outward through the event horizon into the lower region. Luc
 323 Longtin summarizes: “The non-spinning black hole is like the spinning black
 324 hole, but with its gate to other universes closed. For the spinning black hole,
 325 the gate is ajar.” (initial quote, Chapter 21)

8.5 ■ PROPERTIES OF CIRCULAR ORBITS

327 *Details! Details!*

328 A series of Queries helps you to explore some properties of circular orbits in
 329 the everyday positive map energy region around the non-spinning black hole.

QUERY 4. Map $r \rightarrow v$ values of circular orbits

- A. A circular orbit is possible at every r -coordinate where the effective potential has zero slope. Take the r -derivative of both sides of (18) for a fixed L/m , set this derivative equal to zero, and show the following result:

$$r^2 - \frac{L^2}{Mm^2}r + 3\frac{L^2}{m^2} = 0 \quad (\text{circular orbit}) \quad (24)$$

- B. Equation (24) is linear in $(L/m)^2$. Solve it to find:

$$\left(\frac{L}{m}\right)^2 = \frac{Mr^2}{r - 3M} \quad (\text{circular orbit, } r > 3M) \quad (25)$$

Note that this expression is valid for both stable and unstable circular orbits and is invalid for $r < 3M$, where L/m would be imaginary. Circular orbits cannot exist for $r < 3M$, and for $r = 3M$ the circular orbit is a limiting case (Item D in Query 8)

- B. Equation (24) is quadratic in r . Solve it to find:

$$r = \frac{L^2}{2m^2M} \left[1 \pm \left(1 - \frac{12M^2m^2}{L^2} \right)^{1/2} \right] \quad (\text{circular orbit, } r > 3M) \quad (26)$$

Refer to Figure 4. Make the argument that the + sign in (26) corresponds to the minimum of the effective potential, that is to a stable circular orbit; and that the - sign corresponds to the maximum of the effective potential, that is to the unstable (knife-edge) circular orbit.

- C. *Optional:* Take the second derivative of (18) and verify that the \pm signs in (26) correspond, respectively, to a minimum and maximum of the effective potential.

8-14 Chapter 8 Circular Orbits

348 Look more closely at equation (26) and the effective potential curve in
 349 Figure 4 with the “half-black” little circle labeled number 1. In order for the
 350 r -coordinate to be real, the square root expression in (26) must be real. This
 351 occurs only when $|L/m| \geq (12)^{1/2}M = 3.4641M$. You can show that for the
 352 minimum map angular momentum, the global r -coordinate of the circular
 353 orbit is $r = 6M$. This is called the **innermost stable circular orbit** and is
 354 located at $r_{\text{ISCO}} = 6M$.

DEFINITION 6. Innermost stable circular orbit (ISCO)

Definition
ISCO

355 The **innermost stable circular orbit (ISCO)**, located at $r_{\text{ISCO}} = 6M$,
 356 divides r -values for unstable circular orbit in the region $3M < r < 6M$
 357 from r -values for stable circular orbits in the region $r > 6M$. We can call
 358 the ISCO “half stable.” An increase in r at the same map energy puts the
 359 stone into a forbidden map energy region (like a stable circular orbit); a
 360 decrease in r at the same map energy puts the stone into a legal map
 361 energy region (like an unstable circular orbit).
 362

363 Section 8.6 describes a so-called *toy model* of a quasar, the brightest
 364 steady source of light in the heavens. This emission comes from the loss of
 365 map energy of a stone that enters a circular orbit at large r and tumbles down
 366 through a series of “stable” circular orbits of smaller and smaller r . When the
 367 stone reaches the innermost stable circular orbit and continues to lose map
 368 energy, it spirals inward across the event horizon, after which we can no longer
 369 detect its radiation.
 370

QUERY 5. Shell speed of a stone in a circular orbit

Compute the speed of the stone in a circular orbit measured by a shell observer, as follows.

- A. Consider two ticks of the orbiting stone’s clock, separated by wristwatch time $\Delta\tau$ and by zero distance measured in the stone’s local frame, but separated by shell time Δt_{shell} and by shell distance $\Delta x_{\text{shell}} = \bar{r}\Delta\phi$. The relation between Δt_{shell} and $\Delta\tau$ is just the special relativity expression

$$\Delta t_{\text{shell}} = \gamma_{\text{shell}}\Delta\tau = (1 - v_{\text{shell}}^2)^{-1/2}\Delta\tau \tag{27}$$

where γ_{shell} has an obvious definition. From the value of map angular momentum, we can use (27) to calculate shell speed:

$$\begin{aligned} v_{\text{shell}} &= \lim_{\Delta t_{\text{shell}} \rightarrow 0} \left(\frac{\bar{r}\Delta\phi}{\Delta t_{\text{shell}}} \right) = (1 - v_{\text{shell}}^2)^{1/2} \frac{r^2 d\phi}{r d\tau} \\ &= (1 - v_{\text{shell}}^2)^{1/2} \frac{L}{mr} \quad (\phi - \text{motion}) \end{aligned} \tag{28}$$

From this equation, show that

$$v_{\text{shell}}^2 = \left[1 + \left(\frac{mr}{L} \right)^2 \right]^{-1} \quad (\phi - \text{motion}) \tag{29}$$

Section 8.5 Properties of circular orbits **8-15**

From equation (25) show that

$$\left(\frac{mr}{L}\right)^2 = \frac{r}{M} - 3 \quad (\text{circular orbit}) \quad (30)$$

Substitute this into (29) to find

$$v_{\text{shell}}^2 = \frac{M}{r - 2M} = \left(\frac{M}{r}\right) \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-1} \quad (\text{circular orbit, } r > 3M) \quad (31)$$

Equation (31) is valid for both stable and unstable (knife-edge) circular orbits.

- B. What is the value of the shell speed v_{shell} in the ISCO, the innermost stable circular orbit at $r = 6M$?
- C. Verify that the minimum map r -coordinate for a circular orbit is $r = 3M$. (*Hint:* What is the upper limit of the shell speed of a stone?)
- D. From (25) show that, as a limiting case, the map angular momentum L/m increases without limit for the knife-edge circular orbit of minimum r -coordinate.

Circular orbit
of light

Comment 5. Unlimited map angular momentum?

How can the map angular momentum possibly increase indefinitely (Item D of Query 6)? It does so only as a limiting case. According to (10), the map angular momentum is equal to $L/m = r^2 d\phi/d\tau$. The relation between wristwatch time $d\tau$ and shell time dt_{shell} is given by (27), the usual time-stretch formula of special relativity. As the stone's speed approaches the speed of light, the advance of wristwatch time becomes smaller and smaller compared with the advance of shell time. In the limit, it takes zero wristwatch time for the stone to circulate once around the black hole. Because $d\tau$ is in the denominator of the expression for angular momentum, the map angular momentum L/m increases without limit. The speed of light is the limiting speed of a stone, so the speed-of-light orbit is a limiting case, reached by a stone only after an unlimited lapse of the Schwarzschild t -coordinate. This limiting case tells us, however, that light can travel in a circular orbit at $r = 3M$ (Chapter 11).

QUERY 6. Global map energy of a stone in circular orbit

Find an expression for map energy E/m in global rain coordinates for the stone in a circular orbit, as follows:

- A. Use (25) and (15) with $dr = 0$ for a circular orbit. Show that the result is:

$$\frac{E}{m} = \frac{r - 2M}{r^{1/2}(r - 3M)^{1/2}} \quad (\text{circular orbit, } r > 3M) \quad (32)$$

8-16 Chapter 8 Circular Orbits

- B. Does (32) go to the values you expect in three cases: Case 1: $r \gg M$? Case 2: $r \rightarrow 3M^+$ (r decreases from above)? Case 3: $r < 3M$?

QUERY 7. Map energy and map angular momentum of a stone in the ISCO

- A. Show that the map angular momentum of the ISCO is $L_{\text{ISCO}}/(mM) = 3.464\ 101\ 615$.
 B. Show that the map energy of the ISCO is $E_{\text{ISCO}}/m = 0.942\ 809\ 042$.

QUERY 8. Shell energy of a stone in a circular orbit

- A. Use the special relativity relation $E_{\text{shell}}/m = (1 - v_{\text{shell}}^2)^{-1/2}$ for the local shell frame plus (31) for v_{shell}^2 to show that

$$\frac{E_{\text{shell}}}{m} = \left(\frac{r - 2M}{r - 3M} \right)^{1/2} \quad (\text{circular orbit, } r > 3M) \quad (33)$$

- B. From (32) and (33), verify that

$$\frac{E_{\text{shell}}}{m} = \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r} \right)^{-1/2} \frac{E}{m} \quad (\text{circular orbit } r > 2M) \quad (34)$$

This agrees with equation (12) in Section 6.3 for a diving stone.

- C. Far from the black hole, that is for $r \gg M$, set $\epsilon = M/r$. Use our standard approximation (inside the front cover) to show that at large r -coordinate equation (33) becomes:

$$\frac{E_{\text{shell}}}{m} \approx 1 + \frac{M}{2r} \quad (\text{circular orbit, } r \gg M) \quad (35)$$

- D. Take (31) to the same limit and show that (35) becomes:

$$E_{\text{shell}} \approx m + \frac{1}{2} m v_{\text{shell}}^2 \quad (\text{circular orbit, } r \gg M) \quad (36)$$

Would Newton be happy with your result? Would Einstein?

QUERY 9. Orbiter wristwatch time for one circular orbit

- A. From (25) and (11) verify the following wristwatch time for one circular orbit ($\Delta\phi = 2\pi$),

$$\frac{\Delta\tau}{M} = \frac{2\pi(r/M)^2}{L/(mM)} = 2\pi \frac{r}{M} \left(\frac{r-3M}{M} \right)^{1/2} \quad (\text{one circular orbit}) \quad (37)$$

- B. Explain why $\Delta\tau \rightarrow 0$ as $r \rightarrow 3M$.
- C. For a black hole with $M = 10M_{\text{Sun}}$, find the wristwatch time in seconds for one circular orbit for the three values $r/M = 10, 6, 4$.
- D. For a non-spinning black hole of mass $M \approx 4 \times 10^6 M_{\text{Sun}}$ equal to the black hole at the center of our galaxy, find the wristwatch time in seconds for one circular orbit for the three values $r/M = 10, 6, 4$.
- E. *Optional:* Solve (37) for $(r/M - 3)$ and put $r \approx 3M$ in the expression on the right side of your result. Find the value of $(r/M - 3)$ when $\tau = 1$ microsecond for a black hole of mass $M = 10M_{\text{Sun}}$. What is the numerical value of the observed distance $2\pi r$ around this circumference in meters—a directly-measurable distance (Section 3.3). So now we have an astronaut who traverses this large, measurable circumference in a microsecond. To do this, she must move at many times the speed of light. Can this be right? Explain your answer.

QUERY 10. Shell time for one circular orbit

Verify the following expressions for the periods of one circular orbit.

- A. From equations (27), (31), and (37), show that the local shell time for one circular orbit is:

$$\Delta t_{\text{shell}} = 2\pi r \left(\frac{r-2M}{M} \right)^{1/2} \quad (\text{one circular orbit}) \quad (38)$$

For the minimum (knife-edge) orbit, with $r = 3M$, explain why the shell period is equal to the circumference of the orbit.

- B. For a circular orbit of very large r -coordinate, explain why global rain ΔT , shell Δt_{shell} , and orbiter wristwatch time $\Delta\tau$ all have the same value for one orbit, namely $2\pi r^{3/2}/M^{1/2}$.

8.6 ■ TOY MODEL OF A QUASAR

Beacon of the heavens

Quasar

A **quasar** (“quasi-stellar object”) is an astronomical object that pours out electromagnetic radiation of many frequencies at a prodigious rate. The quasar is the brightest steady source of light in the heavens, so we can see it farther away than any other steady source. At the center of a quasar is, almost certainly, a spinning black hole (Chapters 17 through 21), but here we make a first quick model of a quasar using a non-spinning black hole. This sort of rough, preliminary analysis is called a **toy model**.

Toy model

8-18 Chapter 8 Circular Orbits

466 A simple model of quasar emission postulates an **accretion disk**, a gas
 467 disk that swirls around the black hole in its equatorial plane. Interactions
 468 among the molecules and atoms in this gas cloud are complicated. We assume
 469 simply that interactions among neighboring atoms and ions heats the
 470 accretion disk to high temperature and that the resulting electromagnetic
 471 emission is what we observe far from the quasar. The radiated energy we
 472 observe comes from the change in orbital map energy of each atom as it moves
 473 sequentially from a large- r circular orbit to smaller- r circular orbits with
 474 smaller and smaller map energy. We also assume that significant map energy
 475 change takes place over many orbits, so sequential orbits are nearly circular,
 476 each with its nearly constant values of E/m and L/m .

Accretion disk

Radiating away
change in map
energy

Comment 6. Losing map angular momentum

477 What is the mechanism of this orbit change? The sequence of circled numbers
 478 3-2-1 in Figure 4 shows that “our circulating atom” decreases both its map
 479 energy and its map angular momentum as it occupies a set of circular orbits of
 480 decreasing r -values. Map angular momentum of an isolated system is
 481 conserved, so the lost map angular momentum of our circulating atom must be
 482 transported outward, away from the black hole. What mechanism can transport
 483 map angular momentum outward? Equation (31) tells us that atoms in adjacent
 484 circular orbits have slightly different shell speeds, with atoms in the higher orbit
 485 moving more slowly. One might think (incorrectly) that *friction* between our atom
 486 and atoms in a higher orbit increases the velocity—and therefore the map
 487 angular momentum—of atoms in the higher orbit, and so on outward. However,
 488 direct friction turns out to be far too small to account for the outward transport of
 489 map angular momentum. The mechanism may depend on our model that the
 490 accretion disk consists of highly ionized atoms, a plasma, threaded with
 491 magnetic field lines. Magnetic fields greatly increase interactions between ions,
 492 so might account for the outward transport of map angular momentum in a
 493 quasar. We simply do not know.
 494

Transport map
angular momentum
outward

495 Eventually our atom’s circular orbit drops to $r = 6M$, the innermost
 496 stable circular orbit (Definition 6 in Section 8.5). At this point our atom
 497 continues to lose map angular momentum, so that it drops out of the last
 498 stable circular orbit and spirals inward across the event horizon. Once our
 499 atom crosses the event horizon, any further radiation moves only inward and
 500 cannot reach us, the external observers.

Innermost stable
circular orbit

QUERY 11. Map energy given up by “our atom.”

The prodigious radiation we observe from quasars is all emitted before orbiting atoms and ions cross the event horizon.

- A. Start with an atom in a circular orbit at large r -coordinate, moving slowly so its initial map energy is approximately equal to its mass, $E/m \approx 1$, from (32). Now think of its map energy later, as the atom moves in the stable circular orbit of minimum r -coordinate, $r = 6M$. Using (32), find the map energy E/m of the atom in this minimum- r circular orbit to three significant digits. How much map energy has the atom given up during the process of dropping gradually

from large r -coordinate to the smallest stable circular orbit? [My answers: $E_{\text{final}} = 0.943m$ so $\Delta E = 0.057m$]

- B. Suppose that the atom emits as electromagnetic radiation all the map energy it gives up (from Item A) as it spirals down to the circular orbit at $r = 6M$. Show that the map energy of that total amount of radiation emitted is $\Delta E = 0.057m$. Since initially we had $E/m = 1$, therefore 0.057, or 5.7%, is also the fraction of initial map energy that is radiated as the atom spirals inward to the lowest stable circular orbit.

Measure map energy at far from the black hole

518 Map energy E/m is a constant of motion, independent of position.
 519 Suppose that the map energy radiated by the atom during its descent finds its
 520 way outward. Then the same map energy ΔE arrives at the distant
 521 r -coordinate from which the atom departed earlier with $E/m \approx 1$. Moreover,
 522 very far from the black hole spacetime is flat; so map energy is equal to shell
 523 energy there, equation (34). Therefore the group of shell frame observers far
 524 from the black hole see—can in principle measure—a total radiated energy of
 525 $\Delta E = 0.057m$, which is 5.7 percent of the stone’s initial map energy.

Comment 7. How much emitted energy?

526 No nuclear reaction on Earth—except particle-antiparticle
 527 annihilation—releases as much as one percent of the rest energy of its
 528 constituents. Chapter 18 shows that for a black hole of maximum spin, the
 529 fraction of initial mass radiated away by a stone that spirals down from a large
 530 r -coordinate to an innermost stable circular orbit is 42 percent of its rest energy.
 531 No wonder quasars are such bright beacons in the heavens!
 532

Rate of emitted radiation

533 Now let our atom drop into the black hole from the innermost stable
 534 circular orbit at $r = 6M$. How much does the mass of the black hole increase?
 535 Equation (28) in Section 6.5 says that the total mass of the black hole
 536 increases by the map energy E/m of the object falling into it. This allows us
 537 to connect the rate of increase of the mass of a quasar and its brightness to the
 538 rate at which it is swallowing matter from outside. Let dm/dT be the rate at
 539 which mass falls into the black hole from far away and dM/dT be the rate at
 540 which the mass of the black hole increases. Then Item B in Query 11 tells us
 541 that the rate of radiated energy is

$$\text{Rate of radiated energy} \approx 0.057 \frac{dm}{dT} \quad (dm = \text{mass falling in}) \quad (39)$$

542 so that the mass M of the black hole increases at the rate:

$$\frac{dM}{dT} = (1 - 0.057) \frac{dm}{dT} = 0.943 \frac{dm}{dT} \quad (M = \text{mass of black hole}) \quad (40)$$

QUERY 12. Power output of a quasar

During every Earth-year, a distant quasar swallows $m = 10M_{\text{Sun}} =$ ten times the mass of our Sun. Recall that watts equals joules/second and, from special relativity, $\Delta E[\text{joules}] = \Delta m[\text{kilograms}]c^2[\text{meters}^2/\text{second}^2]$.

8-20 Chapter 8 Circular Orbits

- A. How many watts of radiation does this quasar emit, according to our toy model?
- B. Our Sun emits radiation at the rate of approximately 4×10^{26} watts. The quasar is how many times as bright as our Sun?
- C. Compare your answer in Item B to the total radiation output of a galaxy, approximately 10^{11} Sun-like stars.

QUERY 13. How long does a quasar shine?

We see most quasars with large redshifts of their light, which means they began emission not long after the Big Bang, about 4×10^9 years ago. A typical quasar is powered by a black hole of mass less than 10^9 solar masses. Explain, from the results of Query 12, what this says about the lifetime during which the typical quasar shines.



562 **Objection 3.** *We have talked about t and T global coordinates and*
 563 *different kinds of local times near a black hole: shell time, diver time,*
 564 *orbiter time. Is it possible for me to travel to a black hole and use it, in*
some way, to live longer than I can live here on Earth?"



566 As with many profound questions, the answer is both "Yes," and "No." With
 567 or without a black hole, you may live longer—on your wristwatch—between
 568 any two events than your twin—on her wristwatch—who takes a different
 569 worldline through spacetime between these two events (Twin "Paradox,"
 570 Section 1.6). However, you cannot escape the iron rule that *your aging is*
 571 *identical to the total time lapse on your wristwatch*, no matter where you
 572 travel or at what rates you move along the way. When your wristwatch says
 573 100 years after birth, you have aged 100 years. This is the total time lapse
 574 that you *experience*. In this sense, relativity does not provide a way for you
 to burst the bonds of human aging. Sorry!

8.7 ■ EXERCISES**1. Newtonian and relativistic equations of motion**

576 The general-relativistic equation of motion of a stone (20) looks drastically
 577 different from the corresponding Newtonian equation of motion (23). For
 578 example, E is squared in (20) but has the first power in (23). Show that in the
 579 limit of $r \gg M$ and slow motion of the stone in the local inertial frame, the
 580 two equations of motion, (20) and (23) become the same, provided that the
 581 symbol E has *different* definitions in the two equations.
 582

2. Shell time for one orbit

583 An observer in a circular orbit at a given map r -coordinate moves at speed
 584 v_{shell} past the shell observer. Equation (31) gives the value of this shell speed.
 585

Section 8.7 Exercises **8-21**

586 Query 9 gives the wristwatch time for one orbit. What is the shell time for one
587 orbit?

588 A. Show that this shell time for one orbit is

$$\frac{\Delta t_{\text{shell}}}{M} = \frac{2\pi r/M}{v_{\text{shell}}} = 2\pi \frac{r}{M} \left(\frac{r-2M}{M} \right)^{1/2} \quad (\text{one circular orbit}) \quad (41)$$

589 (*Hint:* Recall the definition in Section 3.3 of r —the “reduced
590 circumference”—as the measured circumference of a concentric shell
591 divided by 2π .)

592 B. Compare Δt_{shell} for one orbit in (41) with $\Delta \tau_{\text{shell}}$ for one orbit from
593 (37). Which is longer at a given r -value? Give a simple explanation.

594 C. What is the map angular momentum L of the orbiter, written as r
595 times an expression involving v_{shell} ? (The answer is *not* $mr v_{\text{shell}}$.)

596 D. The text leading up to Definition 4 in Section 8.5 shows that the
597 smallest r -coordinate for a stable circular orbit is $r = 6M$; equation (31)
598 determines that in this orbit the orbiter’s shell speed $v_{\text{shell}} = 0.5$, half
599 the speed of light. Assume the central attractor to be Black Hole Alpha,
600 with $M = 5000$ meters. The following equation gives, to one significant
601 digit, the values of some measurable quantities for the innermost stable
602 circular orbit. Find these values to three significant digits.

$$\Delta t_{\text{shell}} \approx 4 \times 10^5 \text{ meters} \quad (\text{shell time for one orbit}) \quad (42)$$

$$\Delta \tau_{\text{orbiter}} \approx 3 \times 10^5 \text{ meters} \quad (\text{wristwatch time for one orbit})$$

$$L/m \approx 2 \times 10^4 \text{ meters}$$

603 E. The orbiter of Item D completes one circuit of the black hole in
604 approximately one millisecond on her wristwatch. If you ignore tidal
605 effects, does this extremely fast rotation produce *physical discomfort* for
606 the orbiter? If she closes her eyes, does she get dizzy as she orbits?

607 3. When are Newton’s Circular Orbits Almost Correct?

608 Your analysis of the Global Positioning System (GPS) in Chapter 4 calculated
609 values of r -coordinate and orbital speed of a GPS satellite in circular orbit
610 using Newton’s mechanics, with the prediction that the general relativistic
611 analysis gives essentially the same values of r -coordinate and speed for this
612 application. Under what circumstances are circular orbits predicted by Newton
613 indistinguishable from circular orbits predicted by Einstein? Answer this
614 question using the following outline or some other method.

615 A. Find Newton’s expression similar to equation (26) for the r -coordinate
616 of a stable circular orbit, starting with equation (23).

8-22 Chapter 8 Circular Orbits

- 617 B. Recast equation (26) for the general-relativistic prediction of r for
618 stable orbits in the form

$$r = r_{\text{Newt}}(1 - \epsilon) \quad (43)$$

619 where r_{Newt} is the r -coordinate of the orbit predicted by Newton and ϵ
620 is the small fractional deviation of the orbit from Newton's prediction.
621 This expression neglects differences between the Newtonian and
622 relativistic values of L when expressed in the same units. Use the
623 approximation inside the front cover to derive a simple algebraic
624 expression for ϵ as a function of r_{Newt} .

- 625 C. Set your expression for ϵ equal to 0.001 as a criterion for good-enough
626 equality of the r -coordinate according to both Newton and Einstein.
627 Find an expression for r_{min} , the smallest value of the r -coordinate for
628 which this approximation is valid.
- 629 D. Find a numerical value for r_{min} in meters for our Sun. Compare the
630 value of r_{min} with the r -coordinate of the Sun's surface.
- 631 E. What is the value of ϵ for the r -coordinate of the orbit of the planet
632 Mercury, whose orbit has an average r -coordinate 0.387 times that of
633 Earth?
- 634 F. What is the value of ϵ for the r -coordinate of a 12-hour orbit of GPS
635 satellites around Earth?

4. Map ΔT for one orbit

636 Convert lapse of wristwatch time $\Delta\tau$ for one circular orbit from (37) to lapse
637 ΔT for one circular orbit using the following outline or some other method:
638

- 639 A. Show that for a circular orbit, equation (13) becomes:

$$\frac{\Delta T}{\Delta\tau}(\text{one orbit}) = \frac{E}{m} \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-1} = \frac{E}{m} \frac{r}{r - 2M} \quad (44)$$

- 640 B. Into this equation, substitute for E/m from (32) to obtain

$$\frac{\Delta T}{\Delta\tau}(\text{one orbit}) = \left(\frac{r}{r - 3M}\right)^{1/2} \quad (45)$$

- 641 C. Use this result plus (37) to show that

$$\Delta T(\text{one orbit}) = \Delta\tau \frac{\Delta T}{\Delta\tau} = 2\pi \frac{r^{3/2}}{M^{1/2}} \quad (46)$$

642 Does any observer measure this lapse Δt for one orbit?

5. Kepler's Laws of Planetary Motion

Section 8.7 Exercises **8-23**

644 Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) provided a milestone in the history of astronomy:
 645 his **Three Laws of Planetary Motion**, deduced from a huge stack of
 646 planetary observations made by his mentor Tycho Brahe (1546-1601) and
 647 expressed in our notation.

- 648 1. A planet orbits around the Sun in an elliptical orbit with the
 649 Sun at one focus of the ellipse.
- 650 2. The r -coordinate vector from the Sun to the planet sweeps out
 651 equal areas in equal lapses of T -coordinate.
- 652 3. The square of the period of the planet is proportional to the
 653 cube of the planet's mean r -coordinate from the Sun.

- 654 A. Show by a simple symmetry argument that Kepler's Second Law
 655 describes circular orbits around a black hole.
- 656 B. From equation (46) show that Kepler's Third Law is also valid for
 657 *circular* orbits around a black hole (when expressed in global rain
 658 coordinates).
- 659 C. Kepler's Third Law is sometimes called the **1-2-3 Law** from the
 660 exponents in the following equation. Use equation (46) to show that for
 661 circular orbits, in our regular notation using meters,

$$M \equiv M^1 = \omega^2 r^3 \quad (47)$$

662 where $\omega \equiv 2\pi/\Delta T$, with ΔT for one orbit.

663 **Comment 8. Is Kepler's First Law Valid?**

664 Figure 4 in Section 9.3 shows that Kepler's First Law is definitely *not* valid for
 665 non-circular orbits near a non-spinning black hole. Chapter 11 shows that the
 666 orbit of the planet Mercury differs *slightly* from the planetary orbit analyzed by
 667 Newton. The predicted value of this deviation of Mercury's orbit was an early
 668 validation of Einstein's general relativity.

669 **6. Longest Life Inside the event Horizon**

670 Objection 12 in Section 7.8 asked, "Can I increase my lifetime inside the
 671 event horizon by blasting rockets in either ϕ direction to add a ϕ -component
 672 to my global velocity?" You are now able to answer this question using your
 673 new knowledge of map angular momentum. Suppose that you ride on a stone
 674 that moves between the event horizon and the singularity.

- 675 A. What equation in the present chapter leads to the following expression
 676 for your wristwatch lifetime inside the horizon?

$$\tau [2M \rightarrow 0] = \int_0^{2M} \left[\left(\frac{E}{m} \right)^2 + \left(\frac{2M}{r} - 1 \right) \left(1 + \frac{L^2}{m^2 r^2} \right) \right]^{-1/2} dr \quad (48)$$

8-24 Chapter 8 Circular Orbits

- 677 Note, first, that the square-bracket expression on the right side of (48)
 678 is in the denominator of the integrand. Second, note that this equation
 679 describes any motion of the observer whatsoever, free-fall or not.
 680 Free-fall motion has constant E and L . For motion that is not free-fall,
 681 the value of E or L (or both) can change along the worldline of the
 682 stone.
- 683 B. Can any non-zero value of L along your worldline increase your
 684 wristwatch lifetime inside the event horizon?
- 685 C. What value of E gives you the maximum wristwatch lifetime inside the
 686 event horizon?
- 687 D. By what practical maneuvers can you achieve the value of E
 688 determined in Item C?
- 689 E. Show that the maximum value of wristwatch time from the event
 690 horizon to the singularity is πM meters. *Hint:* Make the substitution
 691 $(r/2M)^{1/2} = \sin \theta$.
- 692 F. Chapter 7 found the mass of a “20-year black hole” for a raindrop. Find
 693 the numerical value of (*fraction*) in the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned} & (\text{mass of “20-year black hole” in Item E}) && (49) \\ & = (\textit{fraction}) \times (\text{mass of “20-year black hole” for a raindrop}) \end{aligned}$$

694 **7. Forward Time Travel Using a *Stable* Circular Orbit**

695 You are on a panel of experts asked to evaluate a proposal from the Space
 696 Administration to “travel forward in time” using the difference in rates
 697 between a clock in a stable circular orbit around a black hole and our clocks
 698 remote from the black hole. Give your advice about the feasibility of the
 699 scheme, based on the following analysis or one of your own.

- 700 A. Consider two sequential ticks of the clock of a satellite in a stable
 701 circular orbit around a black hole. Use a result of Exercise 1 to show
 702 that

$$\frac{\Delta\tau_{\text{orbiter}}}{\Delta T} = \left(\frac{r - 3M}{r} \right)^{1/2} \quad (50)$$

- 703 B. What is the value of the ratio $\Delta\tau_{\text{orbiter}}/\Delta T$ in the stable circular orbit
 704 of smallest r -coordinate, $r = 6M$?
- 705 C. What rocket speed in flat spacetime gives the same ratio of rocket clock
 706 time to “laboratory” time as the stable circular orbit of smallest
 707 r -coordinate?
- 708 D. Does the proposed time travel method require rocket fuel to put the
 709 rocket in orbit and to escape the black hole?

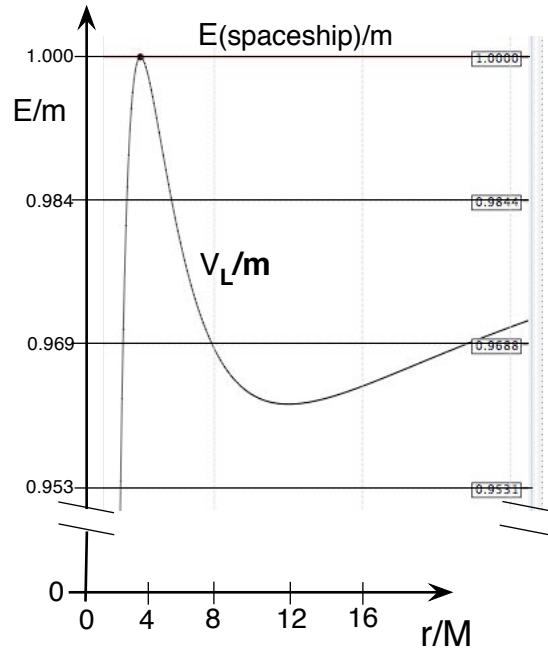


FIGURE 6 Insertion into a knife-edge orbit at $r = 4M$ with map energy $E/m \approx 1$, equal to that of a spaceship moving slowly at large r -coordinate in a direction chosen to give it the value of L/m required to establish the peak value for V_L/m .

- 710 E. Based on this analysis, do you recommend in favor of—or against—the
 711 Space Administration’s proposal for forward time travel using stable
 712 circular orbits around a black hole?

8-26 Chapter 8 Circular Orbits

713 **8. Forward Time Travel Using a Knife-Edge Circular Orbit**

714 Whatever your own vote on the forward time travel proposal of Exercise 6, the
 715 majority on your panel rejects the proposal because it requires extra rocket
 716 thrust for insertion into and extraction from the circular orbit at $r = 6M$. The
 717 Space Administration returns with a new proposal that uses a knife-edge
 718 circular orbit, assuming that an automatic device can fire small rockets to
 719 balance the satellite safely on the knife-edge of the effective potential. The
 720 Space Administration notes that such an orbit can be set up to require *very*
 721 *small* rocket burns, both for insertion into and extraction from a knife-edge
 722 circular orbit. As an example, they present Figure 6 for the case of
 723 nonrelativistic distant velocity, so that the map energy of the satellite is
 724 $E/m \approx 1$. While still far from the black hole, the spaceship captain uses
 725 rockets to achieve the value of L required so that $V_L(r)/m = E/m = 1$ on the
 726 peak shown in Figure 6. They boast that the time stretch factor is increased
 727 enormously by high satellite shell speed in the knife-edge orbit without the
 728 need for rocket burns to achieve that speed.

- 729 A. The condition shown in Figure 6 means that $V_L(r)/m = 1$ at the peak
 730 of the effective potential (18). This equation plus equation (26) are two
 731 equations in the two unknowns r and L . Solve them to find $r = 4M$
 732 and $L/m = 4M$. *Optional:* Describe in words how the commander of
 733 the spaceship sets the desired value of L while still far away, without
 734 changing the remote non-relativistic speed v_{far} .
- 735 B. What is the factor $d\tau/dt_{\text{shell}}$ for the spaceship in this orbit? What
 736 speed in flat spacetime gives the same time-stretch ratio?
- 737 C. Does the spaceship require a significant rocket burn to leave its
 738 knife-edge circular orbit and return to a remote position? What will be
 739 its shell speed at that distant location?

740 **9. “Free” data-collection orbit**

741 After its long interstellar trip, the spaceship approaches the black hole at
 742 relativistic speed, that is $E/m > 1$. The commander does not want to use a
 743 rocket burn to change spaceship map energy, but rather only its direction of
 744 motion (hence its map angular momentum) to enter a knife-edge circular orbit
 745 with the same map energy it already has.

- 746 A. Draw a figure similar to Figure 6 for this case.
- 747 B. Show that the astronauts can find a knife-edge circular orbit on which
 748 to perch, no matter how large the incoming far-away speed with respect
 749 to the black hole.

750 Once in an unstable circular orbit, small rocket thrusts keep the spaceship
 751 balanced at the peak of the effective potential. After they finish collecting

Section 8.7 Exercises **8-27**

752 data, the astronauts push-off outward and return toward home base at the
 753 same speed at which they approached, even if this speed is relativistic. In
 754 summary, once launched toward a black hole the explorers need little rocket
 755 power to go into an unstable circular orbit, to balance in that orbit while they
 756 study the black hole, then to return home. Further details in Chapter 9.

757 **10. Nandor Bokor disproves relativity.**

758 Nandor Bokor looks at Exercise 1 and shouts, “Aha, now I can disprove
 759 relativity!” Parts A through D below are steps in Nandor’s reasoning, not
 760 separate questions to be answered. Resolve Nandor’s disproof without
 761 criticizing him.

762 A. Nandor Bokor says, “Before I begin my disproof of relativity, recall that
 763 we have always had a choice about the shell frame. *First choice*: In
 764 order to be inertial, the local shell frame must be in free fall. In this
 765 case we drop the local shell frame from rest as we begin the experiment
 766 and must complete the experiment so quickly that the shell frame’s
 767 r -coordinate changes a negligible amount. *Second choice*: The local
 768 shell frame is at rest and therefore has a local gravitational
 769 acceleration. In that case we must complete our experiment or
 770 observation so quickly that local gravity does not affect the outcome.
 771 Usually our choice does not change the experimental result, but I am
 772 being super-careful here and will take the first choice, so that shell and
 773 orbiter frames are both inertial.

774 B. “Assume, then, that the shell frame is inertial,” Nandor continues.
 775 “Equation (42) says that during one revolution of the orbiter its
 776 measured time lapse is $\Delta t_{\text{orbiter}} \approx 3 \times 10^5$ meters, while the measured
 777 shell clock time lapse is $\Delta t_{\text{shell}} \approx 4 \times 10^5$ meters. Note that these are
 778 both observed readings—measurements—and they are *different*. When
 779 the orbiter returns after one orbit the two inertial frames—orbiter and
 780 shell—overlap again.

781 C. “Now we have two truly equivalent inertial reference frames that
 782 overlap twice so we can compare their clock readings directly. (This is
 783 different from special relativity, in which one of the two frames—in the
 784 Twin Paradox, Section 1.6—is not inertial during their entire
 785 separation.) In the present orbiting case, neither observer can tell which
 786 of the two inertial frames s/he is in from inside his or her inertial
 787 frame.”

788 D. Nandor concludes, “You tell me, Dude, which of the two equivalent
 789 inertial clocks—the orbiter’s frame clock or the shell observer’s frame
 790 clock—runs slow compared with the clock in the other frame. You
 791 can’t! Equation (42) claims a difference where no difference is possible.
 792 Good-bye relativity!”

8-28 Chapter 8 Circular Orbits

793 **11. Equations of motion in Schwarzschild global coordinates**

794 Start with the Schwarzschild metric, equation (5) in Section 3.1, and show that
 795 equations (11), are (15) are the same in both global coordinate systems, but
 796 (16) takes the simpler form:

$$\frac{dt}{d\tau} = \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-1} \frac{E}{m} \quad (\text{stone, Schwarzschild}) \quad (51)$$

797 **Comment 9. Why not Schwarzschild?**

798 Why don't we take advantage of the simpler equation (51) by using
 799 Schwarzschild coordinates to describe the motion of the free stone? Because we
 800 already know—equation (22) in Section 6.4—that neither light nor a stone moves
 801 inward through the event horizon in a finite lapse of the Schwarzschild
 802 t -coordinate. In theory, Schwarzschild coordinates would not cause a problem
 803 with circular orbits in the present chapter because these orbits exist only outside
 804 the event horizon—indeed, only in the region $r > 3M$. But Chapter 9 treats
 805 more general trajectories of a stone, some of which move inward across the
 806 event horizon.

807 **12. Life under the forbidden map energy region**

808 If we could find some way to travel from our normal upper, positive map
 809 energy region in Figure 5 to the lower, negative map energy region (which
 810 extends outward far from the black hole), could we live a normal life there?
 811 What does “normal life” mean? We reduce “normal life” to essentials: that the
 812 equations of motion for a stone are real! Limit attention to motion outside the
 813 event horizon:

- 814 A. Show that the first two equations of motion (11) and (15) are the same
 815 for E/m under the forbidden region as for E/m above the forbidden
 816 region.
- 817 B. Show that the third equation of motion (16) tells us that $dT/d\tau$ is
 818 negative under the forbidden region, so that global T runs backward
 819 along the worldline of the stone. But T is a unicorn, not a measured
 820 quantity, so the third equation of motion is also valid under the
 821 forbidden region.

822 *Where* are we when we are under the forbidden map energy region in Figure
 823 5? This is our first hint that our everyday lives may not have access to all
 824 regions of spacetime. Alice had it right: Wonderland—and black
 825 holes—become “curiouser and curiouser.”

8.8 ■ REFERENCES

- 827 Initial Emily Dickinson poem from R. W. Franklin, *The Poems of Emily*
 828 *Dickinson, Variorum Edition* 1998, The Belknap Press of Harvard

Section 8.8 References **8-29**

829 University. This poem is variation E of the poem with Franklin number
830 1570, written about 1882. Reprinted and modified with permission of
831 Harvard University.

832 GRorbits interactive software program that displays orbits of a stone and light
833 flash is available at <http://stuleja.org/grorbits/>

834 Last sentence of the final exercise: *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, first
835 sentence of Chapter 2.

836 Download File Name: Ch08CircularOrbits170511v1.pdf