

University of Groningen

M-theory and gauged supergravities

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The king received a message that a sea captain had landed on the coast with a strange animal called an elephant. So he called his wise men and said: "Oh wise men, go down to the seaport and report to me what manner of beast this elephant is." The wise men got into the king's carriages, clip-clop, clip-clop, clip-clop, and they went to the ship. But they'd been reading books so damn long they were blind as bats. When they got there, one felt the legs of the elephant. He said, "hmm." Another one felt the side. He said, "hmmm." Another one felt the ear, "hmmmm." Another one felt the tusk, another one felt the trunk, another one pulled the tail - bad luck for him.

Well, they all got into the carriages and went back to the palace. They bowed low and one said, "Your Majesty, this elephant is very much like the trunk of a tree." Another one said, "Why, you're very much mistaken. I felt it myself. It's like the side of a building." The third started screaming, "Why you're both crazy! I felt it - it's like a large leaf of a plant." The next one said, "No, it's like a smooth spear," another one said, "No, it's like a huge snake!" Now they were all shouting, and the last one screamed at the top of his lungs, "No, it's like a rope that hangs down from heaven, and when you pull on it, the heavens open up with waste."

Adaptation by Pete Seeger of the parable of *The Blind Men and the Elephant* -
an animated rendering of the concept of duality.

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