

Extragalactic astronomy

What secrets lurk in the





brightest galaxies?

ACTIVE GALAXIES

viewed head-on appear as blazars, while those viewed edge-on are called Seyfert galaxies.

ASTRONOMY: ROEN KELLY

Violent, erratic behavior powers jets within blazars, the most manic galaxies.

/// BY BRUCE DORMINEY

Supermassive black holes — possibly millions to billions of times more massive than our Sun — could power active galactic nuclei (AGN) near the fringes of the observable universe. There — where the cosmos is only 10- to 20-percent as old as the total universe — astronomers see brilliant blue quasars and radio-emitting blazars sprinkled among galaxies.

AGN are galaxies with compact, active central cores that emit considerably more energy than do the galaxy's stars, gas, and dust. AGN come in three main types: Seyfert galaxies, quasars, and blazars.

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