Science, Unification Thought and a Post-Materialist Era

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Science, even physics, has in recent years moved much closer to Unification Thought, which certainly places life, especially human life, as the center of the universe.

The over-specialization of the past meant that an astronomer well-versed in planetary astronomy may know almost nothing about the research of the early universe astronomer in the office next door. However a concerted effort to encourage interdisciplinary research over the last two decades has brought about a newly-integrated understanding within science, a much more comprehensive picture that incorporates many diverse fields.

As a result of the rapid pace of discoveries in biology in particular, the importance of life and the recognition of much more about the mechanisms of evolution have changed our thinking of the role of life and consciousness.

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Books such as *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe* by Robert Lanza have been transformational, especially in allowing the average academic to feel more confident in publishing on controversial topics. Philosophy is experiencing an upsurge with the popularity of panpsychism, and old philosophers long overlooked have experienced a revival in popularity, as the themes of their writings have become the themes of today's science.

In early December, a conference entitled "The Primacy of Consciousness" was convened under a partnership between the Galileo Commission, the Academy for the Advancement of Postmaterialist Science, the Institute of Noetic Sciences, and the Scientific and Medical Network in the UK. Scientists and thinkers of all varieties gathered virtually to discuss consciousness from their own perspectives as physicists, biologists, psychologists, etc. There was a strong feeling among the 700 participants that we are finally witnessing the breakthrough to a new paradigm.

The very basis of Unification Thought is precisely the new paradigm toward which science is moving.

Current physics describes the universe as consisting of inert particles of matter, following universal laws. Physics within consciousness ascribes meaning and purpose to the particles themselves, regarding the laws of physics as having been brought into being over time by the habit-producing choices of particles and organisms. This clearly allows for the human to be a co-creator, to have actual free will within the created universe, in accordance with Unification Thought.

Since the 1990s, there have been many scientists whose patience with the endless strings of String Theory, and the highly complex mathematics required by a physics that seemed impervious to observations, has reached its limit. Twenty-first century physics is starting to seriously question its foundational assumptions.

Groups of scientists began the Fundamental Questions Institute, the Perimeter Institute, and others, and the Internet has allowed for research papers with themes that would never have made it into the prestigious journals of the day. In defiance of the unspoken edict that a scientist must do everything possible to exclude the idea of purpose or design from models of reality, underground stealth interviews have demonstrated that a large percentage of scientists are in fact surreptitiously religious in their personal views.

The 19th century showcased the doctrine of evolution as the way out of needing a God. The 20th century also saw a powerful attempt on the part of the Positivist movement to limit all knowledge to that which could be obtained via sense perception only, thereby specifically excluding any possibility of meaning within the universe.

A Unificationist would not reject all 20th century physics. In quantum physics for instance the projection of the atom from a potential state into a real state would appear to require human consciousness in some sense, but an intentional cocreation would be a step further than quantum physics was willing to contemplate. Quantum physics has not yet come up with (or even sought) a mechanism by which the material world might be connected causally to the intent of the conscious mind, and yet that is a concept that would not be antithetical to Unification Thought.

Special Relativity was based on the observed fact that the speed of light in a vacuum was always the same, independent of the speed of the emitting source of that light, and also on the concept of the independence of the laws of physics from the frame of reference of the observer. At that time, there was a strong reaction from philosophers and physicists alike. Much of the reaction focused on the nature of time in Einstein's universe, and its complete divorce from the actual human experience of time, the existence of the now, the experience of flux. Special Relativity rejected the concept of absolute time, the sort of time that one might read off the clock in "God's office," permeating the whole universe simultaneously, which Newton had embraced.

It led to the "twin paradox," today a staple of science fiction and movies like "Interstellar." Clearly the thought that an astronaut who goes off traveling close to the speed of light will find his twin aged by 50 years when he returns two years later is a challenging concept, and there was much resistance to its acceptance at the time.

To a Unificationist, this concept remains highly challenging, since it puts into direct contradiction two human values, the desire to travel and explore a universe which is there just calling to us, and the desire to experience loving relationships with one's family and community. It is not conducive to love of family to have to simply miss most of a lifetime with family members should one want to indulge in space travel.

Einstein defined a method of measuring time (epistemology) by synchronizing clocks locally, subject to certain equations of transformation (known as Lorentz equations), and then proceeded to draw (ontological) conclusions. This quantity delivers different opinions, for instance on whether two events are simultaneous, a major point of contention for the French philosopher Henri Bergson, who felt that a model that dismissed human experience could in no way be complete, and that is the essence of the current objections to today's physics: the exclusion of the human experience as meaningful.

Special Relativity is concerned with what can be measured. The Positivist movement centered on Vienna early last century was insistent on confining reality to that which can be experienced, intentionally and specifically excluding anything else as being meaningless metaphysical speculation. Einstein had become an unwitting hero of the Positivists by basing his theory on a quantity he called "t," defined epistemologically by a measurement technique. Metaphysical speculation was thereby excluded. However, later in response to a query about why he didn't like the epistemological approach, Einstein replied, "Perhaps I did use such philosophy earlier, and also wrote it, but it is nonsense all the same." Einstein was not one to confine himself by people's expectations of consistency!

The 20th century had seen axioms and proofs, the techniques of Euclidean geometry, take the place of scientific intuition, certainly in tandem with the positivist orientation. Einstein himself had in fact accomplished what some called the "geometrization of space and time." In General Relativity all of reality exists at once, free will and choice are an illusion. We don't affect the universe at all, we simply experience the pre-determined reality around us, passing through reality instead of affecting, let alone co-creating, it. General Relativity, like Newtonian physics, is a deterministic theory.

The mystery of consciousness and mystery of existence are deeply connected, and today there are a number of respected physicists and philosophers who take this possibility seriously. This documentary explores the possible connection between these two great mysteries.(Courtesy metaRising channel)

Kurt Godel, who himself frequented cafes with the Vienna Circle positivists, actually proved that intuitive concepts like time cannot be defined by formal methods. Just to make very sure his conclusions could not be rejected, he used precisely the methods of formal proof that the positivists so extolled. His motivation was to distinguish between "proof" and "truth." Proof is determined within a system of axioms, but a universe so defined could have no room for meaning or an intuitive sense of truth, and Godel was absolutely sure of the existence of truth itself. It later emerged from his unpublished papers that he believed in idealism, in spirit, in God, although he did not write of this publicly during his lifetime.

After the Second World War, Godel and Einstein could be seen walking together every day through the streets of Princeton, NJ, where both were fellows of the Institute of Advanced Study, and despite Einstein's achievements in physics, which in many ways rested on a base unacceptable to Godel, they seemed to have greatly enjoyed each other's company. As a birthday present to Einstein, Godel published a paper detailing a solution to Einstein's equations that explicitly allowed for the existence of paths enabling the space traveler to reach an effect before its cause, again a huge challenge to the theory, but received with interest by Einstein.

Meanwhile a process approach, primarily that of Alfred North Whitehead, which emphasizes meaning and purpose, had essentially been excluded from consideration for much of the 20th century. Physicists had decided that philosophy was essentially unnecessary for science at some point early last century, to some degree in response to clashes between the philosopher Bergson and Einstein over the notions of time and simultaneity.

Where Bergson argued that time could not be understood solely within the quantitative, scientific perspective, Whitehead's science and philosophy is enjoying an unprecedented revival today among post-materialist scientists because of his emphasis on the intrinsic value and experience of the organism, as opposed to matter as inert meaningless particles, a similar theme.

Whitehead's Process Thought restores to science the focus on the emergence and intrinsic value of the organism, with the actual experience of the human as primary. In Whitehead's thought, everything moves toward those characteristics that give rise to a greater capacity to exist and relate, perception, awareness, reproduction, sentience, volition, growth, etc., providing the stable foundation upon which a greater joy can be experienced.

Over time, organisms evolve through the choices they make on the basis of what comes before, immediately presented via the consciousness within which all organisms have their being. The most likely choice for the lower organisms is to continue on with the prevailing pattern, but there exists also within all beings the inherent drive towards the manifestation of meaning, and towards the characteristics of life.

Physics within consciousness then sees the evolution of structure in the early universe as akin to the establishment of mycorrhizal networks of fungi, which are underground networks connecting individual plants in a vast "super-organism." In fact, many astronomers have noted the similarity of the large scale structure of the universe to the network of nerves and synapses in a brain, and the emergence of structure can be likened to the emergence of the brain of an infant, gradually forming a neural network as the infant experiences growth.

Unification Thought regards purpose based on heart as the organizing factor that determines the choices for the nature of reality. Specifically, the purpose of the universe is joy, since God is a God of heart and love, and every choice for the design of the universe is to facilitate the experience of joy, both for God and for humanity. Within Process Thought, God is seen as changing and growing along with the universe. Whitehead agrees that everything has both a mental and physical pole, just as stated in the Principle of Creation. However, Whitehead by no means rejected science; in fact he created his own version of Relativity based on his Process Thought, which was very similar to Einstein's.

There is no thought that the scientific knowledge of today is irrelevant and wrong, but it certainly lacks a cohesive philosophical base, which has led to such a plethora of potential models with no way to distinguish between them. With a philosophical basis more aligned with the true purpose of the universe we may be able to make more sense of our multitudinous models and the infinite multiverse that current astronomers are offering us.

Given that astrophysicists now realize they have been studying a mere 4% of the universe until now, the remaining 96% consisting of still-unidentified Dark Matter and Dark Energy, we can say with confidence this is a time of general recognition we are in a paradigm change. And it seems to be finally going towards a science that can recognize the value and role of the human, and for many people, the existence of some kind of afterlife realm, which has no problem finding a location in a science that has parallel universes and higher dimensions.

This is absolutely the time when science and Unification Thought should be developed and shown to be the visionary philosophy it undoubtedly is.

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