

Unification Thoughts: A Universe With Purpose?

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Following an incredibly fertile seventeenth century, in which Newton, Leibniz and others originated a mechanistic model of the universe, science quite rapidly gave rise to an understanding of the universe that really didn't require a creator at all. Maybe the Creator might have started the whole thing off, but after that there was little need for any input beyond the laws of science. Laplace 'had no need of that hypothesis', while eventually even evolution itself, the one place where people still did expect God to have had a hand in designing an intended end, expelled divine input in favor of random mutation, natural selection and survival of the fittest.

Physicists have been working from the assumption that everything can be explained with the laws, or equations, playing the role of purpose to the extent that such may be needed, which is why they have spent three centuries or so looking for the equation that unifies all of physics, and makes everything else inevitable. Matter was seen as inert, or purposeless, supplying nothing in terms of a goal, except for following random paths that caused collisions with each other, resulting in forces that over time shaped the universe. Gravity was at the bottom of everything until, of course, James Clerk Maxwell enunciated a powerful explanation of the equations describing electromagnetism.

All that changed when quantum physics and general relativity came on the scene in the first half of the twentieth century - except that most physicists gave up on twisting their brains around a theory that said you had to look at a particle, measure it, before it actually existed in any recognizably physical state. Most objects exist somewhere, have a speed, momentum, etc., but apparently when you look at the very small, that's not the case. So physics turned to the equations, because they trusted them. Equations gave the right answers, at least.

So everything seemed fine for a while. The universe was discovered to be way bigger than anyone suspected, not to mention that after an initial explosion, all the matter in the universe was found to be moving outwards, even moving outwards at speeds that exceeded that of light. The great telescopes that had been moved beyond the atmosphere into orbit seemed mostly to confirm our models, not refute them.

Difficulties really started piling up after around the eighties. The two pesky models of the very large (relativity) and the very small (quantum) just wouldn't work together! No matter how much incredible math was brought to bear on trying to find a unifying perspective on the two, Quantum Gravity, as it was called, failed to materialize. All the other forces had yielded to the mathematical physicists' goal of a unifying explanation, but several decades of the best physicists' efforts couldn't bring together gravity and the quantum.

Some people were asking questions that led to the 'fine tuning' paradox: how could the universe be so perfectly designed for life, if there was no purpose behind it, no design? No Designer?

But the resistance to change is big! Physicists did not want to let go of their models, just as Ptolemy, 2,000 years ago, had worked out a system of 'epicycles' to explain why the orbits of the planets didn't fit the simple expected circular paths predicted by the fixation on circular motion centered on the earth. So, when it was discovered that galaxies rotated in such a fashion as to actually disobey the laws of gravity as

we know them, rather than admit that we might have to look for some radical change, they proposed that the laws are fine; it's just that most of the matter is in an invisible form. The Dark Matter Problem was born. On top of that, it turned out that the universe was not only expanding, but accelerating in the rate of expansion. That's impossible without a force, according to Newtonian physics, but again the suggestion of a 'Dark Energy' filling all of space was proposed to avoid a deeper change. Deeper changes required philosophical thought, and physics had largely rejected that back in the quantum days in favor of the math.

The challenges continued piling up. String Theory, which started with so much promise, resulted in an almost infinite landscape of models for a universe, making it basically useless, since it gave no way to choose between them. The 'Hubble Constant', a measure of the age of the universe, had been found to a greater and greater accuracy, which astronomers could celebrate - except that one way of measuring it gave one result, and another way of measuring it gave a different, incompatible, result.

Most recently data from the James Webb Telescope, in orbit for a couple of years now, has given us even greater challenges. Apparently galaxies have existed in quite sophisticated form, even much earlier in the universe's history than a model that leaves it all to gravity can accept. What should we do, throw out gravity as we know it?

Meanwhile, actually over a period of several decades, a new perspective has been growing, that the universe exists within Original Consciousness. Initially rejected out of hand by the vast majority of physicists, today the piling up of problematic data has caused at least a substantial minority to seriously consider it. In the field of biology, even more scientists are investigating this approach.

This radical proposal clearly opens up the possibility of a Creator since, after all, an Original Consciousness seems like it could well be a Being with intention and purpose. Consciousness is what we might think of as mind, after all. The Scientific and Medical Network, a British association of open-minded people with interest in science, has been creating materials explaining how the universe could be created within consciousness over a period of years. Most of the people involved refer to Source rather than God, due to the unfortunate reputation of the Judeo-Christian God that has emerged in some western circles over the last century or so, but generally there is agreement that a Creator is needed.

Unification Thought has no problem with the idea that creation results from, or within, the mind of God, as we see from the four position foundation describing the logos and leading to pre-energy and pre-matter. But what is most importantly emphasized in Unification Thought is the heart of God, whereas the scientific aspects of the consciousness model tend to leave this out. Therefore purpose is less emphasized in scientific models including consciousness, which is where Unification Thought can contribute to the debate.

Biologists meanwhile have made very serious, credible progress in uncovering the teleological aspects within evolution. Michael Levin's YouTube 'Nothing in biology makes sense without teleology' explains the discoveries that have led biologists to radically alter their perspective on this, given how Darwin's models precisely disputed the whole idea of teleology (intrinsic purpose) in biological organisms.

Physics is showing interest in this, at least at the edges, and attempting to integrate an array of models of consciousness and purpose into its models. Basically, to re-integrate God. So far, the actual evidence itself seems to be driving this radical step. If this turn continues, we are entering a radically different scientific era, one much more friendly to spirit.