

Re: Big Bang Baloney....or scientific cult?

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"Ralph Hertle" <ralph.hertle@verizon.net> wrote in message
news:40FEA352.8010208@verizon.net...

> *Bill:*

>

> *Bill Hobba wrote:*

>

> *[blip]*

>> *Not another philosophy dude posturing meaningless gibberish as physics.*

>> *'That is, that the universe is a continuing plurality of existents' may
mean*

>> *something to the poster but to a mere mortal like me who studied
mathematics*

>> *it makes no sense. Would it be possible to get an explanation in
ordinary*

>> *English with easy to understand examples not couched in philosophy
double*

>> *speak? Real philosophers like <http://www.friesian.com> are able to
explain*

>> *their ideas in language non philosophers can understand – I see no
reason*

>> *others can not.*

>>

> *[blip]*

>

>

>

> *Philosophy is a type of hobby for me. I do not say that philosophy is*

> *physics.*

Thank heaven for that – we get people on sci.physics.relativity who confuse
the two badly.

>

> *The widest concepts of existence are dealt with by philosophy,*

> *especially within the classifications of metaphysics and epistemology.*

Yes. To do physics you only need a very simple philosophy saying things

sci.physics.relativity: Re: Big Bang Baloney....or scientific cult?

like time is what clocks read or space not endowed with a coordinate system is not much use etc. Such is not satisfying to a philosopher but all you need to do physics.

>

- > *Physics deals with broad concepts as well, for example, in the*
- > *sub–science of cosmology. Metaphysics and cosmology should have common*
- > *terminology, or at least a common set of definitions and proofs of*
- > *definitions.*

Please see what I wrote above.

- > *However, I suspect that due to the rejection of reason in*
- > *some areas of physics, for example, due to the advent of Post Modernism,*
- > *and the rejection of formal logic*

Hold it right there. A philosopher I am not, and have trained myself in physics, but I have formal training to masters level in mathematics and can assure you neither mathematics nor physics has rejected formal logic – being part of mathematics it a discipline that is alive and well and producing very profound results eg the discovery of non standard analysis.

- > *and genus and differentia definitions,*
- > *that quite rational concepts such as something and nothing, existant and*
- > *non–existant, or physical being and empty vacuum, have become quite*
- > *incomprehensible.*

Physics does not deal with concepts such as physical existence or non existence – they are concepts that lie well in the domanin of philosophy. All science has is a collection of theories (hypothesis) and experimental results that either support or refute it – that is all.

- > *For example, the empty vacuum of space is now*
- > *considered to be gravitationally energetic – even though there is no*
- > *physical being in that space.*

What do you mean by physical being? What your possibly talking about is the cosmological constant problem; a good account of which can be found here <http://ice.hut.fi/Volovik/book.pdf> as well as many other interesting ideas along the lines of what we consider as empty space may not be that empty after all. Now as the link says these ideas are not the mainstream (and I am not a supporter of them) but the scientist involved is a genuine well respected researcher – I just gave the link to show how scientists think about such things. The ideas that space we think of as empty may not be all that empty (and not in the sense of the 19th century aether either – which is a crock of crap IMHO) is hardly a mind blowing or difficult philosophical concept to grasp.

- > *Modern philosophy has corrupted some of*
- > *modern physics. Even Newton's concepts are being trashed.*
- >

Re: Big Bang Baloney....or scientific cult?

Of course – he assumed absolute time which we now know does not exist – it is not compatible with the idea of locality and experiment shows locality is obeyed by nature rather than absolute time. For an account of what is really happening in Special Relativity and why Newton's ideas needed revision see <http://arxiv.org/abs/physics/0110076>.

> *The Nihilists are going to work on Einstein with what appears to be the same zeal.*

I am unaware of what your referring to.

> *The*
> *gibberish to which you refer may be dangerous for rational comprehension*
> *of the facts, and, indeed, the attack of many many of the modern*
> *philosophers, generally of the Kantian persuasion, is upon the existing*
> *nature of the universe and upon the validity of human reason and*
> *knowledge. Do not believe everything that you read – neither of*
> *philosophy or physics.*

I trust sources by reputable physicists like Weinberg, Lev Landau, Richard Feynman and my ability to reason. If you stick to reputable sources and post to sci.physics.relativity what you do not understand you will begin to understand modern physics as well.

>
> *On this NG, and also on HPO, humanities.philosophy.objectivism, I have*
> *discussed this and related issues with numerous posts. There you will*
> *find considerable writings and explanations.*
>
> *You wished a clarification for my definition of the universe, which in*
> *the short form of the definition is:*
>
> *the universe is a continuing plurality of existents.*
>
> *A limited explanation of the context of each term of the definition*
follows:
>
> *The*
>
> *[grammatical article]*
>
> *universe*
>
> *[the concept being defined]*
>
> *is*
>
> *[the term stating the type of identity for the definition,*
> *i.e., trees are plants.]*
>
> *a*

- > *[grammatical article]*
- >
- > *continuing*
- >
- > *[adjective for term, 'plurality' –*
- > *'continuing' meaning being, existing, or functioning, without*
- > *origin or end]*
- >
- > *plurality*
- >
- > *[the differentia of the definition (in terms of*
- > *Aristotle's system of definitions, and that is*
- > *universally used in science). Meaning that a plurality*
- > *is a number of units or entities, is several, is not a*
- > *single unit, is many entities, and that the several*
- > *constituent members of the group are taken together*
- > *and are considered as all members of a single mental*
- > *unit. A plurality qua number means all or everything*
- > *in the greater class of objects. A plurality is a*
- > *plural concept, as is the concept of the universe.]*
- >
- > *of*
- > *[grammatical preposition]*
- >
- > *existents*
- >
- > *[the genus of the definition (in terms of*
- > *Aristotle's system of definitions) is a being*
- > *(existent), or beings (existents), that in*
- > *a metaphysical context is that which is, having*
- > *substance (i.e., entity Mars), or that, in an*
- > *epistemological context is that which has no*
- > *part and that identifies certain methods of*
- > *identification of properties and relationships*
- > *(i.e., concepts: mathematics, formula, or triangle]*
- >
- > *There is no single physical (or in philosophy, metaphysical) entity that*
- > *is the universe.*

Ok. The thing though is this. Science is not concerned with such things. All it has is a collection of theories and its relationship to observation (experiments). When it uses words like universe etc it does not mean it in the philosophical sense you use it above – what it means is always very obvious from context. For example take the big bang theory of the origin of the universe. In that context it refers to the origin of the physical things we see around us and what science shows they are composed of eg atoms, quarks, electrons etc ie everyday common sense meaning not a detailed philosophical one. This issue is examined here <http://www.friesian.com/feynman.htm>. Basically science is not concerned with examining issues at the level you wish. Such is not satisfying to a philosopher like yourself but it is not what science is about. I also

humbly suggest before passing comment on scientific issues you make an effort to understand it at sciences 'simplistic' conceptual level before relating it to your philosophical ideas. I believe by doing that you will gain a much better appreciation for what is really happening. If you really want to understand what modern science is saying about the world there is one current philosopher I do like – he is Victor Stenger (it happens he is also a physicist). His ideas are can be found here:

<http://www.colorado.edu/philosophy/vstenger/>.

- > *The universe is a multitude of existing things. These*
- > *things, that is everything, continue to exist even though their parts*
- > *and relationships may be undergoing changes, What all existents are may*
- > *be changing, however, that they are, taken together, is constant in the*
- > *being of each existent.*

The question a scientist needs to ask is exactly what experimental consequence do the above ideas have? And non trivial ones either such a we see a world around us or some such. But predictions at variance with current heronries. You see science is test, hypothesize, test, hypothesize over and over and unless you hypothesis are testable in some way then you not really doing violence and should not be posting to science forums.

- >
- > *Philosophy, although it is a science (at least Objectivism is a*
- > *science), is not Physics.*
- >

Are you referring to Ayn Rands Objectivism? I read a lot in my youth on her and to be quite frank, while greatly admiring her stand against the looney left of her time, think she was a hypocrite. However having said that she raises and examines issues from a perspective that should be more widely understood IMHO. But what she writes is not really science; it is not based on scientific methodology.

- >
- > *Freis is a Kantian; and Kant has nothing in common with Objectivism, the*
- > *philosophy of Ayn Rand. Kant's philosophy is based on Plato, and Ayn*
- > *Rand's Objectivism is strongly based on Aristotle.*

I had not read the above when I wrote what I said above. I do not necessarily agree with the authors views of the link I gave on philosophy – it is simply a link to a philosopher that speaks in what I consider understandable language. While often pungent Ayn Rand also did the same. That it the point I was making – in philosophy one does not need to dress up ones ideas in language difficult to understand.

- >
- > *Platonism and Aristotelianism are on the fundamental concepts, opposites.*
- >

I am afraid the issue is not quite that clear cut. For example Plato believed in a world of shadow revealed to us by the world of reason. Many people, including myself (and great scientists and mathematicians eg Roger Penrose) get the feeling that the mathematics of our physical theories are expressed in are somehow smarter than the mathematicians, and is more descriptive of the essence of how the world works than what we see around us. This is examined here – <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~matc/MathDrama/reading/Wigner.html>. Because of that many scientists (not all) side to a variant of Platoes ideas. The interesting part of this is mathematics is strongly related to logic (indeed Bertrand Russell said they were really one in the same) and logic was founded by Aristotle. So in one sense Aristotle's ideas lead to something along the lines of Plato – rather ironic.

- >
- > *Kant holds, along with Plato, that knowledge is impossible.*
- >

IMHO Kant was plain wrong – at least in his ideas about Euclidian geometry being a priori – he was refuted by the discoveries of and specific refutations given by Gauss, Riemann, Hilbert and others. Which is an example of something I believe in – scientists do and make progress, philosophers play word games and get nowhere.

- > *Ayn Rand,*
- > *however, along with Aristotle, holds that knowledge is knowable by*
- > *means of the acquisition of sense perception data and the use of*
- > *reason and logic, and that these, as integrated by the mind, result in*
- > *concepts that verifiably identify the facts of the universe.*

I believe in the above as well. But Ayn Rand held other ideas as such that government protection drives out the good protection of the free market – ideas that experience has shown are not always true. And that was one of Ayn Rands problems – she held a strong philosophical basis for her ideas even in the face of evidence to the contrary. And her personnel life as a reflection of her philosophy does not flatter her at all – hypocrisy is a word that readily comes to mind here. However science holds a different view – we should not approach problems with a preconceived philosophical bias eg capitalism is always good socialism is always bad. We should examine issues on their merit, decide on the best course of action, and be prepared to change or abandon our ideas should experience show they are wrong. That is the lesson of science. Conformity with observation is all that counts.

- > *That my definition "makes no sense"? No doubt. Once you modify your*
- > *life's philosophy by means of the acceptance of Kant's ideas, the rest*
- > *of the world will seem to you to be truly incomprehensible.*

As I alluded to above the scientists that developed the mathematics on which relativity is based mercilessly attacked Kant so your inference his ideas are at the basis of modern science would seem without foundation.

sci.physics.relativity: Re: Big Bang Baloney....or scientific cult?

Thanks
Bill