

Re: Painful but inevitable resignation

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On 11/19/2004 7:06 PM, Andr? Michaud wrote:

>>

>> *Considering time and flow as closely related to each other terms, I
>> nonetheless dislike the expression time flow because people imagine it
>> on the basis of traditional bilateral notion of time.*

>

> *I agree on this point. I, however, do not consider what I call "the
> progression of the present moment" as being related to past and future.
> I see it as the only moment of existence.*

No objection. This is perhaps the key the quoted experts were looking for.

> *What we call the "past" can*

> *then only be a subjective impression based on our recollection of
> sequences of events that continuously unfolded as they were current,
> or as sequences of events that we extrapolated to have occurred from
> the current state of decay of their current remains.*

In that I do not share you utterly subjectivistic point of view. In order to not loose your cooperation I would suggest focussing on what we perhaps agree on: Past is quite different from future in that it leaves traces on can identify now.

> *As for the future, it is not written yet, in my view.*

Of course. Nobody will deny this. My basic idea goes a decisive step further. A text that is not yet written does not yet exist relative to the recipient. That's why I am suggesting to restrict the peraining measure to the existing elapsed time. While abstract quantities can be described at will on the usually arbitrary time-scale. Reality fits to elapsed time.

>> *My different approach arose from a purely practical one. If we agree
>> that future events do not belong to reality,*

>

> *We definitely agree on this.*

>

>> *then it makes sense to have an objective scale of elapsed time which is*

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>> *not based on the hypothetical bilateral time coordinate.*
>
> *Definitely. On my part, I have been studying what could be the "velocity"*
> *of the objective and physical (in my view) progression of the "present*
> *moment" that I refer to along a dimension orthogonal to what we see as*
> *"space".*

Too much seeming agreement makes me wary. Indeed, I should make you aware of my sliding time-scale. On that scale, the zero is permanently at the front, at now. Nonetheless I see your question justified. The measure of elapsed time is perhaps something we have to take for granted as we have to just measure spatial distance. Well freshmen tend to wonder if I am telling them that velocity of light as well as wave resistance of space depends on epsilon and my in a similar manner.

>> *The other way round, usual time is merely an abstracted, extended, and*
>> *sliding copy of that unilateral objective scale.*
>
> *Yes. That is why I said that our "scientific" measurement of time flow*
> *is subjective.*

More cheeky: That's why common sense grammar beats the scientific notion of time.

>> *If I am correct, and reality-bound time is a unilateral quantity, then*
>> *this "correction" of the traditional believe is indeed a foremost*
>> *fundamental one.*
>
> *This is my view also. I think that the progression of the present moment*
> *(the only existing moment in my view) is directly linked to motion of the*
> *fundamental particles.*

I did not yet see the most fundamental particles. If you are right, does it matter for me?

>> *Tortuously speaking, the now of my left feet is not absolutely identical*
>> *to the now of my right ear. In that respect I share the relativists*
>> *point of view. The reason for me to think so is simple: If we accept*
>> *observation as the only reasonable criterion of reality, then this*
>> *relates to the observing unity, not to the physiology or psychology of*
>> *observation.*
>
> *I see. Here we differ. To me, observation is not the criterion of reality,*
> *because what our awareness (whatever that is) is observing is only the*
> *stored memories of the patterns that our neocortex abstracted from the*
> *data provided by our senses.*
>
> *To me, what is happening to all particles during the unique progressing*
> *present moment is physical reality.*

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The latter is a reasonable position. You are more close to Einstein's utterance than me in that. I will reconsider my position which arose from fundamental difference between past and future.

- >> *I believe that there is an objective relationship underlying observation.*
- >> *You might call my belief a model.*
- >
- > *I believe that everyones' beliefs are subjective models, including mine.*
- > *External reality is something else, that we need to understand better if*
- > *our species is to survive.*

I did not refer to my subjective experience but perhaps to the same what you are calling external reality. Once again: My aim is to exclude any mere speculation from that model I am calling reality. As long as you only have a vague imagination of what you reality is, your model is just less precise. Calling the same thing reality, you are merely expressing your readiness to believe in something. Calling the same thing model I am trying to express suspicion and my effort to avoid speculation. In particular, I do not consider future time objective reality.

- >> *This background behind observation is, of course, more than just*
- >> *observation itself.*
- >
- > *Yes. What you call "that background" is what I call objective reality,*
- > *if I understood you correctly.*

Yes.

- >> *Stop. You did not follow me. My message is quite clear: I cannot confirm*
- >> *any compelling reason to postulate something that has no chance ever to*
- >> *be of verifiable relevance,*
- >
- > *But we are verifying it. All those photons that hit our eyes have to be real*
- > *and all have been emitted by electrons de-exiting in atoms somewhere in*
- > *surrounding materials, etc. Don't you think that the step is easily taken*
- > *to conclude that these atoms really objectively exist, irrespective of*
- > *our observing or not?*

I did not use the term observation in a narrow sense. I rather meant the collective scientific work, and I highly appreciate that this work has created a largely unitarian result so far.

- >> *no matter whether it is called god or objective future time in the sense*
- >> *of something to discover.*
- >
- > *I fail to see a relation to god here, or to hypothetical future time. Could*
- > *you elaborate?*

I consider god and future time notions that cannot be confirmed by means of scientific evidence. Moreover, I see such notions related to the same desire to have something to imagine. It will be nearly equally different

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to dissuade people from both.

- >> > *We are constantly following it, even when we are not paying any attention.*
- >>
- >> *I agree that attention does not matter at all. However, my point of view*
- >> *is different. I strictly distinguish between reality and imagination.*
- >
- > *I do too.*

Those who imagine walking through space and time did not yet realize the impossibility to do so.

- >
- >> *In reality, I cannot move in time. So I cannot follow it. Elapsed time is*
- >> *my measure of the permanently growing temporal distance of real events.*
- >> *Forget any distracting psychology.*
- >
- > *It depends on what you mean by "moving in time". What I mean by following it*
- > *is simply the state of our relentlessly living in the "present moment", an*
- > *idea that you just agreed to.*

Correct. The present moment belongs to my scale of elapsed time that moves relative to the ordinary time.

- > *That's what I mean by "we are following it". In fact, it is dragging us*
- > *along, whether we like it or not.*

I understood: Dragging along the arbitrarily chosen ordinary scale of time.

- >> *Relativity attributes the present moment to the observer and denies a*
- >> *ubiquitous universal time.*
- >
- > *I know. But if relativity was not based on a subjective notion of timeflow,*
- > *ubiquitous progression of the present moment could not be denied.*

What scale does timeflow refer to?

- > *What if the few so-called "proof" of time dilation that are on record could*
- > *all be explained otherwise?*

I did not yet deal with time dilation.

- >> *In general, we should not confuse the subjective "now" in the sense of*
- >> *momentaneous awareness with the objective border of past.*
- >
- > *As I said, I do not associate the objective progression of the present*
- > *moment with the subjective notions of "past" or "future".*

So we seem to agree in that.

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- >> *Awareness is physiologically based on reality in a manner that sets a*
- >> *temporal window immediately after the very border.*
- >
- > *Yes. We can think only about what we have already observed in the data*
- > *that our senses communicate to us of what is happening out there at*
- > *the particle level.*

Really? Prediction is important.

- >> > *Our model of reality is what we think reality is.*
- >>
- >> *While I agree that the term reality denotes a model, I nonetheless*
- >> *consider this model like nothing else than what we are calling the*
- >> *objective reality because it has proven successful in any case so far*
- >> *and will perhaps continue to do so.*
- >
- > *We do differ here. Because, it seems to me a fact that we have not*
- > *completely understood all of what is out there.*

Your objective reality differs from my model in that it lets more room for the unknown. In principle, such flexibility is to be regarded as something valuable.

'Objective reality' sounds more mystical, almost like god. 'Model' can be mistaken as deterministic, almost manmade for good. No my intention is merely to exclude speculation that cannot be falsified for logical reasons.

- > *I do not understand the relation with god. Understanding how the universe*
- > *functions is different in my view from theorizing on what could have*
- > *caused it to exist.*

This ultimate question is definitely out of our scope. When Einstein said "For us believing physicists, the division into past present and future has merely the meaning of an albeit obstinate illusion", then you should ask why he referred to his belief.

- >
- >> *Sorry, you did not yet aware of your own inconsequent thinking. You are at*
- >> *risk to regard all of these elements of objective reality like given or*
- >> *more drastically speaking godgiven.*
- >
- > *I don't think I am at any risk of that nature.*

People are at risk to mystify the objective reality and include in this notion absolutely speculative components, in particular future time.

- >> *There would not be any problem with such believe if people would be more*
- >> *suspicious. Does given really include "given" forever? That is the point.*
- >
- > *I do not understand what you mean here. Could you elaborate?*

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It is always the same: Predicted future events are not yet real.

- > *Yes I do. As I said, we seem to differ on the point of identity of our*
- > *subjective models and external objective reality.*

Paradoxically, your notion of objective reality seems to be more subjective than mine of the pertaining model.

- >> > *You assume here that Einstein was correct on this point. What if he*
- >> > *was not?*
- >>
- >> *Emmy Noethers theorem provides convincing evidence for this symmetry.*
- >
- > *That certainly makes sense when applied to the theories. But in my view of*
- > *things, the theories are subjective models. I think that we still have not*
- > *completely put in focus what is objectively out there. This means that*
- > *our theories (our models) will have to evolve again to come into better*
- > *focus with what is out there (even if only to deal coherently with the*
- > *Pioneer so-called "anomaly").*

I found out that typical flaws in theory, e.g. alleged superluminality, result from avoidable trouble do to inclusion of future time.

- >
- >> >> *I conclude: The only reasonable attribution can be made to*
- >> >> *a measure of time itself after we accepted that the usual notion of time*
- >> >> *cannot do this job. There is not even necessary to invent something new.*
- >> >> *The pertaining measure is called elapsed time.*
- >> >
- >> > *Yes. a subjective measurement.*
- >>
- >> *No, the only really measurable time, i.e. the only objectively existing*
- >> *one.*
- >
- > *In a sense yes, since flow of time is somehow subjective, contrary to (in my*
- > *view, of course) the progression of the present moment.*

I do not understand why you are hesitating to accept that objectively elapsed time is THE adequate measure for description of any real physical process. Forget the flow of time, subjectivity and all other distraction.

- >
- > *I was referring to (I quote you here): "The other way round, usual time is*
- > *merely an abstracted, extended, and sliding copy of that unilateral objective*
- > *scale."*

So it was perhaps just a mistake.

- >> *I am just suggesting to abandon the admittedly deeply rooted believe*
- >> *that time is something godgiven extending without any limit even over*

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>> *not yet existing reality.*

>

> *I fully agree on this,*

Having accepted your caveat. I will reconsider the reality of the past.

Just traces of the past are remaining real for a while. So reality looks like that:

now
/|
- / |
-- / |
-past-- / |-----future

> *since for me, the progression of the present moment*

> *is something physical, that I link to the motion of particles and not*

> *to subjective past-present-future usual view of the "flow of time".*

Einstein is frequently quoted saying: Time is what the clock shows.

He is definitely correct. Clocks always show in principle elapsed time.

> *What has already occurred cannot be changed and the future is not written*

> *yet. That's what I believe.*

I too.

>>

>> *Science is obviously at odds with common sense in this respect because*

>> *ordinary people do not consequently obey the tenet of godgiven time.*

>> *Even the most fanatic believers intuitively act more reasonably.*

>

> *I see no connection between flow of time (subjective) or even the progression*

> *of the present moment, and god.*

Perhaps you did not often attend a service. "... in eternity amen".

The physical belief I am struggling with might be even older. I refer to the belief in a pre-existing future time, just to be revealed.

> *I don't think that any of this is godgiven.*

> *To me it is just part of the fundamental mechanics of the universe, irrespective*

> *of what could originally have caused it to come into being.*

If belief did always restrict to the question what could originally have caused things to come into being, then the world would be different.

> *Just like the lattice structure of a diamond has nothing to do with whether*

> *it formed naturally in the depth of the Earth or was artificially produced*

> *in a pressure oven.*

The question is: Do we have to anticipate a time structure ranging into all future? I suggest to not generally assume such lattice.

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>> >> *I argue that the tacit assumption of pre-existing time is to blame for
>> >> this contradiction.*

> *Einstein and Weizsaeker were causalists. I think that their resignation
> related to the impossibility of reconciling time dilation with objective
> reality, given that their belief in time dilation as a physical reality
> makes such reconciling impossible.*

In the quoted sentences, Einstein did not refer to time dilatation while
v. Weizsaecker definitely not dealt with it when he thoroughly and
repeatedly depicted the problem. Their resignation was based on their
lacking readiness to ascribe causality to influences exclusively from
the past and declare future time just not yet existing.

>> >> *Extrapolation of the
>> >> measurable past time to the imaginary future is also some sort of
>> >> believe. In that sense, there might not yet be many antideterminists
>> >> alias causalists outing themselves like me.*
>> >
>> > *I think that only causalists can really address this question with
>> > any chance of solving the problem. Non-causalists simply don't care,
>> > or think it is impossible.*
>>
>> *Any description of future is deterministic rather than causal.*
>
> *I think that no description of future is involved. Causality need involve
> only the certainty that events cannot occur without a cause.*

I dealt with causality and summarised several joint features of it.

> *Besides, I deeply respect you for knowingly bringing up an issue that few
> dare pilot in serious publicil discussion for fear of peer opinion.*

The reason for me to address the matter relates to downright practical
consequences. See <http://iesk.et.uni-magdeburg.de/~blumsche/M277.html>
for an example.

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