

Ask A Genius 26 - Informational Cosmology 2

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Scott: What form would the math of IC take into account? What would it describe informationally? How would this involve metaphysics?

Rick: A lot of stuff in math and science works independent of ultimate framework. Eugene Wigner said one of the most basic things is the unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics in describing the universe. At some point, as science and philosophy become better, the surprising effectiveness of math would have to be explained, but all we need to know short of and independent of that explanation is that math works to a great extent in describing a great variety of things.

Ideally, there needs to be an explanation as to why that stuff works. However, we know that stuff works. We know things boil down to the simple, practical methods that we've developed and have survived for centuries. For instance, everything in Newtonian Mechanics.

Newton had a vague theoretical framework. He explained how things worked mechanically. He didn't have much of an explanation as to why, only a little bit. Over the past 100 years, we've understood Newtonian Mechanics as a subset of Einsteinian Mechanics, when you're not dealing with extreme velocities or other extreme conditions.

We understood Newtonian Mechanics within the framework of Einsteinian Mechanics, but why Einsteinian Mechanics are the ones that rule the world, the non-quantum world, isn't understood very well. People go with Einstein's half-explanation that the equations are beautiful and simple, and that somehow God, by which Einstein means some principle of simplicity and elegance in the universe which favors simplicity and elegance. Obviously, it is a circular explanation.

So, we're used to using scientific ideas and method without knowing why they work at some deep level. Although, you and I, if we're at all right, looking at IC, we see a tendency for persistent structures to persist within a temporal framework.

The processes we see being effective in the world are effective across the unfolding of time and we are creatures who live, and our existence is, pinned to the unfolding of time, which favours persistent structures – and persistent structures tend to be self-consistent and simple like a lot of mathematical structures. It seems circular, but not really because persistence is a process that requires that property in the things that participate in persistence.

I would argue that things that persist embody principles that are durable and persistent as time unfolds. They are effective at working within a temporal, cause-and-effect, self-consistent framework.

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