

Ultimate Understanding

Abstract

One aspect of the world is that it appears to be intelligible to us. In this paper, a reason for this intelligibility is given in terms of the ultimate understanding that consciousness can have. This way, the world is intelligible because a consciousness can have an ultimate understanding even in principle.

Introduction

Consciousness is a natural phenomenon of the universe in which we live. A full account for why the universe is the way it is must ultimately include consciousness in its world view. Our current materialistic view of the world fails to encompass consciousness in its explanations. As such, the materialistic world view is incomplete if not completely incorrect. Nevertheless, its success for the past 400 years, makes it very difficult to replace with another world-view that can also take consciousness into account. The difficulty arises from the astonishingly mathematical laws of the universe capable of predicting the values of universal constants of up to many decimals. How can such a precise system be shaken from its grounds such as to be replaced by another system that contains mind? In order to find a loophole in the system, we will attempt to understand where this great precision of the world comes from in the first place. We will try to find an answer taking into account the aspect that the world is not only so precise, but it is also intelligible to a consciousness.

Conscious Understanding

The most remarkable feature of consciousness is the phenomenon of understanding. It's worth pointing out at this moment that understanding is a natural phenomenon. I'm making this emphasizing here because the word *understanding* is very often used in our everyday conversations, and this employment of the world in the most mundane

situations makes us overlook the very nature of understanding. We are so used to using this word that we somehow diminish its profound nature. Understanding is a central feature of consciousness. Without consciousness having this aspect, we would not be able to do anything. A lion would not be able to understand what a gazelle is, so he will starve to death. Without understanding, complex life would not be possible. So is very important to realise that understanding is a natural phenomenon. It has to do with the most profound nature of reality. Without the phenomenon of understanding, the most complex life forms would have probably been bacteria or at best plants. But this is the trivial implication of understanding when it is applied to biology. What we want to argue in this paper is that also the physical world itself is a consequence of understanding, and this time not in a trivial way.

The more our science progress, the more features about the natural world we uncover. This is possible because we have the ability to understand. Using our ability for understanding we can bring features of the world and reflect them in our consciousness. Why is it possible to do such a thing at all? What is it about the features of the external world that allow them to be reflected in a consciousness and so allow them to create understandings in our minds? How far can we push the discoveries? Will we ever reach a point beyond which we will not be able to reflect features of the world in our understanding? If so, why not?

Clearly, at this point, not even knowing what the nature of understanding is, we cannot say too much about it. But there are still some characteristics that

we can notice. One is that there are simpler understandings and there are also more complex understandings. So there is an ability of understanding to have a certain degree of complexity. Can the complexity of understanding go on to infinity? Notice that I'm not talking here about any particular understanding, I'm just talking about understanding in general, as a natural phenomenon. Let's assume that there is a limit to this complexity, a limit given by the nature of understanding, not by the complexity of the material object that implements it (i.e. you cannot have a brain as big as a galaxy). Let's call this limit *the ultimate understanding (UU)*. Now that we established in principle the problem that we want to analyse, let's have a look at it from a concrete way, and try to find its content.

What could the UU refer to? Would such a limit refer necessarily to the physical world? Today, the most complex and difficult concepts are found in sciences. Indeed, there are many human endeavours each with their own complexities, for example music, architecture, technology, but the greatest efforts appear to be made in science. Would the UU also refer to science? Or would it just be the most complex and most beautiful song ever written? At this moment is anyone guess what would UU refer to. But for the present argument, let's assume that UU would refer to the physical world. For example, the person that would have the UU, would easily describe the relations between electrons, protons, quantum mechanics, general relativity, dark matter, dark energy, consciousness and other yet unknown phenomena. He will be able to calculate all the constants of nature with the greatest possible precision. One question arises at this moment: Would there be phenomena in the world that would still be beyond the reach of even the UU? If so, what would make those phenomena to be beyond UU? If we were able to change so many paradigms in order to get to the UU, why wouldn't we be able to see one more step further?

Let's postpone these questions and explore a rather worrying alternative. Let's take the case that the UU would not refer to the physical world. Actually, let's take the case in which it would not refer to anything real whatsoever. After all, we have the ability to understand a lot of imaginary things. For example, you can explain to a child that if he is a bad child, Santa Claus will not bring him any present. And then if indeed he will not receive any

present for Christmas, he will understand that this was because he was a bad child. So there clearly can be a lot of understandings that only refer to imaginary constructs. Let's assume that the UU will also refer to such an imaginary construct. For example, the person that would have the UU will be able to tell you about the relations between i-electrons, i-protons, i-quantum mechanics, i-general relativity and so on, where "i" stands for "imaginary". He will be able to formulate a perfectly meaningful construct with beautiful mathematical and logical entities, but ultimately that construct would be purely imaginary. Let's assume that at that point in time, we would also have a full understanding of the natural world. But that understanding would be less complex than the UU. The question arises about why there can be an understanding that is more complex than the understanding that is required to understand the natural world. Remember that that UU would be fully meaningful and consistent! How would be possible that a meaningful and consistent construct doesn't represent a real world, the real world being simpler than that? Can such a situation occur? Can the UU be imaginary? In the example with Santa Claus, that particular understanding can be shown to be false when you grow up and you learn about the speed of light, so you conclude that is not physical possible for Santa Claus to go to all children in the world in only 1 night. But here we are talking about the *ultimate* understanding. That understanding would not permit anything outside it that can prove it to be incorrect. So as far as we would be able to tell, it would be a beautiful meaningful and consistent construct. And it would be more complex than the understanding that the actual world would provide us with. Would that be possible?

The conjecture that I want to put forward here is that if an UU actually exists, than that inevitably refers to the real world. Actually, the world is the way it is precisely because there can be an UU even in principle. The world is the way it is because in principle there can be a conscious being that can have an ultimate understanding. And to avoid the case that that UU could refer to an imaginary world more complex than the real world, the real world turned to be exactly that world that UU refers to. This is why the world is intelligible to us.