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admin@exactphilosophy.net

exactphilosophy.net

avantgarde

Sources of cognition

Ever since Galileo observed Jupiter's moons circle Jupiter with his telescope, observation of the outer world has become virtually the only source of cognition accepted as valid in science and generally in mainstream mundane perceptions and decisions. This reflects a fundamental asymmetry inherent in most parts of exact sciences and generally in mainstream approaches to the world. This may not be an ideal choice of paradigms in the longer run.

One of the involved paradigms is that there would be just one "outer world" or "reality", which different people would perceive from different angles at different times. That single "outer world" would be where measurements in science are done; that would be the source of cognition. In contrast, each individual being would have their own "inner world" (also called "mind" or "imagination"), something generally not considered worthy as a source of cognition in science.

But why not alter that paradigm, and assume that there would (conversely or symmetrically) be just **a single inner world**, into which each individual would look from their own personal angle?

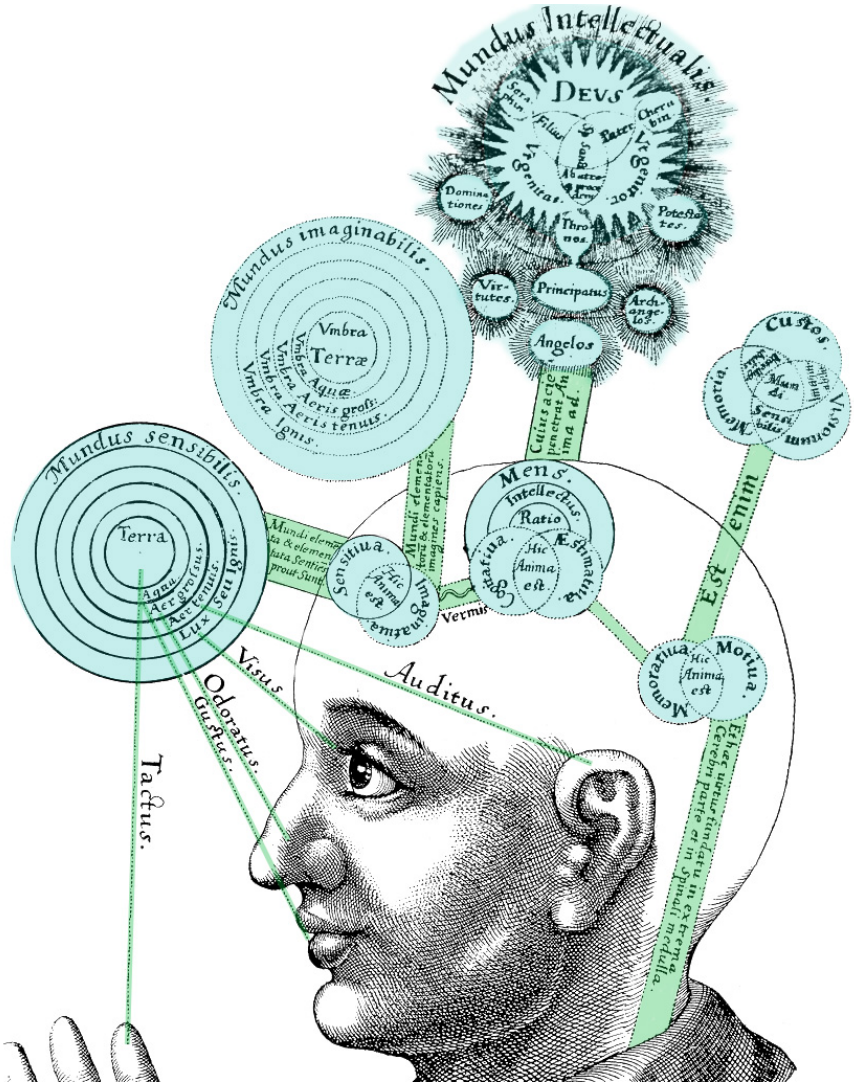
As a physicist I am well aware of the colossal advantages that exact sciences have brought humanity. I am also aware that just a single new experimental result could wholly change practically all theories as far as scientific answers to fundamental questions are concerned. But considering the current view of the universe in 2020, I am beginning to wonder if maybe the approach of current science might be too asymmetric with regards to "in" and "out" as sources of cognition. In the "outer" view, the universe appears extremely huge, full of solar systems that would superficially resemble our solar system, and, yet, no signs of life outside our own planet earth. A large part of the universe would have to be composed of postulated dark matter and dark energy and, yet, even remote stars and galaxies seem to be made of the same matter as our own environment.

What speaks for a shared inner world would be, for example, that in dreams of different people the same universal themes keep reappearing, what Jung called *archetypes*. Of course, in the current paradigm that could often be explained via exchange of information in the outer world, but this may not be a good explanation in all situations, and generally not the simplest one. Paradigms are by definition rather a choice than a necessity; they may make some parts of being easier or more complicated to describe, but it may not be possible to prove paradigm A more true than paradigm B, simply because paradigms often also influence how you determine "more true".

Obviously also some ancient "esoteric" (="inner") traditions like astrology would assume in a way that there is just one inner world of which each individual would be a specific part. For example, of the pair of opposites egoism/altruism

a Leo would initially rather tend to egoism and the opposite sign Aquarius rather to altruism. Overall, a lot in astrology is based on a balance of opposites, which does maybe also relate to Plato's world of ideas. Such an abstract world of ideas could be all there is to an inner world as source of cognition, or maybe not. In any case, a future science that would give the inner world just as much weight and attention as the outer world might be superior to current science in many ways, just out of an argument of symmetry.

I got this idea essentially after reading Jung's work on psychological types, where I had misread some passages without full context and indirectly also attributed him somewhat of a "medieval" mind, like this:



Sources of cognition before Enlightenment:
Robert Fludd, Utriusque cosmi maioris scilicet et minoris [...] historia, tomus II (1619), tractatus I, sectio I, liber X, De triplici animae in corpore visione.

There are likely other aspects regarding sources of cognition in which science is asymmetric, like conscious versus unconscious. This reflects also in astrology: At night the sky shows lots of stars and planets; during the day, when people are typically consciously awake, the sun outshines them all, symbolically chasing away a maybe important "occult" part of the world. It may be worth noting

that the moon can shine both during day and night, and even shadow the sun during a total solar eclipse. Thus to get a fuller picture, science might have to become, so speak, "more like the moon"...

By the way, in terms of my definition of elements on my web site, two elements would be outside, two inside, i.e. quite symmetric from the start. I wrote this text initially in just about an hour, so, for example, some complications with a mind that is supposedly inside itself observing an inner world are not explored, immediately for the sake of carving out some asymmetries most prominently.

There is also a maybe more fundamental asymmetry in science, a focus on the largest common denominator, on general things, as first proposed by Aristotle in his metaphysics, which would be, in part, contrary to Jarry's pataphysics.

And there would likely be more assymetries of that kind...

It appears that what Edmund Husserl writes in *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft* (1911, Philosophy as a Rigorous Science) is very similar to what I am pointing out here regarding the asymmetry of the sources of *Erkenntnis* in contemporary sciences including psychology.