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Particle/Waves – What Do They Mean for Psychology and Religion?



Once upon a long time ago I was a psychoanalyst. Then, via my countertransference workshops and experiential therapy, I initiated the method of Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI) which brings educational-therapeutic influence into classrooms, social and commercial organizations, and to any place where groups meet. TCI has been taught at the Workshop Institute of Living-Learning in America since 1966 in New York and later in other cities of the United States and Canada.

Since 1974, WILL-Europe has been established and TCI has a steady and

astounding impact in all fields of the "helping professions" and other organizations. My first book in German, *From Psychoanalysis to Theme-Centered Interaction*, has been a bestseller. At present, I work on a book that the late Alfred Farau started 20 years ago. It will be published soon as *Gelebte Geschichte der Psychotherapie (Living in the Flow of Psychotherapy's History)*.

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Stimulated by Capra's (1975) book: *The Tao of Physics* and by the American Academy of Psychotherapists Convention in 1980 and by scribbled notes of my late friend Alfred Farau (whose unfinished book, *Historical Aspects of Psychotherapy*, I am in the process of bringing up to date) I had in the last few weeks sudden flashes of insight (or so it has seemed to me) concerning psychological and religious phenomena.

I would like to put forth some of these thoughts for your consideration. I hope that some of you will give me your reactions.

Today's physics stipulates that matter and energy are, on a subatomic level, identical; the universe is thought of as an over-all oneness harboring infinitesimally small particle waves. An Aristotelian mind objects: A wave cannot be a particle at the same time. Yet only this concept seems to embrace the qualities which make the phenomena of light and its speed comprehensible. We therefore state that the same event appears to be a wave at one time and a particle at another. This means that the models our mind is capable of visualizing do not necessarily reflect the world as it is but only the world as our minds can describe it. We assume that light is neither a wave only nor a particle, yet we use our observations for describing the same event from two points of observation and superimpose one model on the other and speak of particle/waves.

In human observation particle/waves interact with each other. Space is not empty but differentiated by density and mobility of the traveling

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particle/waves. As it is impossible to predict speed, direction, and location of particle/waves, physics declares the law of uncertainty. The law of uncertainty transcends the law of causality. These paradoxical aspects of the concept of particle/waves, the element of freedom (uncertainty), and the extreme speed in the core of the atom through the pressure inside have stimulated me to try putting together explanations for some puzzling psychological, physiological, and religious phenomena. Before leaving on the trips of my imagination I want to state again the concepts which I am borrowing from physics:

- There is a paradox in the phenomena and concept of particle/waves, which had to be hypothesized to account for the behavior of matter.
- On a subatomic level the law of causality only exists in combination with the law of uncertainty.
- Particle/waves are always in motion, attracting and rejecting each other. They fuse and defuse.
- The most confined and smallest parts within an atom demonstrate the greatest speed and power.
- On the particle/wave level, matter and energy are not separable.

Stumbling Toward a Basic Hypothesis

Is a particle/wave more miraculous than subjective experience and objective observation? Can a subjective feeling or thought be conceived of as a pattern of an electroencephalogram or any other machine-traced signs? These are obviously related to each other in some decipherable way yet are basically incomparable; my subjective experience of passionate love or hate is not commensurable with chemical and physical processes. My violent pain is not identical with the mess of disorderly organs which the surgeon observes. Some psychologists say: "I am my body." Some believers say: "My body dies; my soul lives on." To me it appears to be a similarly open question whether matter and energy or particle/waves may on a subatomic level be identical or have been hypothesized that way by our objectifying minds. They may as well contain subjective aspects, while only their "particleness" impresses our eyes via microscopic lenses. For the sake of free inquiry I am now using one basic hypothesis: Particle/waves—matter and energy include life, subjectivity, and spirit. It depends on the viewpoint, the observers' perspective, whether the observed is objective or subjective, material or spiritual. *The paradox of a wave appearing as a particle or vice versa is no more or less miraculous than the "paradox" that sensations and feelings can be "observed" subjectively and objectively;* pulse-taking and blood tests seem to coincide with subjective experiences of well-being or malaise.

Subjectivity and objectivity—the experiential-subjective and the measurable-communicable—are the equivalents of the particle/waves phenomena.

I believe this hypothesis can help illuminate knowledge in several areas.

The Aura

Light around bodies can be seen by some esoterically trained people and can be made visible to anyone by Kirlian photography. It can be photographed coming from plants, animals, and people. The fresher a leaf, the more vivacious an animal, the deeper in concentration a person, the stronger are the light flashes coming from their surfaces. A healer's concentration on his or her healing hands shows up on Kirlian photographs as violent flames from the fingers, while they turn into softly enveloping halos when the person rests after the healing efforts are complete. After death the light slowly fizzles out and may be observed speeding into the universe in small sprays.

Where do energy waves of the aura go, when the living light has been turned off by death? Do they remain particle/waves in the cosmos? Do they disperse and vanish or will they be found somewhere in some new ways of being?

Could it be that the inner experience of subjective concentration corresponds to an increase of density of particle/waves which spill over to the aura and show up as flames in Kirlian photography, are signs of living spiritual matter in the universe?

Is "inside" of the particle/waves a creative subjective conscious/unconscious core which is certain in our own subjective experiencing (as insiders of our own combination of particle/wave existence), but which looks "uncertain" to the outside observer?

Suppose we use the analogy of particle/waves to cells of an organism. Cells are of independent/alive quality and yet also dependent on their situation within the total organism. The organism is equally dependent on the cells which are dependent on it. Thus the cell is in mutual interdependence with all other cells and the total organism.

When the organism dies, it decays, which means that particle/waves disperse into different constellations and fuse by attraction toward new gestalten. (The possibility that spirit may exist before or beyond all particle/waves can still be maintained.)

Subjectivity as "waves"—objectivity as "particles"—may be only an analogy; I think it is *more* than that!

Maybe the concept of waves is a simile to the concept of subjectivity, objectivity a simile to particles. Maybe particle/waves as a concept is an analogy to subjectivity/objectivity—two perspectives of the same reality.

Our own particle/waves nature is in osmotic connectedness with everything inside and outside of ourselves. We may transcend through

the emanation of particle/waves (aura, electricity, sexual attraction, telepathy, etc.) into other entities beyond our own body/time/space; and maybe we are open to emanations coming from other entities toward us. Such a process may be speedier, finer, and subtler than other processes, such as breathing, eating, and defecating, which connect us to our surroundings. And as we are in such interchange of emanations, our subjective experiences have creative power beyond ourselves: We can do, direct, alter, be the cause of building or destroying not only through action—which we have always known—but also through felt energy like concentration, love, and hatred.

The following paragraphs contain some thoughts about possible connections between the above theory and the following phenomena.

Prayer and Meditation

I can state certainties of inner experience, yet I can err; I can never contain within myself all determining factors. I cannot predict my power nor force my will upon this world; the law of uncertainty rules major parts of my subjective experience.

Prayers are human heritage. They are spoken to a power beyond our own. They are spoken as requests or in gratitude. The superpowers may be conceived as nature or part of nature, such as the sun, the moon, or humanlike Olympic or Valhalla Gods. Or they are spoken to one imageless eternal God-Creator, who makes himself known through messengers, or through revealing himself to faithful receivers, or through the human experience of being meaningfully guided.

Important for the praying person is the experience of beneficence—even if wishes may not be fulfilled or signs are not forthcoming. The benefit may be experienced as greater emotional peace and more strength for achieving goals or bearing pain. One may, in praying, feel more sheltered, more sure of oneself and one's purposes or the meaning of life. (The first known fear is the infant's fear of falling; prayer may suggest that we cannot fall of the universe.)

Similar emotional experiences of strength, peace, self-assuredness follow *meditation*. In meditation one does not speak to outside powers, but relates to one's own center, giving oneself up to one's "living void," one's "pure consciousness." Meditative concentration means letting go of outside contacts, of thoughts and emotions, and focusing on a single phenomenon only—a mantra, an image, a sound, a motion, or breathing.

Fulfillment in meditation is experienced as "spacing out"—feeling transparent, open, widening, belonging to the universe.

As we return to daily life, we bring back more self-assuredness, strength, peace, and serenity which evolve through prayer as well as through meditation.

If all energy is conceived as infinitely small particle/waves interacting with each other, then prayers and meditation function as energy sources emanating from the centered person who acts as a kind of electromagnetic power, attracting particle/waves not only from his or her own sources, but also from the outside body/space environment.

This means that a person's praying or meditating mind-spirit can resonate with particle/waves from outside his or her own gestalt which gives peace, strength, power to the meditating or praying person.

Spiritual healing and evil harming power have been documented. People can be healed or damaged through suggestions, placebos, auto-suggestion, through good and evil images, through prayers and curses, through loving or hateful touch.

As the universe is filled with energy particle/waves which are thought of as being paradoxically substance/motion, energy, life and spirit, I imagine them as subjective gestalten which harbor embryonic states of subjective (internal-experiential) as well as objective (external-observable) qualities.

And if we as people are like cells of a total organism, thinking, feeling, sensing, spiritual-material gestalten, then we are cells in the process of growing and splitting, bound in interdependent autonomy to all other "cells" in the One "God-Organism" who is beyond our knowing. And it becomes conceivable that God is in the eternal process of continued transformation through the beneficial or evil change of all his cells for which we may be responsible. Theism and Pantheism would not be in contradiction to "my basic hypothesis." It would be harder for me to conceive of atheism on the basis of this hypothesis of particle/waves which allow for universal autonomy in interdependence. Through prayers, meditation, and faith, particle/waves may or may not come toward me by the grace of their—however limited—freedom and godliness.

Psychic Power

A clairvoyant once told me that any child could be psychic. Her mother and grandmother were soothsayers. They helped her become aware of her telepathic ability as a three-year-old child, while other children were being laughed at when they said "silly things." This woman was sure that all children—if supported rather than ridiculed for their first psychic experiences—could be trained to make use of their psychic powers.

I have not experienced myself as an ESP receiver. Yet others have dreamed or thought correctly about what I was doing from far away locations. My own ability to be intuitive is different from being psychic. However, I have trained my intuition by giving special "training-intuition" workshops which were geared to assist people in becoming more intuitive, i.e., finding short-cuts through their integrated knowledge and skills by pertinent practice.

I have made it a rule not to push aside seemingly irrelevant and irrational ideas and images which came up in me in groups. I will communicate them to the group if they appear three times in the same session. Such flashes often prove to be intuitive recognition of facts not consciously perceived. The verification or rejection of such flashes has become a valuable tool in daily living and especially in psychotherapy.

Now I connect these experiences with the particle/waves theory. Both psychic and intuitive processes seem to express themselves in imagery and feelings rather than in words. It may well be that the verbal, rational emphasis of our culture has allowed less room for intuition and telepathy, and we may need more concentration and to take imagery and children's phantasies more seriously than we have. Our flashes of telepathy or intuition may be connected to our concentration on the inside imaginative side of our personalities and on incoming particle/waves streaming toward us from people and other living beings.

I am sure that psychic power as well as intuition can be trained toward greater skillfulness.

Hypnagogic Pictures

My first idea of connecting particle/waves theory with psychological phenomena occurred through my interest in hypnagogic pictures. I had always thought that dreams have a very different quality than hypnagogic imagery, which occurs shortly before falling asleep or sometimes in "let-go" awake states or in some drug-induced flow of pictures. They seem to be more mechanical aspects, like after-images, and do not appear to convey rational or emotional content as dreams do. They have a neutral emotional loading and their often-racing images don't seem to belong to important aspects of the person's life.

After thinking that the particle/waves can inhabit even "empty space," it occurred to me that hypnagogic pictures may be of similar origin to after-images: They may partly be induced from the outside even though they appear as subjective imagery. Some of our inner particle/waves may connect to those outside of our gestalt, especially in a falling-asleep state of mind. In contrast to "calling-in" the particle/waves by prayer or other concentrated intellectual and spiritual activities, hypnagogic pictures may appear through allowing particle/waves in by a de-concentrated stage of consciousness, which lets in more random particle/waves from the outside. In the state of nearly falling asleep, we are more open to being receivers, having lost some of our control. Could it be that parapsychological capacities awaken when the logical mind and the perceptive contact powers are tired or go to sleep—and possibly even more so in the process of dying?

Could it be that meditative, religious, creative concentration and its opposite, "de-concentration" in falling asleep, have some similarity, namely