

Platonism, Constructivism, and Quantum Platonism

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1 Introduction

I have been trying to understand how Category Theory and Set Theory relate to quantum TGD inspired view about fundamentals of mathematics. I managed to clarify my thoughts about what these theories are by reading the article Structuralism, Category Theory and Philosophy of Mathematics by Richard Stefanik [2]. Blog discussions and email correspondence with Sampo Vesterinen have been very stimulating and inspired the attempt to represent TGD based vision about the unification of mathematics, physics, and consciousness theory in a more systematic manner.

Before continuing I want to summarize the basic ideas behind TGD vision. One cannot understand mathematics without understanding mathematical consciousness. Mathematical consciousness and its evolution must have direct quantum physical correlates and by quantum classical correspondence these correlates must appear also at space-time level. Quantum physics must allow to realize number as a conscious experience analogous to a sensory quale. In TGD based ontology there is no need to postulate physical world behind the quantum states as mathematical entities (theory is the reality). Hence number cannot be any physical object, but can be identified as a quantum state or its label and its number theoretical anatomy is revealed by the conscious experiences induced by the number theoretic variants of particle reactions. Mathematical systems and their axiomatics are dynamical evolving systems and physics is number theoretically universal selecting rationals and their extensions in a special role as numbers, which can be regarded elements of several number fields simultaneously.

2 Platonism and structuralism

There are basically two philosophies of mathematics.

a) Platonism assumes that mathematical objects and structures have independent existence. Natural numbers would be the most fundamental objects of this kind. For instance, each natural number has its own number-theoretical anatomy decomposing into a product of prime numbers defining the elementary particles of Platonica. For quantum physicist this vision is attractive, and even more so if one accepts that elementary particles are labelled by primes (as I do)! The problematic aspects of this vision relate to the physical realization of the Platonica. Neither Minkowski space-time nor its curved variants understood in the sense of set theory have no room for Platonica and physical laws (as we know them) do not seem to allow the

realization of all imaginable internally consistent mathematical structures.

b) Structuralist believes that the properties of natural numbers result from their relations to other natural numbers so that it is not possible to speak about number theoretical anatomy in the Platonic sense. Numbers as such are structureless and their relationships to other numbers provide them with their apparent structure. According to [2] structuralism is however not enough for the purposes of number theory: in combinatorics it is much more natural to use intensional definition for integers by providing them with inherent properties such as decomposition into primes. I am not competent to take any strong attitudes on this statement but my physicist's intuition tells that numbers have number theoretic anatomy and that this anatomy can be only revealed by the morphisms or something more general which must have physical counterparts. I would like to regard numbers as analogous to bound states of elementary particles. Just as the decays of bound states reveal their inner structure, the generalizations of morphisms would reveal to the mathematician the inherent number theoretic anatomy of integers.

3 Structuralism

Set theory and category theory represent two basic variants of structuralism and before continuing I want to clarify to myself the basic ideas of structuralism: the reader can skip this section if it looks too boring.

3.1 Set theory

Structuralism has many variants. In set theory [3] the elements of set are treated as structureless points and sets with the same cardinality are equivalent. In number theory additional structure must be introduced. In the case of natural numbers one introduces the notion of successor and induction axiom and defines the basic arithmetic operations using these. Set theoretic realization is not unique. For instance, one can start from empty set Φ identified as 0, identify 1 as $\{\Phi\}$, 2 as $\{0, 1\}$ and so on. One can also identify 0 as Φ , 1 as $\{0\}$, 2 as $\{\{0\}\}$,.... For both physicist and consciousness theorist these formal definitions look rather weird.

The non-uniqueness of the identification of natural numbers as a set could be seen as a problem. The structuralist's approach is based on an extensional definition meaning that two objects are regarded as identical if one cannot find any property distinguishing them: object is a representative

for the equivalence class of similar objects. This brings in mind gauge fixing to the mind of physicists.

3.2 Category theory

Category theory [4] represents a second form of structuralism. Category theorist does not worry about the ontological problems and dreams that all properties of objects could be reduced to the arrows and formally one could identify even objects as identity morphisms (looks like a trick to me). The great idea is that functors between categories respecting the structure defined by morphisms provide information about categories. Second basic concept is natural transformation which maps functors to functors in a structure preserving manner. Also functors define a category so that one can construct endless hierarchy of categories. This approach has enormous unifying power since functors and natural maps systemize the process of generalization. There is no doubt that category theory forms a huge piece of mathematics but I find difficult to believe that arrows can catch all of it.

The notion of category can be extended to that of n-category: in [5] I described a geometric realization of this hierarchy in which one defines 1-morphisms by parallel translations, 2-morphisms by parallel translations of parallel translations, and so on. In infinite-dimensional space this hierarchy would be infinite. Abstractions about abstractions about..., thoughts about thoughts about, statements about statements about..., is the basic idea behind this interpretation. Also the hierarchy of logics of various orders corresponds to this hierarchy. This encourages to see category theoretic thinking as being analogous to higher level self reflection which must be distinguished from the direct sensory experience.

In the case of natural numbers category theoretician would identify successor function as the arrow binding natural numbers to an infinitely long string with 0 as its end. If this approach would work, the properties of numbers would reflect the properties of the successor function.

4 The view about mathematics inspired by TGD and TGD inspired theory of consciousness

TGD based view might be called quantum Platonism. It is inspired by the requirement that both quantum states and quantum jumps between them are able to represent number theory and that all quantum notions have also space-time correlates so that Platonia should in some sense exist also at

the level of space-time. Here I provide a brief summary of this view as it is now. The articles "TGD" [6] and "TGD inspired theory of consciousness" [7] provide an overview about TGD and TGD inspired theory of consciousness.

4.1 Physics is fixed from the uniqueness of infinite-D existence and number theoretic universality

a) The basic philosophy of quantum TGD relies on the geometrization of physics in terms of infinite-dimensional Kähler geometry of the "world of classical worlds" (configuration space), whose uniqueness is forced by the mere mathematical existence. Space-time dimension and imbedding space $H = M^4 \times CP_2$ are fixed among other things by this condition and allow interpretation in terms of classical number fields. Physical states correspond to configuration space spinor fields with configuration space spinors having interpretation as Fock states. Rather remarkably, configuration space Clifford algebra defines standard representation of so called hyper finite factor of II_1 , perhaps the most fascinating von Neumann algebra.

b) Number theoretic universality states that all number fields are in a democratic position. This vision can be realized by requiring generalization of notions of imbedding space by gluing together real and p-adic variants of imbedding space along common algebraic numbers. All algebraic extensions of p-adic numbers are allowed. Real and p-adic space-time sheets intersect along common algebraics. The identification of the p-adic space-time sheets as correlates of cognition and intentionality explains why cognitive representations at space-time level are always discrete. Only space-time points belonging to an algebraic extension of rationals associated contribute to the data defining S-matrix. These points define what I call number theoretic braids. The interpretation in of algebraic discreteness terms of a physical realization of axiom of choice is highly suggestive. The axiom of choice would be dynamical and evolving quantum jump by quantum jump as the algebraic complexity of quantum states increases.

4.2 Holy trinity of existence

In TGD framework one would have 3-levelled ontology numbers should have representations at all these levels [7].

a) Subjective existence as a sequence of quantum jumps giving conscious sensory representations for numbers and various geometric structures would be the first level.

b) Quantum states would correspond to Platonia of mathematical ideas

and mathematician- or if one is unwilling to use this practical illusion- conscious experiences about mathematic ideas, would be in quantum jumps. The quantum jumps between quantum states respecting the symmetries characterizing the mathematical structure would provide conscious information about the mathematical ideas not directly accessible to conscious experience. Mathematician would live in Plato's cave. There is no need to assume any independent physical reality behind quantum states as mathematical entities since quantum jumps between these states give rise to conscious experience. Theory-reality dualism disappears since the theory is reality or more poetically: painting is the landscape.

c) The third level of ontology would be represented by classical physics at the space-time level essential for quantum measurement theory. By quantum classical correspondence space-time physics would be like a written language providing symbolic representations for both quantum states and changes of them (by the failure of complete classical determinism of the fundamental variational principle). This would involve both real and p-adic space-time sheets corresponding to sensory and cognitive representations of mathematical concepts. This representation makes possible the feedback analogous to formulas written by mathematician crucial for the ability of becoming conscious about what one was conscious of and the dynamical character of this process allows to explain the self-referentiality of consciousness without paradox.

This ontology releases a deep Platonistic sigh of relief. Since there are no physical objects, there is no need to reduce mathematical notions to objects of the physical world. There are only quantum states identified as mathematical entities labelled naturally by integer valued quantum numbers; conscious experiences, which must represent sensations giving information about the number theoretical anatomy of a given quantum number; and space-time surfaces providing space-time correlates for quantum physics and therefore also for number theory and mathematical structures in general.

4.3 Factorization of integers as a direct sensory perception?

Both physicist and consciousness theorist would argue that the set theoretic construction of natural numbers could not be farther away from how we experience integers. Personally I feel that neither structuralist's approach nor Platonism as it is understood usually are enough. Mathematics is a conscious activity and this suggests that quantum theory of consciousness must be included if one wants to build more satisfactory view about fundamentals

of mathematics.

Oliver Sack's book *The man who mistook his wife for a hat* [1] (see also [H3]) contains fascinating stories about those aspects of brain and consciousness which are more or less mysterious from the view point of neuroscience. Sacks tells in his book also a story about twins who were classified as idiots but had amazing number theoretical abilities. I feel that this story reveals something very important about the real character of mathematical consciousness.

The twins had absolutely no idea about mathematical concepts such as the notion of primeness but they could factorize huge numbers and tell whether they are primes. Their eyes rolled wildly during the process and suddenly their face started to glow of happiness and they reported a discovery of a factor. One could not avoid the feeling that they quite concretely saw the factorization process. The failure to detect the factorization served for them as the definition of primeness. For them the factorization was not a process based on some rules but a direct sensory perception.

The simplest explanation for the abilities of twins would in terms of a model of integers represented as string like structures consisting of identical basic units. This string can decay to strings. If string containing n units decaying into $m > 1$ identical pieces is not perceived, the conclusion is that a prime is in question. It could also be that decay to units smaller than 2 was forbidden in this dynamics. The necessary connection between written representations of numbers and representative strings is easy to build as associations.

This kind theory might help to understand marvellous feats of mathematicians like Ramanujan who represents a diametrical opposite of Groethendienck as a mathematician (when Groethendienck was asked to give an example about prime, he mentioned 57 which became known as Groethendienck prime!).

The lesson would be that one very fundamental representation of integers would be, not as objects, but conscious experiences. Primeness would be like the quale of redness. This of course does not exclude also other representations.

4.4 Experience of integers in TGD inspired quantum theory of consciousness

In quantum physics integers appear very naturally as quantum numbers. In quantal axiomatization or interpretation of mathematics same should hold true.

a) In TGD inspired theory of consciousness [7] quantum jump is identified as a moment of consciousness. There is actually an entire fractal hierarchy of quantum jumps consisting of quantum jumps and this correlates directly with the corresponding hierarchy of physical states and dark matter hierarchy. This means that the experience of integer should be reducible to a certain kind of quantum jump. The possible changes of state in the quantum jump would characterize the sensory representation of integer.

b) The quantum state as such does not give conscious information about the number theoretic anatomy of the integer labelling it: the change of the quantum state is required. The above geometric model translated to quantum case would suggest that integer represents a multiplicatively conserved quantum number. Decays of this state into states labelled by integers n_i such that one has $n = \prod_i n_i$ would provide the fundamental conscious representation for the number theoretic anatomy of the integer. At the level of sensory perception based the space-time correlates a string-like bound state of basic particles representing $n=1$.

c) This picture is consistent with the Platonist view about integers represented as structured objects, now labels of quantum states. It would also conform with the view of category theorist in the sense that the arrows of category theorist replaced with quantum jumps are necessary to gain conscious information about the structure of the integer.

4.5 Infinite primes and arithmetic consciousness

Infinite primes [E3] were the first mathematical fruit of TGD inspired theory of consciousness and the inspiration for writing this posting came from the observation that the infinite primes at the lowest level of hierarchy provide a representation of algebraic numbers as Fock states of a super-symmetric arithmetic QFT so that it becomes possible to realize quantum jumps revealing the number theoretic anatomy of integers, rationals, and perhaps even that of algebraic numbers.

a) Infinite primes have a representation as Fock states of super-symmetric arithmetic QFT and at the lowest level of hierarchy they provide representations for primes, integers, rationals and algebraic numbers in the sense that at the lowest level of hierarchy of second quantizations the simplest infinite primes are naturally mapped to rationals whereas more complex infinite primes having interpretation as bound states can be mapped to algebraic numbers. Conscious experience of number can be assigned to the quantum jumps between these quantum states revealing information about the number theoretic anatomy of the number represented. It would be wrong to say

that rationals only label these states: rather, these states represent rationals and since primes label the particles of these states.

b) More concretely, the conservation of number theoretic energy defined by the logarithm of the rational assignable with the Fock state implies that the allowed decays of the state to a product of infinite integers are such that the rational can decompose only into a product of rationals. These decays could provide for the above discussed fundamental realization of multiplicative aspects of arithmetic consciousness. Also additive aspects are represented since the exponents k in the powers p^k appearing in the decomposition are conserved so that only the partitions $k = \sum_i k_i$ are representable. Thus both product decompositions and partitions, the basic operations of number theorist, are represented.

c) The higher levels of the hierarchy represent a hierarchy of abstractions about abstractions bringing strongly in mind the hierarchy of n-categories and various similar constructions including n:th order logic. It also seems that the n+1:th level of hierarchy provides a quantum representation for the n:th level. Ordinary primes, integers, rationals, and algebraic numbers would be the lowest level, -the initial object- of the hierarchy representing nothing at low level. Higher levels could be reduced to them by the analog of category theoretic reductionism in the sense that there is arrow between n:th and n+1:th level representing the second quantization at this level. One can also say that these levels represent higher reflective level of mathematical consciousness and the fundamental sensory perception corresponds the lowest level.

d) Infinite primes have also space-time correlates. The decomposition of particle into partons can be interpreted as a infinite prime and this gives geometric representations of infinite primes and also rationals. The finite primes appearing in the decomposition of infinite prime correspond to bosonic or fermionic partonic 2-surfaces. Many-sheeted space-time provides a representation for the hierarchy of second quantizations: one physical prediction is that many particle bound state associated with space-time sheet behaves exactly like a boson or fermion. Nuclear string model is one concrete application of this idea: it replaces nucleon reductionism with reductionism occurs first to strings consisting of $A \leq 4$ nuclei and which in turn are strings consisting of nucleons. A further more speculative representation of infinite rationals as space-time surfaces is based on their mapping to rational functions.

4.6 Number theoretic Brahman=Atman identity

The notion of infinite primes leads to the notion of algebraic holography in which space-time points possess infinitely rich number-theoretic anatomy. This anatomy would be due to the existence of infinite number of real units defined as ratios of infinite integers which reduce to unit in the real sense and various p-adic senses. This anatomy is not visible in real physics but can contribute directly to mathematical consciousness [E3].

The anatomies of single space-time point could represent the entire world of classical worlds and quantum states of universe: the number theoretic anatomy is of course not visible in the structure of these these states. Therefore the basic building brick of mathematics - point- would become the Platonia able to represent all of the mathematics consistent with the laws of quantum physics. Space-time points would evolve, becoming more and more complex quantum jump by quantum jump. Configuration space and quantum states would be represented by the anatomies of space-time points. Some space-time points are more "civilized" than others so that space-time decomposes into "civilizations" at different levels of mathematical evolution.

Paths between space-time points represent processes analogous to parallel translations affecting the structure of the point and one can also define n-parallel translations up to $n = 4$ at level of space-time and $n = 8$ at level of imbedding space. At level of world of classical worlds whose points are representable as number theoretical anatomies arbitrary high values of n can be realized [E10].

It is fair to say that the number theoretical anatomy of the space-time point makes it possible self-reference loop to close so that structured points are able to represent the physics of associated with with the structures constructed from structureless points. Hence one can speak about algebraic holography or number theoretic Brahman=Atman identity.

4.7 Finite measurement resolution, Jones inclusions, and number theoretic braids

In the history of physics and mathematics the realization of various limitations have been the royal road to a deeper understanding (Uncertainty Principle, Gödel's theorem). The precision of quantum measurement, sensory perception, and cognition are always finite. In standard quantum measurement theory this limitation is not taken into account but forms a corner stone of TGD based vision about quantum physics and of mathematics too as I want to argue in the following.

The finite resolutions has representation both at classical and quantum level.

a) At the level of quantum states finite resolution is represented in terms of Jones inclusions N subset M of hyper-finite factors of type II_1 (HFFs)[A9]. N represents measurement resolution in the sense that the states related by the action of N cannot be distinguished in the measurement considered. Complex rays are replaced by N rays. This brings in noncommutativity via quantum groups. Non-commutativity in TGD Universe would be therefore due to a finite measurement resolution rather than something exotic emerging in the Planck length scale. Same applies to p-adic physics: p-adic space-time sheets have literally infinite size in real topology!

b) At the space-time level discretization implied by the number theoretic universality could be seen as being due to the finite resolution with common algebraic points of real and p-adic variant of the partonic 3-surface chosen as representatives for regions of the surface. The solutions of modified Dirac equation are characterized by the prime in question so that the preferred prime makes itself visible at the level of quantum dynamics and characterizes the p-adic length scale fixing the values of coupling constants. Discretization could be also understood as effective non-commutativity of imbedding space points due to the finite resolution implying that second quantized spinor fields anticommute only at a discrete set of points rather than along stringy curve.

In this framework it is easy to imagine physical representations of number theoretical and other mathematical structures.

a) Every compact group corresponds to a hierarchy of Jones inclusions corresponding to various representations for the quantum variants of the group labelled by roots of unity. I would be surprised if non-compact groups would not allow similar representation since HFF can be regarded as infinite tensor power of n-dimensional complex matrix algebra for any value of n . Somewhat paradoxically, the finite measurement resolution would make possible to represent Lie group theory physically [A9, C3].

b) There is a strong temptation to identify the Galois groups of algebraic numbers as the infinite permutation group S_∞ consisting of permutations of finite number of objects, whose projective representations give rise to an infinite braid group B_∞ . The group algebras of these groups are HFFs besides the representation provided by the spinors of the world of classical worlds having physical identification as fermionic Fock states. Therefore physical states would provide a direct representation also for the more abstract features of number theory [E11].

c) Number theoretical braids crucial for the construction of S-matrix [C3]

provide naturally representations for the Galois groups G associated with the algebraic extensions of rationals as diagonal imbeddings $G \times G \times \dots$ to the completion of S_∞ representable also as the action on the completion of spinors in the world of classical worlds so that the core of number theory would be represented physically [E11]. At the space-time level number theoretic braid having G as symmetries would represent the G . These representations are analogous to global gauge transformations. The elements of S_∞ are analogous to local gauge transformations having a natural identification as a universal number theoretical gauge symmetry group leaving physical states invariant.

4.8 Hierarchy of Planck constants and the generalization of imbedding space

Jones inclusions inspire a further generalization of the notion of imbedding space obtained by gluing together copies of the imbedding space H regarded as coverings $H \rightarrow H/G_a \times G_b$. In the simplest scenario $G_a \times G_b$ leaves invariant the choice of quantization axis and thus this hierarchy provides imbedding space correlate for the choice of quantization axes inducing these correlates also at space-time level and at the level of world of classical worlds [A9].

Dark matter hierarchy is identified in terms of different sectors of H glued together along common points of base spaces and thus forming a book like structure. For the simplest option elementary particles proper correspond to maximally quantum critical systems in the intersection of all pages. The field bodies of elementary particles are in the interiors of the pages of this "book".

One can assign to Jones inclusions quantum phase $q = \exp(i2\pi/n)$ and the groups Z_n acts as exact symmetries both at level of M^4 and CP_2 . In the case of M^4 this means that space-time sheets have exact Z_n rotational symmetry. This suggests that the algebraic numbers q^m could have geometric representation at the level of sensory perception as Z_n symmetric objects. We need not be conscious of this representation in the ordinary wake-up consciousness dominated by sensory perception of ordinary matter with $q = 1$. This would make possible the idea about transcendentals like π , which do not appear in any finite-dimensional extension of even p-adic numbers (p-adic numbers allow finite-dimensional extension by since e^p is ordinary p-adic number). Quantum jumps in which state suffers an action of the generating element of Z_n could also provide a sensory realization of these groups and numbers $\exp(i2\pi/n)$.

Planck constant is identified as the ratio n_a/n_b of integers associated with M^4 and CP_2 degrees of freedom so that a representation of rationals emerge again. The so called ruler and compass rationals whose definition involves only a repeated square root operation applied on rationals are cognitively the simplest ones and should appear first in the evolution of mathematical consciousness. The successful [M3] quantum model for EEG is only one of the applications providing support for their preferred role. Other applications are to Bohr quantization of planetary orbits interpreted as being induced by the presence of macroscopically quantum coherent dark matter [D6].

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