

The Holographic Paradigm and Its Adaptation to Psychological Anthropology

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Over the millennia of man's existence, he has sought to explain supernatural phenomena. While many of his searches have been in vain, given past and present-day methodology, this end is not surprising. Folklore abounds with stories of the unknown, and our conception of apparitions, devils, and super-human abilities have changed little. Today, science has the holographic paradigm and it is within this paradigm that the dark of the unknown will move into the light of tangible known.

In the course of this lecture, I will elaborate on the Holographic Paradigm as it has been defined by the world's leading scientists. I will discuss Psychological Anthropology's role in contributing its analyses. I will introduce the Unified Paradigm and its unique place between these two disciplines. I will provide an example of how the Unified Paradigm operates, and I will list six constructs, including the *genesis of theory*, which are a result of the application of the Unified Paradigm.

The Holographic Paradigm offers a new perspective on religious phenomena and experience. It is based on the disciplines of Quantum Physics, Psychology, and Anthropology, employing perceptive psychological aspects of the individual and his interaction with nature. Combined with the discipline of Psychological Anthropology, it becomes the Unified Paradigm. The Unified Paradigm is a means to research and define the paranormal. It is scientific yet is free to explore the realms deemed religious.

David Bohm, a former protégé of Einstein and one of the world's most respected quantum physicists, and Karl Pribram, one of the architects of our modern understanding of the brain, believe that the universe itself may be a giant hologram, quite literally a kind of image or construct created, at least in part, by the human mind. This remarkable new way of looking at the universe explains not only many of the unsolved puzzles of physics,

but also such mysterious occurrences as telepathy, out-of-body and near-death experiences, “lucid” dreams, and even religious and mystical experiences such as feelings of cosmic unity and miraculous healing.

The concept of the holographic paradigm is summarized as: The sum total of phenomena, either tangible or intangible, in a dynamic—theoretically illusionary—reality. Marilyn Ferguson defines the holographic paradigm: “Our brains mathematically construct ‘concrete’ reality by interpreting frequencies from another dimension, a realm of meaningful, patterned primary reality that transcends time and space. The brain is a hologram, interpreting a holographic universe.”

Bohm’s theories and his work have produced some of the most startling assertions that the tangible reality of our everyday lives is really a kind of illusion, like a holographic image. Underlying it is a deeper order of existence, a vast and more primary level of reality that gives birth to all objects and appearances of our physical world--much in the same way that a piece of holographic film gives birth to the hologram. Bohm calls this deeper level of reality the implicate, or enfolded, order, and refers to our own level of existence as the explicate, or unfolded, order. He uses these terms because he sees the manifestation of all forms in the universe as the result of countless enfoldings and unfoldings between these two orders. Stanislav Grof speculates that if the implicate and explicate orders are an accurate description of reality then, “it is conceivable that certain unusual states of consciousness could mediate direct experience of, and intervention in, the implicate order. It would thus be possible to modify phenomena in the phenomenal world by influencing their generative matrix.”

In his landmark book, *Languages of the Brain*, Karl Pribram’s studies in memory as a nonlocal entity led him to the conclusion that the brain operates like a hologram. He discovered that the characteristic firing of neurons created an interference pattern, much like a laser does when bounced off an object to be photographed. A hologram is only visible because of the interference pattern created by the laser. Although to the naked eye the holographic film appears as nothing more than concentric rings, when a laser beam is shined through the film, the original object materializes. This idea can be best illustrated by an example from Ken Wilber: “If you take a holographic photo of, say, a horse and cut out one section of it—the horse’s head—and then enlarge that section to the original

size, you will get, not a big head, but a picture of the whole horse. In other words, each individual part of the picture contains the whole picture in condensed form. The part is in the whole and the whole is in each part.”

It was from the idea of a gigantic hologram that the Holographic Paradigm was born. According to Pribram, it consists of: [the idea that] “the brain is a hologram perceiving and participating in a holographic universe. In the explicate or manifest realm of space and time, things and events are indeed separate and discrete. However, beneath the surface, as it were, in the implicate or frequency realm, all things and events are spacelessly, timelessly, intrinsically, one and undivided.” And, Bohm and Pribram reasoned, the quintessential religious experience, might very well be a *genuine* and *legitimate* experience of this implicate and universal ground.

In applying these ideas to this lecture topic, the conclusion reached by Bohm and Pribram contributes this important observation: If the brain does function like a hologram—working within a larger universal hologram which it has access to—then it might have a direct link into a field domain or, as Wilber states, a “holistic frequency realm” that transcends spatial and temporal boundaries. And this, reasoned Pribram, might very likely be the domain experienced by the world’s great mystics and sages.

The “holistic frequency realm” is where the common source of religion lies. Within Bohm’s implicate order, religion and all explicate manifestations are contained—implicate matter existing in a “shaded” reality that literally possesses no dimension. The explicate manifestations are direct movements within the implicate which, as matter is unfolded, can be changed and reshaped in virtually limitless ways. Or, as Stanislov Grof remarks: “The world is not necessarily as solid as we perceive it.”

Nevertheless, the implicate and explicate orders are still one and the same—whole and interdependent—and Bohm says that unless this basic understanding takes hold, “primarily physical laws cannot be discovered by a science that attempts to break the world into its parts.” Unexplainable phenomena of any and all types originate from the same source—the implicate—and it is within that basic yet complex understanding where we can begin the journey of discovery. We are, as the Australian aborigines say in their concept of dream-time, just learning how to survive in infinity.

Physicist Fred Wolf asserts that the holographic model explains lucid dreams--unusually vivid dreams in which the dreamer believes he or she is awake. Wolf believes such dreams are actually visits to parallel or “shaded” realities. He also states that the holographic model will ultimately allow science to develop a “physics of consciousness” that will enable science to begin to explore more fully these other dimensional levels of existence. This challenge offered by Wolf can be taken up by Psychological Anthropology, utilizing its experience with human and cultural archetypes, and its openness in studying religious systems.

The Unified Paradigm can meet the challenge. It is grounded in the ideals of the holographic paradigm and is heavily contingent on the responses and advancements offered by cultural analyses and psychoanalytic psychology. The Unified Paradigm works to qualify and test first-hand knowledge, and looks to see if similar types of phenomena labeled “mystical” or “supernatural” exist in ritual systems and in historical accounts. This type of analysis focuses on consistency. The Unified Paradigm reexamines data and allows devising of tests which attempt to discover a more holistic, approximate truth of not only tangible data but also intuitive experience. It succeeds because it does not rely on authority to distinguish truth.

Let me provide an example how the Unified Paradigm would work.

One of the most profound reports of supernormal abilities--and one of the most meticulously recorded--was the Jansenist Miracles of the 18th Century. The Jansenists were a puritanical sect of Dutch-influenced Catholics. The “miracles” began shortly after the death of Francois de Paris in 1727. Because of his saintly reputation, worshippers began gathering at his tomb. Until 1733—possibly until 1750—mourners performed miraculous displays of healing such ailments as paralysis, deafness, sores, and blindness. The mourners also started to experience strange involuntary spasms or convulsions and to undergo the most amazing contortions of their limbs. It was while they were in this fitful, trance-like state that the convulsionaries displayed the most phenomenal of their talents. One was the ability to endure an almost unimaginable variety of physical tortures. These included severe beatings, blows from both heavy and sharp objects, and strangulation—all with absolutely no sign of injury, or even the slightest trace of wounds or bruises.

The thread of similarity, of similar conditions, although varying types of miracles, makes this case worth studying. The events were witnessed by thousands of people. In 1733, it was noted in the public records that over 3,000 volunteers were needed simply to assist the convulsionaries. This attracted persons from all positions in society who provided the numerous accounts, both official and unofficial, of the authenticity of the events.

In applying the Unified Paradigm, the following constructs form the basis for analysis:

1. The intention is to neither prove nor disprove the information, but to ascertain the plausibility of an event. This construct is particularly applicable to historic accounts where no living witnesses remain.

2. What type of information is available? Do we have reports resembling folklore, or do we have an extremely particular account? How reliable are the witnesses? What are the individual and cultural backgrounds of the witnesses? In this instance we have numerous first-hand reports of intricately detailed occurrences of phenomena, which lend credence to the plausibility of this case. It was witnessed by persons in different social classes, and by the sheer volume of reports, cannot be easily dismissed as a contrived instance. Carre de Montgeron, a court-appointed scribe, and ironically sent by King Louis XV to disprove the Jansenists, wrote a particularly vivid account of Jansenist Jeanne Maulet: “To test the convulsionaries apparent invulnerability to torture, Mlle. Maulet leaned against a stone wall while a very strong man delivered one hundred blows to her stomach with a 30-pound hammer.” It is noted that the convulsionaries themselves asked to be tortured because they said it relieved the pain of the convulsions. To test the force of the blows, Montgeron himself took up the hammer. Montgeron’s report is as follows: “At the 25th blow, the stone upon which I struck, which had been shaken loose by the preceding efforts, suddenly became loose and fell to the other side of the wall, making an aperture more than half a foot in size.”

3. Generate analysis from outside sources: Michael Talbot regards the event as psychokinesis on a large scale. This idea hinges on the logic that intense faith and hysteria trigger the deeper forces of the mind. Instead of being produced by one individual, the psychokinetic effects may have been created by the combined fervor and

belief of all those present—which might account for the unusual vigor of the manifestations. Harvard psychologist William McDougall echoes Talbot when he noted in the 1920s that religious miracles might be the result of the collective psychic powers of large numbers of worshippers. In other words, visions brought on by “mass hysteria” are no less real for being labeled thusly. Indeed, the concept of “mass hysteria” is a relevant component of the Holographic Paradigm.

4. At this point, using the information gathered in points 1 through 3, possibilities are debated as to how such phenomena are manifested. Could Mlle. Maulet have had the ability to alter her body’s physiology to become more or less substantial? Speculations are as follows: Talbot argues that PK is at work, however he notes that it does not explain every aspect of the convulsionaries’ invulnerability. Some researchers believe the holographic view of reality may have the key to understanding the phenomena on its own ground. Bohm believes that consciousness and matter are different aspects of the same fundamental something (called *Æther* by the alchemists), a something that has its origins in the implicate order. As Talbot puts into simple terms: “In addition to psychokinetically moving objects around, the mind may also be able to reach down and reprogram the cosmic motion picture projector that created those objects in the first place. Thus, not only could the conventionally recognized rules of nature, such as inertia, be completely bypassed, but the mind could alter and reshape the material world in a way far more dramatic than even psychokinesis implies.”

Through this analysis and speculation, *genesis of theory* is obtained. Instead of an incident going unnoticed or ignored by the scientific community, the Unified Paradigm takes on the event and applies to it the best theories of the day. This procedure evolves intellectually, upgrading an incident from just a report and its plausibility, to the possible reason for the manifestation, and then to theories of the mechanisms behind the manifestation. The next step is to further analyze ways to replicate the event—by either creating it with technology, or by designing devices to record such events scientifically in the field.

The Unified Paradigm’s contribution to science is that it reasserts the intrinsic value of mystical phenomena and experience. Unlike most ideas outside the holographic paradigm, it does not belittle or completely reject such invaluable sources. Instead, as in

the Jansenist example, it considers these sources much as it does the “hard” sciences. Fritjof Capra notes: “Physicists explore levels of matter; mystics explore levels of mind. What they have in common is that both levels lie beyond ordinary sense perception.” It is crucial we accept this as truth; that we not limit ourselves to one particular view of the universe. We must remember that every qualified view is not only unique but relevant in scientific endeavor.

I submit the application of the Unified Paradigm will expand the domain of science, increasing exponentially the bounds of present-day knowledge and understanding. It asks scientific questions of the unknown, dealing with reports of phenomena which have remained on the fringes of our scope of knowledge since man began pondering the nature of his existence.

In assimilating all conceptual knowns and unknowns, the Unified Paradigm provides an explanation, incorporating these constants into its framework:

1. The supernatural and the sum total of its visible manifestations are a perceivable reality.

2. Current scientific theory does not explain the supernatural and the sum total of its visible manifestations—in some cases completely ignores it. So science must look to areas outside the field of anthropology—primarily quantum physics—and incorporate these fields for suitable hypotheses.

3. The Holographic Paradigm is a valid theory of a perceived reality.

4. Operating within the Holographic Paradigm and applicable scientific theories, the Unified Paradigm utilizes interchangeable human perceptions. While not limited to its exclusivity, it works to generate a *genesis of theory* which fosters evolution of intellect and attitude.

5. Within these constants, the Unified Paradigm works to foresee future application of technologies to enable replication of paranormal phenomena.

6. What the Unified Paradigm emphasizes most is that true paradox in nature does not exist; paradox is only a perceived limitation, and as we learn more of the true nature of the universe we will come to accept this conclusion. These six points I have listed are the constants provided by the Unified Paradigm. Within its creation and subsequent future theories, the scope of its application will be realized.