



Einstein, Science, and Philosophy

Danilo M. Lombos of D.M. Lombos Law Office, Philippines

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to reinvigorate Philosophy and the present crop of philosophers by directing their attention to the need to update themselves of the advancement in scientific theories and mathematics in line with the contention of Stephen Hawking, Leibniz and Galileo. In that we will not be able to understand the universe and reality unless we learn the language and grasp the symbols in which it is written. The scientists describe “what” the universe and reality is while the philosophers ask the most important question “why”. The answer to which springs the significance and meaning of the “what” of our actions and of life, in general. Philosophy without science is empty, science without philosophy is blind. Part 1 discusses that since the time of the Milesian Philosophers, philosophy was conducted by assuming the existence of a rational mind which depends upon the impressions it receives from the senses. These sense impressions, though known by the Greek philosophers, like Plato and Aristotle up to the contemporary Philosophers like Heidegger and Nietzsche, to be of limited perspectives, thereafter form thought structures and ultimately a conceptual framework which becomes the determinative standard of what is valid or invalid for us or what is acceptable or not acceptable for us. This “conceptual framework” determines the form and structure of our reality by imposing concepts on everything that now becomes our “world”, our “reality”, our “truth”. Part 2 discusses that the dawn of Quantum Mechanics through the discovery of the characteristics of subatomic particles especially that of light particles in the experiments of Max Planck, Bohr and Einstein, showing that light is both wave and particle, brought about a revolution in science, epistemology and the theories of cognition. Quantum Mechanics, and Einstein’s General and special theory of relativity show us that the “real world” follows different rules and conceptual patterns different from that imposed by our minds. More importantly, these concepts of Quantum Mechanics and Einstein’s relativity are also originally, precisely and more accurately expressed not in the ordinary everyday language of conversation but in the language of Mathematics. Part 3 presents the overwhelming imperative that for philosophy to continue its tradition of searching for wisdom and knowledge, it must necessarily update itself with the advancement in Mathematics, and Science, especially the fields of Quantum physics, Relativity, and Astronomy, failing which, philosophy would be relegated to the dust bin of irrelevance and perpetual insignificance. As Stephen Hawking said, philosophers must update themselves with the latest scientific theories and mathematics in order to continue asking the question “why”. It is the duty of philosophers to continue asking the question “why” while scientists pursue the question “What”. Without knowing the “what” how can philosophers intelligently ask the question “why”? – a most important question from which will spring the significance and meaning of the “what”, as well as the rationale, direction and ethical norms that will guide our actions and our life in general. I venture say to the point of repetition that philosophy without science is empty, science without philosophy is blind.

Keywords

Albert Einstein, Science, Philosophy, Conceptual Framework, Mathematics, Quantum Mechanics