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Quantumly Entangled: Cosmic Consciousness in the Classroom

Abstract

The main problem with Western education is the dualistic perspective which separates the teacher/tutor and the student into two separate identities. However, modern physics, specifically the theory of quantum entanglement, is showing that the atoms which compose the false identity of a "self" are intertwined in a mutual state of causality. These quantum revelations are affirming the ancient wisdom teaching of "That art thou" which is found in religions and spiritualities across the globe which an individual arrives at in an ego death and rebirth experience. The system of cosmic consciousness in the classroom expunges the dualistic perspective of "you" and "me" and focuses on only "us," fostering an environment of co-habitation and learning.

Key words: tutor, quantum physics, non-locality, entanglement, consciousness, Western education, alchemy, metaphysics, hermeticism, Hinduism, Buddhism, William Blake, Zen, pedagogy.

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour
- William Blake

Several years ago the entire nature of my being and existence was transformed in a seemingly inconsequential moment of heightened thought. As I pondered my relation to other people and the universe at large, I realized that I was the universe experiencing itself, that I was already loved by every bit of existence as I was in a constant state of mutual co-creation with every atom across every spectrum of reality, and above all else, that there was no “me” or “I” to begin with. In a moment of what the Zen Buddhists describe as “satori” I had become timeless and formless, and at one with what the Hindus call “Indra’s Net,” in which the existence of every aspect of reality is reflected in every other bit. What I experienced is what some people call an ego death and rebirth experience, an experience that consumed me into existence at one with what alchemists call the “Anima Mundi,” and an experience which Jesus spoke of when he said “Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Since I had this revelation, I have escaped the dualistic view of “you” and “me,” I only know see “us.” It is this immaculate perception that drives not only my world view, but especially in the context of being a teacher and a tutor, my educating philosophy.

It has been my observation that for the many people who come to this realization, it occurs with a certain amount of alienation. I typically do not discuss it openly because when I do I receive in return the “this person is crazy” stare. This perception is implicit in my character and persona, and I refrain from dogmatizing my spiritual gnosis because I know that

paradoxically, an ego death and rebirth experience cannot be obtained through any other means than self-reflection.

At the current time, I am a first year master's student at Utah State University. I am also serving as a graduate instructor in English as well as a tutor at the University's Writing Center. Often I feel as if my world views are incongruent with the prevailing sentiment of academia, and it has been difficult for me to find my thoughts mirrored in pedagogy. So recently, when I began to read Rosenblatt's *Transactional Theory of Reading and Writing*, my eyes lit up when I read the following passage:

“For 300 years, Descartes’ dualistic view of the self as distinct from nature sufficed, for example, for the Newtonian paradigm in physics. The self, or “subject,” was separate from the “object” perceived. “Objective” facts, completely free of subjectivity, were sought, and a direct, immediate perception of reality was deemed possible. Einstein’s theory and the developments in sub-atomic physics revealed the need to acknowledge that, as Neils Bohr (1959) explained, *the observer is part of the observation* – human beings are part of nature. Even the physicists’ facts depend to some extent on the interests, hypotheses, and technologies of the observer,” (Rosenblatt, 1364). (Italics my own).

My goodness, I thought. Finally a pedagogical theorist understands the paradigm through which I conduct my life. The big take away from this quote is that the observer and the observed are not two mutually exclusive identities, they are intertwined in a state of mutual causation because they are the same “thing.” *There is no observer and there is no observed.* It is this notion that fuels my interaction with students both in the classroom as a teacher and in the writing center as a tutor: there is no you, there is no me, our minds and our very existence are intertwined. What’s more, the ego death and rebirth experience is not mystical fluff, it is a reality that is being affirmed by modern quantum physics, as referenced by Neils Bohr’s experiments.

The primary problem facing Western thought, and in turn Western education is that we operate from a place of “I-consciousness” instead of a place of what I like to think of as “cosmic consciousness.” Cosmic consciousness is the ability to, as William Blake phrased it, “See a World in a Grain of Sand, And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,” (Blake). It is a sense of divine interconnection, of the interdependence of nature and the nonseparability of matter.

With the notion of cosmic consciousness introduced I would like to articulate how I believe this philosophy should be implemented in the classroom as well as a university writing center. Operating from a point of cosmic consciousness allows for the duality of “I” and “you” to be expunged altogether. It does wonders to erase the power structure inherent between the teacher/tutor and the student. The classroom and writing center become infinitely more co-creative and allows for work to be done collaboratively instead of being inherently split in nature. Really, the teacher/tutor and the student are merely assemblages of atoms that are intertwined with one another creating reality. I’m sure that practically anyone who has received a college education can think of a teacher that has been exceptionally ego-centric in their method of teaching and cares little for his or her students. In the system of cosmic consciousness, this type of thinking is not possible.

To affirm this mystical philosophy, I would like to introduce a topic that is being explored today in the modern quantum physics alluded to earlier: quantum entanglement. This phenomena is the fact that “entangled particles remain connected so that actions performed on one affect the other, even separated by great distances... The rules of quantum physics state that an unobserved photon exists in all possible states simultaneously but, when observed or measured, exhibits only one state,” (Tate). The repercussions of this are enormous: particles

are in a constant state of interaction with one another. Indeed, everything we do affects everything else. Or, as Chuang-Tzu would say, “‘That’ comes out of ‘this’ and ‘this depends on ‘that’ – which is to say that ‘this’ and ‘that’ give birth to each other,” (Mitchell, 18). It is precisely this notion, that what you are observing is *actually you*, “That art thou,” is what Aldous Huxley identified as *the* perennial philosophy when he said: “Based upon the direct experience of those who have fulfilled the necessary conditions of such knowledge, this teaching is expressed most succinctly in the Sanskrit formula, *tat tvam asi* (‘That art thou’); the Atman, or immanent eternal Self, is one with Brahman, the Absolute Principle of all existence; and the last end of every being is to discover the fact for himself, to find out Who he really is,” (Huxley, 8).

What a brave new world it would be if “That art thou” was the prevailing paradigm in education. No longer would the classroom and a writing center be places of rigid power structures, but rather they would be a place of literal cosmic co-creation. Manly P. Hall once said “Though the modern world may know a million secrets, the ancient world knew one – and that was greater than the million; for the million secrets breed death, disaster, sorrow, selfishness, lust and avarice, but the one secret confers life, light and truth,” (Hall, 119). This one secret is “That art thou,” the perennial philosophy, the *Prisca theologia*.

The ego death and rebirth experience that opens one to the knowledge of “That art thou” is the route to cosmic consciousness – but how does this relate to teaching and tutoring? Well, it is my belief that the teacher or the tutor should get rid of “I-consciousness” from the experience of teaching and tutoring all together. Quantum entanglement has shown us that in fact there is no teacher, no tutor, and no student; there are only entangled particles co-existing

and creating reality together. Of course, the results of this sort of interaction are beyond extensive. Both the teacher/tutor and the student can truly learn together, diametrically opposed to the inherently dualistic method of teaching often used in the banking concept of education when the teacher and student are mutually exclusive and the teacher divulges wisdom and knowledge to the student. In my system of cosmic consciousness in the classroom and in the context of tutoring, this sort of interaction is virtually non-existent, as the teacher knows that they are not separate from the student, but rather *they are them*. The classroom and writing center automatically become an infinitely more compassionate, open and interactive environment.

In finality, I would like to leave you with the pinnacle of the ancient wisdom, found in the Hermetic writings of the *Corpus Hermeticum*:

“If you don’t make yourself equal to God, you can’t perceive God; for like is known by like. Leap free of everything that is physical, and grow as fast as that immeasurable vastness; step beyond all time and become eternal; then you will perceive God. Realize that nothing is impossible for you; recognize that you too are immortal and that you can embrace all things in your mind; find your home in the heart of every living creature; make yourself higher than all heights and lower than all depths; bring all opposites inside yourself and reconcile them; understand that you are everywhere, on the land, in the sea, in the sky; realize that you haven’t been begotten, that you are still in the womb, that you are young, that you are old, that you are dead, that you are in the world beyond the grave; hold all this in your mind, all times and places, all substances and qualities and magnitudes; then you can perceive God, (Mitchell, 34).

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