A Theory of Knowledge

Everything interacts with its environment – from the smallest sub-atomic particle to the largest galaxy. The human being is no different.

Interaction insinuates dynamic inter-relationship. Knowledge can be defined as “post-active” comprehension. The dynamic inter-relationship involved in the comprehension necessary to achieve knowledge is the tension between opposites, or what may be called reciprocal reciprocation (RR).

A RR consists of two diametrically opposing concepts which cannot be inferred without the other. They are mutually exclusive in concept and definition, yet mutually inclusive in the operation of comprehension.

The opposition of the positive and the negative is the most readily recognized RR (i.e. yes and no). The simplest example is left and right. If something is left (yes), then it is not right (no) – and vice-versa. A technological analogy of this would be the digital computer, where a circuit is either on (yes) or off (no).

Two important facets of RR need to be understood. First, one must remember that RR allows comprehension so that definition may be determined – at which time we acquire what is defined as knowledge. Thus, even the slightest differentiation of objects or ideas is done through the use of RR: something just left of center will still be realized to be to the right of something – or, something we perceive as blue-green will be neither blue nor green, but something else.

The second, and more subtle facet, is that of prioritization of comprehensions. The standard concept of space, for instance, is meaningless unless one first comprehends the concepts of left and right, up and down, and near and far. The concept of space, therefore, is a result of a cascading of basic RRs into a more abstract concept (i.e. space) of a higher intellectual level. These higher level concepts then can be internalized (using RR) for use in the resolution of other ambiguities required for humans to expand knowledge.

Knowledge has been referred to as the comprehension of the realities of the universe. Defining reality has been argued throughout history, but there appears to be two legitimate states of existence.

First, there is the objective existence proposed by the ancient Greeks. They proposed that something either exists or it does not exist. [Notice the reciprocal nature of the argument.] Since it would be incomprehensible to hold that nothing exists, then something must exist. This is objective existence.

Second, there is the subjective existence so eloquently stated by Descartes in the phrase: “I think, therefore I am”. This phrase resulted from the realization that no matter how much one can deny the reality of anything, one cannot deny that they are denying.

These two states of existence are a RR. Our subjective existence allows comprehension of our objective existence, which allows our subjective existence comprehension of our objective existence, which allows…

The resulting scenario may be called the “reality situation”. This dynamic inter-relationship between object and subjective existence is not a classical attempt at an explanation of reality, but rather, an undeniable situation in which the rational mind finds itself. It is impossible to separate our subjective observations from the objective universe because one is meaningless (in operation) without the other. Consequently, as we cannot employ one without the other, all of our comprehensions required for knowledge come to us via this primary reciprocal reciprocation of subjective and objective existence.

Reality encompasses our undeniable “reality situation”. This can easily be demonstrated by experiences which defy explanation - as experience is different from knowledge. While we may be able to have knowledge of the consequences and existence of an experience, we may not be able to comprehend (and thus, have knowledge of) what constituted the experience itself. This is exemplified by the science of quantum dynamics. Richard Feynman famously stated that “...nobody really understands quantum dynamics.” This would be because quantum dynamics operates outside our “reality situation”, and hence, outside of knowledge. However, its ramifications do not, and therefore, do fall within our “reality situation” (i.e. the realm of knowledge).

According to this theory, all knowledge is obtained through comprehension using RR. If this is true, then it stands to reason that knowledge is finite, since RR is an inherently finite parameter. If RR is necessary to know something, then singularities or infinities cannot be comprehended - only their existence may be comprehended. This presents a major stumbling block to those who insist that knowledge is infinite. If knowledge is infinite, one will have to come up with a different definition of knowledge - one (like that presented above) which would stand in all occasions.