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Science and its organs of publication

Assessment attempts by Dr. Manfred Pohl

By scientific publications, I mean media whose task is to make the findings of scientific research available to the public so that experts and interested individuals alike can inform and educate themselves, and also to stimulate scientific discussion and further research, thus contributing to the advancement of science.

All scientific journals employ the peer-review process, in which accredited reviewers, the peers, guide the publications in the journals. Their task is to assess submitted articles for publication and to provide recommendations to the editors, which are generally followed. Therefore, reviewers must have a proven scientific standing in the fields they are evaluating, which qualifies them for this task. The task of peer reviewers is not to classify the content of papers according to their conformity with generally accepted standard opinions, thereby taking sides for or against an existing doctrine and binding their decision-making authority over publications to this. Such an approach hinders the initiation of scientific discussions, suppresses other, potentially relevant viewpoints, undermines scientific progress, and thus clashes with freedom of the press, which is a highly valued asset in our society. The substantive evaluation of a publication must be reserved for the scientists who use the publication for their information.

In some fields, particularly theoretical physics and cosmology, practices have become entrenched that counteract this process. The majority of reviewers in this field are professionally committed to the established standard models, which they vehemently defend. They do not tolerate other or opposing opinions and judge them as false or even as a conspiracy against science. With these assessments, they claim the right to make censorial judgments as to whether a submitted contribution aligns with their views. If it deviates from the official positions, they recommend that the editor reject its publication. However, they have no authority to do so.

The economist Prof. Dr. Mathias Binswanger from the University of Applied Sciences Solothurn, Switzerland, writes the following in his book *Sinnlose Wettbewerbe - warum wir immer mehr Unsinn produzieren* (*Meaningless Competitions - Why We Are Producing More and More Nonsense*):

"If a scientist wants to publish an article in a scientifically recognized journal, they must first submit it to the journal's editors, who are usually established champions in their field. However, these editors often lack the time to attend to the day-to-day operations of 'their journal', and therefore there is a less established managing editor responsible for the administrative process. This editor receives manuscripts from eager scientists and thus initiates the peer-review procedure. But what exactly is meant by the peer-review procedure? The submitted manuscripts are given to one or more professors or other recognized scientists (the so-called peers) for review. Ideally, these peers work in the same field as the author of the article and should therefore be able to assess its quality." ... "As the crowning conclusion of the process, the reviewers then inform the editor in writing whether they recommend acceptance (very rare), revision, or rejection (most frequent) of the article for the respective journal. Quite a few top journals even boast about their high rejection rates, which supposedly reflect the high quality of these journals (Fröhlich 2007, p. 338). For such journals, the rejection rates are in the range of 95 percent."

The modern researcher knows that such an approach is no longer useful and inappropriate. It is all the more astonishing, then, that such methods are firmly established in current theoretical physics and cosmology. With a profound bow to the clerical doctrine of creation, scientists cease to think and research independently. The anti-scientific belief in a "beginning" of the universe with all its consequences—Big Bang, inflationary phase, accelerated expansion, dark energy—hinders not only cosmology but also the progress of science in general. It is hardly surprising that contemporary cosmology no longer invokes any gods to justify its adherence to the Big Bang hypothesis. This misconception has become so entrenched that even scientists who do not believe in a consciousness outside of matter can no longer abandon the narrative of an axiomatic stance toward the Big Bang hypothesis. Logically, this phenomenon has no explanation. This clearly demonstrates the administratively enforced control of an entire scientific field, whose members are kept from independent research and critical thinking through regulatory influence. This influence sometimes goes so far that young researchers no longer receive funding if they question established opinions.

In his book, Binswanger laments the complete loss of scientific independence at universities and colleges and their total surveillance by state institutions. Since the 1960s, the quality of research has declined sharply across the board. Universities and colleges must submit to artificially staged competitions in which they are subjected to a comprehensive comparative evaluation (ranking) using a multitude of sometimes nonsensical so-called quality indicators. The results of these rankings are then used to weight the distribution of research funds. As a result, the focus of universities and colleges has shifted away from research itself and toward achieving self-promotional metrics in these pseudo-competitions.

He quotes Thorpe from 2003: "Coupled with the euphoria surrounding the market and competition was also a deep distrust of independent, 'ivory tower' university-based basic research, the purpose of which politicians often don't quite understand. What does the search for knowledge achieve besides high costs? Former British Education Secretary Charles Clarke therefore described the 'medieval search for truth' as obsolete and superfluous."

At this point, I would like to offer some scientific clarifications regarding the misconceptions described above and their consequences.

Among the fundamental, irrefutable laws of nature are the conservation laws of energy, mass, and momentum, as well as the equivalence of mass and energy. These physical principles are increasingly being denied in cosmology with flimsy excuses; it is claimed that they are not applicable to the "universe as a whole." Such talk is baseless because, firstly, due to the unlimited delation of the universe in all directions, there is no "whole" universe, and secondly, because natural laws are valid in all inertial frames of reference, so there are no natural laws that only sometimes apply – if they cannot be used, then they simply do not apply in the universe. Denying these natural laws invariably leads to speculations that contradict reality, and these are now employed by almost all of cosmology. Across the board, an unbridled mysticism surrounding cosmic processes is constructed using pseudo-logical claims, suggesting that the universe must necessarily have had a beginning. This suggestive argumentation serves the sole purpose of preserving something that cannot be maintained by rational thought: the theory of a Big Bang, with which cosmic matter supposedly arose from nothing. Increasingly unrealistic constructs are offered, and the attempts at explanation become ever more nebulous. The public is expected to believe these accounts because the so-

called "experts" say so. The motives of these experts for constantly spreading new unrealistic narratives remain unclear.

All these misconceptions can be traced back to one and the same fundamental failure: the lack of a crucial definition of the object of study in physics—a precise definition of matter. The dialectical-materialist concept of matter, which was generally accepted as recently as the 1980s and encompassed the eternal and infinite existence of matter as mass and energy, has been dismantled over the last three decades, culminating in the complete denial of its necessity. This has plunged physics, deprived of its object of study, into a crisis that remains irreversible to this day. Current explanations of matter, insofar as any are used at all, are riddled with errors that exacerbate this crisis. For example, energy is asserted to be non-matter, while space, time, and forces are treated as material entities. See:

<http://hauptplatz.unipohl.de/Wissenschaft/EssenceMatter.pdf> and further articles at <http://hauptplatz.unipohl.de/Natur.htm>.

However, as long as such errors are considered the dominant views, one cannot speak of a scientific method. They are the root cause of all proclaimed pseudo-theories and speculations about the cosmic movement of matter.

I have experienced this complex predicament myself quite frequently in the physical sciences. Over the past 25 years, I have applied to more than 20 scientific journals for publication of some of my papers, all of which were rejected, either with vague statements or without any explanation at all. Among these rejections are contributions that reveal quite obvious errors in publications, errors that require correction. The following example illustrates this point.

Recently, a new theory about the inflationary phase of the universe after the Big Bang was published (yet again), a theory that has been refuted as absurd for decades. It speaks of the movement of cosmic matter at multiple times the speed of light. This publication presents an extensive mathematical apparatus with rather dubious representations to justify an inflationary phase. The very first line of this "mathematical" derivation presents a sum of a pressure in N/m^2 and an energy density in J/m^3 , which cannot possibly have any physical basis. The proclaimed sum cannot be calculated because it involves two quantities of different natures with different units of measurement. This is something one learns as a student in a general education school. This error permeates the entire derivation, combined with other mathematical inconsistencies, so that the entire derivation ultimately becomes meaningless. Such a scientific blunder was published in the American journal *Physical Review Research*, No. 7/2025, of the American Physical Society (APS). Apparently, none of the reviewers noticed the errors. My rebuttal, submitted to the same journal for publication and pointing out the significant errors, was rejected without explanation. Further details can be found at http://hauptplatz.unipohl.de/Wissenschaft/Inflation_Gegendarstellung.pdf.

Other journals also contain hair-raising publications, all of which passed the peer-review process without any objections from the peers. Here you can find:

- Explanations for the conversion of mass into energy and back (Europhysic Letters, EPL) (<http://hauptplatz.unipohl.de/Wissenschaft/AufarbeitungAblehnung.pdf>)
- Explanations about the detection of gravitational waves (already refuted by Einstein in 1938) (<http://hauptplatz.unipohl.de/Wissenschaft/Gravitationswellen.htm>, http://hauptplatz.unipohl.de/Wissenschaft/Gravitationswellen_Maerchen.pdf)
- Proofs that the sum of all natural numbers from 0 to ∞ is equal to $-1/12$ (Der Spiegel) (<http://hauptplatz.unipohl.de/Wissenschaft/DieSummenUnendlicherFolgen.pdf>)

- Descriptions of the warp drive, which would allow travel in space at speeds higher than the speed of light (Der Standard)
(http://hauptplatz.unipohl.de/Wissenschaft/UeberDenWARP_Antrieb.pdf,
http://hauptplatz.unipohl.de/Wissenschaft/Groesser_C.pdf)
- Developments on large spacecraft that could reach Proxima Centauri in 250 years (Project Hyperion)
(<http://hauptplatz.unipohl.de/Wissenschaft/RaumschiffChrysalis.pdf>)
- Articles about the beginning of the universe and its accelerated expansion (Frankfurter Rundschau)
(<http://hauptplatz.unipohl.de/Wissenschaft/UrknallFrankfurterRundschau.pdf>,
<http://hauptplatz.unipohl.de/Wissenschaft/LieuMaterie.pdf>)
- Explanations about the size of the universe (an MDR podcast)
(<http://hauptplatz.unipohl.de/Wissenschaft/WieGrossUniversum.pdf>)

In all known media, there are no limits whatsoever on the publication of such bizarre scientific excesses. Anyone and everyone can disseminate such scientific blunders. There are no peers sufficiently qualified to question the seriousness of such contributions and ultimately reject them for inferior quality. However, they seem to possess this qualification immediately when an author contradicts one or more standard opinions and provides arguments to correct the errors. This then triggers the familiar narcissistic reaction of protecting narratives that are firmly entrenched in standard views and can no longer be questioned. In other words: the standard model is correct, everything else is wrong or conspiratorial, therefore no discussion is necessary. This is not a scientific method; I know scientific methods to be different.

Such behavior makes me feel like I've been thrown back into the Middle Ages. After Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) established the heliocentric worldview in the 16th century, nothing changed. Not even when Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) proved it mathematically and through observation 100 years later. Instead, Galileo was forced by the Holy Inquisition to recant his teachings. But this couldn't prevent the breakthrough of the new understanding of the world. The replacement of the geocentric worldview, in which the Church, with its power at the time, established the Earth as the center of the universe, didn't occur through new insights from the Church, but rather through public pressure. The clergy lost credibility with their doctrine, and the heliocentric worldview increasingly attained the status of common knowledge. Nevertheless, it took another 300 years for the heliocentric worldview to be officially recognized in science. It wasn't until 1992 that both scientists were rehabilitated by Pope John Paul II. Though I have personal doubts as to whether the clergy is generally authorized to rehabilitate scientists. One can only hope that it won't take another 300 years before the current standard model of cosmology, and the many unsuitable speculations that accompany and support it, are replaced by a model that explains the movement of cosmic matter with observed facts.

Also of interest here is my contribution to the discussion on the Big Bang hypothesis, published in the science section of the Berliner Zeitung on July 18, 2024. The newspaper had given me the extremely rare opportunity to publish a critical article on questions of theoretical physics and cosmology. This was done by mutual agreement with a courageous science editor who was willing to allow such criticism to be published. However, since my views, which make me a dissident among today's physicists, could not (or would not) ultimately be left unchallenged, the editorial staff themselves printed a counter-article by the astrophysicist Dr. Thomas Bührke on July

25, 2024. A staunch advocate of the mainstream, he attempted to refute my statements with irrelevant remarks. With his contribution, however, he ultimately demonstrated that he himself apparently has insurmountable problems with basic physics knowledge. His contribution confirms my statements in the preceding paragraph about the narcissism of mainstream followers. I have compiled the whole story at <http://hauptplatz.unipohl.de/Wissenschaft/UrknallBZ.htm>.

In conclusion, I believe that science is not solely comprised of the creative research work of its many contributors, but is also, in detail, dependent on societal structures. This includes political and economic dependencies, as well as the influence of the Church. Although the influence of the clergy appears somewhat less pronounced today, it is nonetheless present. In Germany, for example, stem cell research is subject to considerable religiously influenced restrictions due to this influence. I also recall an anachronistic statement by Pope John Paul II, who, in an audience on the sidelines of an event of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in 1981, to which Stephen Hawking was also invited, instructed him that there was nothing wrong with us studying the development of the universe after the Big Bang, but we should not attempt to research the Big Bang itself, for it was the moment of creation and thus the work of God (Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, 2001, Rowohlt-Verlag, Hamburg, ISBN 3-499-61340-9). There are also illustrative examples of the economic constraints on science. When the American astronomer Halton Arp advanced his research to measure galaxies whose movements cannot be explained by the Big Bang hypothesis, he received a letter from the dean in November 1981. After more than a hundred nights of observation, his research project had not yielded the desired results. He would no longer be granted telescope time for this type of research. In short: either he proves his Big Bang disproof or he will no longer receive funding. As a result, Arp left the USA and took a position at the Max Planck Institute in Munich. (<https://www.zeit.de/zeit-wissen/2010/01/Halton-Arp>). On the other hand, considerable funds remain available to the approximately 2,000 scientists worldwide who are searching for gravitational waves with LIGO interferometers – waves which, according to Einstein's research since 1938, cannot exist – to chase a phantom. The relationship: gravitational waves are needed to support the Standard Model, but a Big Bang disproof is not.