

Cause and Coincidence:
The Serial Structure Of Reality
...being the lost paradigm of Paul Kammerer, elucidated by
John Townley and Robert Schmidt...
All German translation from *Das Gesetz Der Serie* by Robert Schmidt

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Overview

As we journey into the twenty-first century, humankind is increasingly being faced with a universal crisis. It's not an economic crisis, or a moral crisis, or a political crisis, or even a technological or ecological crisis, although all of these are involved and contribute to the larger problem.

It's a reality crisis.

The more rapidly and radically the world around us changes, the more we must look to find some kind of universal personal and social foundation in reality upon which to ground ourselves to face the wind and storms of change. Without that, we will (and are being) blown away. Yet everywhere we look to find this necessary grounding, we are presented with contradictions, right down to the perceived physical reality we have to deal with on a day-to-day basis. Nothing contributes to this more than the fast pace of change and the flood of information created by the ubiquity of the computer, which increasingly has become not only the tool but the driving force of our culture. Using mathematics and physics of the strangest sorts, it assures us that life is a quantum gamble, where nothing is certain except statistically, and information that describes our state at one moment is irrelevant the next. We are catapulting ourselves toward the dream of virtual reality when we don't know what our reality is to begin with.

At the bottom of it is, simply, cause and effect. To feel stable in the least, we need to know, in a phrase, what comes next. That used to be obvious. Life worked on ordinary cause-and-effect, Newton-style, and seeing was believing. Anyone who had a different version probably didn't have his head screwed on tight. Not so, any more, or so it seems. Drop a tab of acid, and internal gauges of reality turn upside-down, often making as much or more sense than the original. Or, if you're of a more legal mind, get a scrip for Prozac and change your whole personality for, perhaps, the better. Or perhaps not. Suddenly that bag of trash you throw out has become an insult to the planet, a previously inanimate object which now has become Gaia. You're supposed to get along with something you didn't even know was there. Too complicated? Believe on Jesus and it'll all be OK, unless you wind up in Jonestown or with the Branch Davidians. Pursue the prophets of the New Age, if you can find one that makes sense for more than a few months. Or, follow the scientific method and reject all the rest as airhead garbage -- and find your funding, and community support, too often cut out from under you.

Part of the problem is communication -- as long as your input is limited and consistent, you can bring yourself to accept the status quo and reject the occasional anomaly. If you only encounter one person who has been in contact with extraterrestrials, you can discount it as crazy. When the media brings you thousands who have, reality begins to falter. Everyone experiences a strange coincidence now and again, but when you find out they are a regular occurrence, flying in the face of accepted logic, you wonder which part, if any, is really real, or if reality has any collective meaning at all except on a personal, moment-to-moment basis. That's our current price of knowing too much and understanding too little. It's been going on for more than a century, but recently it's been getting all too intense.

Pop science and philosophy like to label this a paradigm shift -- a good enough buzzword -- but which paradigm do you pick? How often do you have to shift horses in mid-stream before you find a reliable mount?

Part of the problem has been in the approach. When, for instance, you give up science for the Bible, or vice-versa, you simply exchange mutually exclusive belief systems, which doesn't get you anywhere -- just one set of failings traded for another. So, too, with most of the "paradigms" currently being offered. Throughout history, successful paradigm shifts have

proceeded from a more limiting view of reality, albeit somewhat still workable and based on facts formerly available, to a more inclusive one, which includes the previous but enlarges upon it to include more recently acquired information. Evolution generally does not reject a previous stage outright, but expands and improves upon it. So, general relativity did not invalidate Newtonian physics, it expanded its limits with a larger view which kept the old, working system and included a larger explanation for what did not fit. Our perception of reality thus is like a growing crabshell, or a snake shedding its skin, each keeping the original interior but bringing in more space as the result of growth. Of course, it's those growth spurts without a shell or skin when things get a little dicey.

As a lifelong collector of oddities and anomalies, and a student of pursuits outside the more recent paradigm such as astrology and spiritual technology, it long seemed to me that there would have to be an overall structure of reality which explained all (or at least most) of the many observations that seem real enough to practical experience and yet do not fit into the currently accepted overall picture. Too much of everyday experience did not fit the mold, and when that happens, you've got to change the mold, despite what establishment pundits may insist upon. The trouble is, who's got a new, bigger, and better structure to drop it all into?

A lot of people in the 1960's spent a lot of time searching for just that, through drugs, music, religion, fringe science, and a host of other avenues which have altered our culture irrevocably, but only in the direction of change and flux, not of solution. We're still at it now, but with a host of individual new structures that often don't get along very well. So where's the big picture we're all looking for?

One of the notable seekers of that turbulent decade, though not of that generation, was Arthur Koestler, and his seminal book *The Roots Of Coincidence* went far to try to explore the alternate realities that the new physics, spiritual awareness, and global consciousness were bringing into being. In that book, he mentioned an early 20th century scientist named Paul Kammerer who had first addressed the universality of unexplained coincidence and related anomalies and from whom Jung, allegedly, had derived his concept of "acausal synchronicity," now such a popular phrase. Unlike Jung, who had made the whole thing a very personal and unexplainable affair, Kammerer had used a very universal, scientific (for the time) approach -- collecting, cataloguing and structuring the events which he encountered. In fact, he had even published a large work on the subject, *Das Gesetz Der Serie*, in 1919. Alas, he died shortly after, and the work had moldered ever since, never even translated out of the German. I quietly thought to myself at the time: nothing is going to get organized in our generation unless we first go back and see what was done already in such an extensive work. And I let it go at that, having no access to the work.

Over a decade later, I mentioned this to a friend of mine, Ellen Black, who, being an astute researcher, went and dug up a copy of Kammerer's book, obscurely gathering dust in a California library. She gave it to her husband Bob Schmidt, who was a skilled translator with a deep background in philosophy and science history, and soon bits and pieces of the tome began to come to light.

Bits and pieces it was, too, for at first it didn't seem to make a lot of sense to Bob, despite his background. It seemed, on first reading, to be a tantalizing but confusing set of data and cryptic theory which probably didn't hold water -- the very reaction Koestler had, who more or less dismissed it in his book. Yet on second, and third, and fourth readings another picture -- and a very difficult one -- emerged. Kammerer was proposing concepts for which there was no previous vocabulary, no ready-made words to allow the mind easily to follow what he was

saying. He was manufacturing ideas which went beyond and enveloped widely-disparate fields, unconnectable at his time and only partially-connectable now. He was, as we found, a truly visionary thinker whose concepts presaged the recent developments of chaos, systems, and complexity theory and beyond. As I had suspected all along, this looked like the key to unite the multiple but limited new paradigms which have been arriving on the scene since the 1960's. Forthwith, we commenced on doing a translation and commentary on *Das Gesetz Der Serie*.

But as it turned out, we couldn't just translate it, for a variety of reasons. First, it was peppered with references to contemporary scientific and philosophical theories it was presumed the reader was familiar with, most of which would be alien to the modern reader, and most of which were essential to the points being made. Simply to annotate those would make the original 400+ page book into an encyclopedia. Second, the heavily German writing style itself was so dense (despite the fact that Kammerer considered it a popular-style book) that few would wade through it. Folks don't have the patience these days, and for good reason -- too much other information around you have to assimilate.

Most important, however, was the difficulty we ourselves had in wrapping our heads around the concepts presented. Without precedence in our (or anyone else's) experience, we would understand parts of it in a flash, and then lose it the next day for lack of a mental handle to cling to. So, over a period of seven years, we had to work it into our lives until we understood it from a gut level and could put it into words with enough current scientific and social distribution to make sense. As we journeyed through Paul Kammerer's world, we would suddenly realize, "Oh, that looks like chaos theory!" or "Here's a step beyond Rupert Sheldrake," or even more strangely, "That's Newton with an octave added on."

As the modern connections, which Kammerer had no access to, became clear, so did dozens of applications which he could not have conjured up specifically, though they were often suggested in the original work. Here was a proto-thinker, come and gone before his time, and it was our task to bring the rest of the job home to the 21st century. I say "rest of the job" with some hesitation, as each of the many application areas we discuss toward the end of the book suggests broad avenues of research and testing we could never have the time (or funding!) to pursue. What we have tried to do is encapsulate Kammerer's ideas in a way which we can understand and so, we hope, can others. We have tried to do it simply, although it is not simple material, so we risk being accused of shallowness and oversimplification. Yet we do so in order to provide the material access to the broadest possible range of readership, to reach the many who will benefit from it the most.

When Paul Kammerer wrote *Das Gesetz Der Serie* in 1919, he intended it to be for a popular audience. He felt then, as we do now, that it was an idea whose time was soon to come. In this, our presentation follows his dictates, despite the risk of making it too pop. We have also had something of a similar dilemma in presenting the material over seventy years after its original publication, in which we have tried carefully to include the most recent, leading edge discoveries and attitudes of modern science within a theory that still embraces and even goes beyond many of them. Herein we try to provide an overall starting point, a basic thrust for others to pursue once the ideas have come into the public venue. We have avoided individual, clinical scientific suppositions which should await full experimental evaluation before publication (although we suggest them) but rather present a series of broad assertions that will only get tested because of publication and subsequent controversy (as was the case, for instance, with the theory of relativity). Kammerer's work is not just another step forward which is connected to and linearly develops the past, it is a leap that embraces the future, which must

develop and apply it, just as much of the 20th century was spent proving, developing and applying relativity. In addition, so much of the material is concerned with elevating the most basic of common sense that for much of it, you have to climb inside it and drive it around for a while to see how it gets results -- and that is better done on the street, not in the lab, which is yet another reason why we present it initially as a popular book, as Kammerer originally envisioned it.

Ultimately, we hope the effect of absorbing this material will bring upon the reader what it brought upon us -- both a broadening of understanding (so that's how it works!) and a depth of centering (I somehow knew it all along) that will bring greater comfort and confidence to being an organism whose evolutionary potential is a reason unto itself.

-- John Townley