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Universal Truths Unlocked in Philosophers' Dreams

By Walter Putnam

All too often, discussions on space exploration and development fail to recognize some of the underlying principles at work in discourse on subjects with such a potentially profound impact on civilization. We get so caught up in the fundamentals, the science and engineering and – dare we mention – the funding of complex projects and missions that we tend to overlook the “why” which propels our dreams.

It is true that there are practical reasons behind the goal of discovery and practical approaches are required to yield the desired results. Yet, there are no doubt intangible factors that come into play whenever humans venture forth to open new frontiers. There were sound reasons to invent a machine that enables us to fly through the air to get from point A to point B, quicker and without some of the obstacles of ground transportation. But who can deny that development of air travel followed centuries of dreaming about breaking the constraints of gravity and flying through the sky like a bird?

Some of the ideas that spring from the well of creation precede their practical application by many generations. Others seem to go hand in hand. Still others follow the flow, making sense of new developments after the fact in the way that we are just now beginning to realize the ramifications that the Internet is having, and will continue to have, on culture and civilization in the future.

In Dr. Robert Krone's second volume of *The Journal of Space Philosophy*, produced under the auspices of Kepler Space Institute, of which Dr. Krone is provost, we continue to explore the universal truths that are interlocked with advancements in the study and exploration of extraterrestrial space. In Volume I, we were treated to essays on the meaning of a glimpse of Earth from space through Frank White's explanation of “The Overview Effect,” the mysteries of “dark information” streaking throughout the Universe indicative of a Cosmic intelligence, as outlined by Dr. Joel Isaacson, and Dr. Terry Tang's insights into the influence of Chinese language and culture on China's space program.

These are just a few among the dozen essays contained in the Journal, which debuted in the autumn of 2012. In Volume II, we will continue to learn how these “universal truths” are unlocked by the study and understanding of philosophers. For just a sample: “What is Dark Energy? A Toroidal Model of the Cosmos: The Big Bagel” by Howard Bloom and “The Exploration Imperative,” by Rod Pyle.

It is not an idle study. The ideas and thoughts that run parallel with developments in the realm of space will have an impact not just on current developments, but also far into the future, as witnessed through the “Overview Effect” and its impact on protection of Earth’s environment, or as the global discoveries and explorations of the Renaissance planted the seeds of the Enlightenment, which in turn fostered new thoughts on human rights and freedoms, yielding a whole new way of thinking on democracy in the New World of the 18th Century.

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