

Entangled in Duality

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Introduction

This essay begins with two assumptions; if you are uncomfortable with either one, this essay may be a challenge for you. The first assumption is that Awareness/Consciousness¹ is the ground state of All-That-Is. In this essay, idealism is the preferred perspective over materialism. Below is an excerpt adapted from another essay (see innerego.com) where this preference is addressed.

There are two dichotomous views on the ultimate nature of reality. One can be called the *Primacy of Matter* (a.k.a. materialism) and the other the *Primacy of Consciousness* (a.k.a. idealism). Classical physics and everyday experience support the former, and some interpretations of quantum physics and the experience of various mystics support the latter. The two views have significantly different implications. For example, materialists explain consciousness as an epiphenomenon (derivative) of matter, while idealists explain matter as an epiphenomenon of Consciousness. There is considerable contention around which view is correct. The likelihood is that neither conception will ever be conclusively demonstrated to the satisfaction of everyone.

Both views are faced with essentially the same conundrum, that is, *initial origination*. If you are of the Primacy of Matter persuasion, you must ask how did matter come about and from what? One hypothesis is the so-called "big bang" event or the near instantaneous expansion of an extremely dense concentration of energy/matter (a.k.a. the primordial atom). Even assuming it is correct, there still

1. When capital letters are used to begin a word such as in "Consciousness," the reference is to a primary state as opposed to a derived state (lower case) such as when the word "consciousness" is used. In other words, Consciousness is a universal state and consciousness is a personal or individuated state.

remains the question of where did this "primordial atom" come from? The noted physicist Stephen Hawking, for example, suggests *spontaneous creation* or the creation of something from nothing. If you are of the Primacy of Consciousness persuasion, you must ask where did the *Universal Field of Consciousness* (hereafter just Consciousness) come from? I know of no hypothesis about the origin of Consciousness. Some Primacy of Matter advocates might argue that matter has always existed and the material universe has cycled through endless regenerations. Likewise, some Primacy of Consciousness advocates might argue that Consciousness has always existed and always will exist. In the end, both camps reach a point where they really have no choice but to say that either matter just is or that Consciousness just is. Regardless of which hypothesis you find the most plausible, you are ultimately faced with a *leap of faith*.

I make the assumption that Consciousness is primary simply because it provides a model that is broader and deeper than materialism. However, one need not throw off materialism entirely when adopting idealism, because materialism can be subsumed under idealism as a secondary construct. In fact, the two models can be construed to be almost identical except with different root assumptions or starting points. The second assumption that I will make is that evolutionary biology is a valid and powerful *process* operative at many levels. This almost doesn't need to be put forward as an assumption since the theory describing the process has pretty well been empirically established. There are, however, some points within the theory that can be argued on scientific grounds, such as the reliance upon random change to the exclusion of any other potential factors. The details of the debate around that issue or others are not necessary to this essay. There are also some who reject the theory out-of-hand, because it is inconsistent with their religious ideology. Such individuals will have to tentatively entertain this assumption for purposes of understanding this essay or stop reading now.

An idea related to the first assumption is that of the indivisible whole. If Consciousness is the ground or source state of All-That-Is, then there is only one Consciousness albeit with many derivative consciousnesses. Thus, All-is-One becomes an unavoidable philosophical position. The indivisible whole hypothesis is supported by science within the limits of the “physical” universe. Experiments that have been replicated support the quantum state of *entanglement* by which two particles² become connected and share information. If the information is changed in one, it immediately changes in the other even if the second particle is on the other side of the universe. Since the exchange of information in the space/time universe is limited by the speed of light and the speed of light is too slow to account for this near instantaneous exchange of information, entanglement implies an underlying non-locality that is outside of space/time.

One physicist who has described this entangled universe as an indivisible whole is Menas Kafatos. He further suggests that from our perspective this whole only seems to consist of parts. The perception of these parts or aspects arise from Niels Bohr’s Principle of Complementarity, which was originally proposed to explain the complementary pair of *particle* and *wave* but was extended by Bohr to go beyond applications in physics. A complementary pair consists of two aspects of one reality. Thus, hot and cold, male and female, good and bad, wet and dry, life and death, chaos and order and so on are complementary pairs within the ordinary world. The world that we experience appears to express or manifest itself through such pairs. Thus, the relative world arises from the absolute ground state of

2. There is no such thing as a particle as the general public understands the word. The continued use of the term is a carry over from classical physics but it no longer has the “physical” characteristics it was thought to have in classical physics. In short, a particle is not made of matter as it was understood in the classical sense. Some now describe a particle as a concentration of energy and others as a packet of information.

Consciousness. In a sense then, only the whole represented by these pairs is “real.” Each member of the pair arises from the whole and is grounded or rooted in the whole.

The apparent function of complementary pairs is to create a dynamic that permits change, which is necessary for experience. Change is, for example, the driving force for the second assumption mentioned above. The relative world of change that arises from the absolute is the complement of its unchanging ground state.

In summary, we are living in a local world of flux that has arisen out of a virtually infinite and indivisible field of Consciousness that is non-local. We are individuated derivatives within a universe that is an indivisible whole in which everything is at root connected or entangled.

The Core Function of Evolution

While the point might be argued, I will present the core function of the evolutionary process to be reproductive success. I suggest this simply because lack of reproductive success brings the “game” to a halt. Thus, first and foremost, evolution must operate in ways that ensures that life thrives. The evolutionary process has been very successful in meeting its core function. The proof of this is evident in the overwhelming diversity of life and the numbers of people that populate this planet. Presently, there are around seven billion people, and projections are that it will likely peak at around ten billion people later in this century. This did not happen due to a failure of evolutionary driven reproductive success or even through marginally successful reproduction.

At root, human life appears to be about sexual reproduction. The strongest evolutionary motive seems to be the sex drive. Take that away and all the derivatives collapse like a house of cards: art, culture, science, politics, sports and so on. The complement of reproduction is extinction. One cognitive scientist, Donald

Hoffman, has even run experiments that demonstrate that it is likely that the very way in which we perceive the world is designed to ensure reproductive success. His experiments suggest that our perception is finely tuned to show us what is important to reproductive success, not how “reality” is in any fundamental sense. As the philosopher Emmanuel Kant recognized in his discourses, we can never know a “thing” in itself. All we can know is what our senses present to us and how our minds interpret those sensory signals, which represent a very limited set from what is available. In a manner of speaking, we are framed by our biology and embedded within the matrix of our consciousness.

Very few of us recognize the degree to which we are driven by biological systems that operate outside of our awareness. At best, we often become aware of impulses and desires that arise from the operation of these systems. Acting on these impulses and desires usually generate immediate rewards, though our actions may have long-term consequences. For example, pleasure from sexual activity leads us to regularly engage in this behavior, and it can frequently lead to reproductive outcomes as evidenced by the size of the human population. If there is a reproductive outcome, other biological systems come into play with the purpose of facilitating a successful outcome long-term. For example, hormone-influenced behaviors toward a child and its care produce rewarding feelings and bonding effects. Further, these biological systems rooted in our early evolution have been incorporated into and articulated through culture. For example, culture creates social extensions of these biological systems that define relationships between the sexes and between parents and adult relatives and children that are generally accepted with little critical examination. We are to a great extent like puppets under the control of our biological systems and their cultural extensions. Most of us go through life more or less on script as if we are automatons.

The complementary pair represented by sex plays a critical role in what we

think of as reality. Recall that complementary pairs exist within the context of an indivisible whole. Thus, only the whole is “real” in an absolute sense. Neither party to a complementary pair embodies Reality. Any single aspect of such a complementary pair only has reality relative to its complement. Thus, male and female are somewhat like mirror images of one another. It would appear that a “male” person from his perspective cannot know the whole of which he is one aspect nor can a female person from her perspective know the whole of which she is one aspect.

The question then becomes, can a part ever know the whole? The whole, of course, is ultimately far more than the merged aspects of a single complementary pair. However, solving the riddle posed by a complementary pair can pull aside the veil that hides the indivisible whole. Perhaps sex is the Rosetta Stone that can lead to deciphering the puzzle posed by a reality comprised of a metaphorical dance between mirror reflections posing as male and female. Hindu thought seems to support the idea of sex as a Rosetta Stone. This is evident in a picture I once saw of a statue depicting Brahman. Brahman, in Hindu thought, is the ultimate reality in the universe. Parabrahman is Absolute reality from which the universe arises. The picture of Brahman showed a statue with two faces. On one side of the head was the face of Shiva (representing the male principle) and on the other side was Shakti (representing the female principle). This same construct is also present in the West through the depth psychology of Carl Jung and his concept of the collective unconscious. The animus (male principle) and anima (female principle) are both archetypes in the collective unconscious. They are also aspects of the unconscious of each individual and both influence the psyche of every individual to varying degrees.

The Sexed Ego

How then might one know the whole? The only way to know the whole is to connect with the whole on a fundamental level. To do this one must see beyond

the mask that temporarily permits an individuated self to develop and become entangled in the relative world. This mask is often called ego, where ego represents the narrative or story through which most people live. Perhaps the most basic mechanism involved in the development of an ego is sexing. Inculcation of the biological division of sex often begins prior to birth and certainly at birth. The importance of this biological division is given a critical role in virtually all cultures and is evident, in part, through cultural gender norms. Often this division by sex is insisted upon even in the face of the ambiguity often served up at the margins by the inevitable diversity resulting from biological variability. Neither the evolutionary process nor biological reproduction is rigidly precise, though most cultures prefer to pretend that it is invariant. In fact, it is somewhat like a continuum that is heavily weighted at the ends, while the middle supports a richness of diversity.

I said above that sex might be the Rosetta Stone that can lead to deciphering the puzzle posed by a reality grounded in complementary pairs. Anyone who seeks to dissolve relativity arising like a veiling mist from the Absolute must overcome a divided perspective. One's entanglement in sex seems like a good place to start deconstructing this divided perspective. The Jungian anima and animus archetypes, according to Jung, exist in all of us with different degrees of emphasis and may even be in open conflict in people such as some transgendered individuals. Thus, if one can reconcile or balance these archetypes within one's mind or psyche, it should be possible to acquire a perspective on the whole. To quote Joseph Chilton Pearce, "To become whole all parts must be left behind for a whole is not the sum of its parts but a different state altogether." Understandably, almost everyone attempts to objectify one element of the complementary pair male/female to the exclusion of the other element. An alternative might be to integrate the elemental pair into a whole and become non-binary.

Unity

Knowing the universal whole through direct experience is sometimes referred to as union with the Absolute or the indivisible whole. This is probably only possible for those who have softened their relativistic conditioning. One cannot experience the whole while deeply entangled in relative thinking. Striving to exemplify one side or the other of a complementary pair simply perpetuates entanglement in a relative perspective. Thus, a likely first step is to bring into greater balance complementary pairs and for reasons already given, sex/gender seems like a good place to begin the work, though there are other possible starting points. Even if one achieves no more than a better balance between anima and animus within one's personality, there should follow a better integrated psyche.

How might one go about such an undertaking. There are many possible methods that might be employed but perhaps the two most essential methods are first to identify and then pay close attention to those complementary pairs in which one is entangled. The goal here is to understand the tensions that drive your ego narrative ("Know thy self."). For example, if you're entangled in politics, stop reacting and start reflecting on how the tensions produced by politics engages your personal narrative and thereby affects your thoughts and feelings. Become an observer of the process rather than an unwitting participant.

No doubt, one of the complementary pairs that one will be entangled in will be sex and gender since this is almost a universal source of entanglement. The fundamental tensions here will derive from innate biological programs, culturally instilled programs and personal programs learned from experience. These programs usually operate outside of one's conscious awareness. Thus, make a practice of trying to bring these programs into conscious awareness through your attention. When you become consciously aware of them, recognize how their influence operates through your body/mind but has no effect on the attentive awareness that is inspect-

ing them. For example, when one of your sex/gender programs is aroused by a stimulus in the environment, try to follow this back to its fundamental source, that is, the program that drives it and then try to understand the underlying purpose of that program. Try to deconstruct it and stand back from it. Through understanding try to bring this reactive response under the control of your self-agency. Follow this up by trying to imaginatively or intuitively bring the complement of this program into awareness and perform the same type of examination that you did on its inverse program. Persons on the transgender spectrum should find this easier to do since they probably have, to some degree, pairs of complementary sex/gender programs operating.

Having cleansed oneself of the illusions of a life grounded in relative programming, one settles into the *natural mind* (see innerego.com). The journey of transformation doesn't end at the natural mind. From the natural mind one can live a contented life, or one can seek intuitive knowledge of the Absolute. All complementary pairs are merely part reflections of fundamental aspects of the Absolute. To know directly the indivisible whole requires a critical shift in perspective. A shift that transcends one's assumption that "I am a body/mind." The use of the term "seek" implies that this is something to be found, but in fact it is a realization of a perspective that is always available. When the shift happens, it has profound implications for how one views the relative world and one's place in it.

There are things that one can do to prepare for this shift in perspective. Many use meditation, cultivation of presence or Self-inquiry (see innerego.com) to "fertilize the ground," but it can't be made to happen (see Taken at innerego.com). The reason it can't be made to happen is simply that it requires a perspective that originates outside of the psychological structure referred to as ego. Doing is the province of the ego and the ego can't take a perspective that requires an awareness operating outside of ego's structure any more than an eye can examine itself.

When this shift takes place, one realizes that one is not a *body/mind* but the awareness that inhabits the body/mind. This is not an intellectual understanding but a direct and intuitive knowing. The word “inhabits” is used in the same sense that one inhabits a dwelling. The person inhabiting a dwelling is not the dwelling, and should the dwelling be torn down, the person who inhabited the dwelling goes on. In the same sense, awareness and the individuated consciousness expressed through it arises from the indivisible whole and persists for as long as the Absolute persists. When one is taken by the realization that one is not a body/mind but pristine awareness itself, one also recognizes that pure awareness is devoid of all dualities. Awareness is not good or evil, not male or female, not life or death, not order or chaos. It just is. With this realization comes freedom from history and tradition, culture and words. Freedom from the past and from the future. Freedom to simply be. True perceptual liberation from entanglement in the illusion of complementarity and relativistic reality (see Outlaw at innerego.com).