

On The Nature of Mind Created Reality and the Significance of Personal and Cultural Narratives

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The beliefs we hold in the deep, and mostly unconscious, reaches of our mind exert a powerful influence over our perception of reality. The article explores the power of personal and cultural narratives and outlines the mechanisms by which the narratives shape our reality. The dominant scientific narrative, based on the notion that 'what is real is what is measurable' is challenged and a new definition of reality proposed. This new definition embraces current scientific thinking, yet expands it in a way that allows a genuine synthesis between scientific rigor and spiritual realization to emerge.

Keywords: Mind created reality, science, cultural narratives, deep mind, phenomenal experience, formless presence, consciousness research, reality research.

I. INTRODUCTION

This article has grown out of an effort to address certain well-known but oft ignored ambiguities in the foundations of modern science. The aim has been to reconcile modern science with persistent accounts of spiritual realities beyond mind and matter. It has been the premise of the work that both science and spiritual traditions are right in essence yet incomplete in their understanding of reality.

The preliminary conclusion has been that it is no longer meaningful to view reality as existing independently of our perception of it. Reality has revealed itself as a fluid state of never-ending unfoldment, representing a point of tension between pure being and phenomenal experience through which the mystery of life is gradually unveiled.

The purpose of this particular article is to shed light on the impact, the dominating cultural narratives has on shaping our reality. By cultural narratives are meant the stories we tell ourselves about who we are and why we are here. The narratives come in many shapes. Some are religious in nature, others scientific, yet others political and some are a mix.

Narratives are important for the obvious reason that the dominating narrative sets the overall agenda. In the present context I seek to dig deeper in relation to the nature of the narratives. My aim is to show the mechanisms whereby the narratives influence reality in subtle ways, in order to highlight their significance. Not just as political factors (which they are) but as existential and spiritual factors that shape our perception of reality.

II. MIND CREATED REALITY (MCR)

It is my postulate that our deep mind exerts a powerful influence over events in our lives as well as our interpretation of these events. Deep mind refers to the part of our mind that is not consciously accessible, but contain a kind of cellular memories of our past.

The emergent results seem to indicate the existing of two potential vectors of influence which can be labeled:

- **The strong MCR hypothesis:** Deep mind influence *events* in such a way that our life experience reflects the contents of deep mind.
- **The weak MCR hypothesis:** Deep mind influence our *perception of events* in such a way that our experience of life reflects the contents of deep mind.

The obvious difference between the two is whether deep mind can influence something which is causally beyond our control (i.e. the choices of other people etc.).

The preliminary results tend to indicate that the strong MCR hypothesis is, in all likelihood, true. Due to the acausal nature of the influence it is, however, difficult to prove. A model explaining this acausal influence *has* been developed. It is, however, beyond the scope of the present article to venture into this. For the purposes of the present work justifying the premise of weak MCR will suffice.

III. A UNIFIED FIELD

When Einstein proposed the theory of relativity in 1905, he challenged the implicit assumption of his time, that space and time existed independently of each other. In much the same vein, the results of the Reality Research, carried out so far, indicate that mind and matter cannot meaningfully be considered distinct categories of existence, but must be thought of as a unified mind-matter matrix in much the same sense as Einstein's 4D space-time matrix.

Some might argue that this is old news. Yet while it is true that the idea is not new, the precise relation between mind and matter has always been vague and ill-defined. What is new is that the mechanisms, through which mind and matter are related, have been illuminated and a genuine theory of consciousness has been proposed [1].

IV. MIND AND THE PHENOMENAL WORLD

The last century has brought an incredible expansion in our understanding of the universe as well as the psyche. Yet science tends to view the inner and outer worlds as distinct categories in a manner that contradict the essence of Einstein's assertion that: '*Time and space are modes by which we think, not conditions in which we live.*'

If we understand the implications of the statement, then an image of a fluid reality conditioned by the mind arise,

in contrast to a more popular notion of reality as something solid and concrete that exist independently of our mind. Taken at face value, quantum physics and the theory of relativity, the two main pillars of science, do not show reality to be solid and definite, on the contrary. Subatomic reality, as portrayed by physics, is evanescent and ephemeral. Quantum physics demonstrate, in no uncertain terms, that an event has not happened, and cannot be considered “real” until a conscious observer has witnessed it. In a very literal sense, *witnessing* reality is therefore part of *establishing* reality.

V. THE REALITY QUESTION

During the development of quantum physics and the theory of relativity, the quantum pioneers discussed the so-called “Reality Question”. The question pertained to what the theories actually meant – what the equations implied in regards to what is ultimately *real*. This issue has never been satisfactorily resolved and today there exist no less than eight competing interpretations of quantum physics, each elevating different aspects of the theory to reality [3]. However, all of them are marred by ambiguities and none of them offer an adequate explanation of the nature and origin of consciousness.

In the words of physicist Nick Herbert [3, p. 249]:

It is not that we possess bad or imperfect theories of consciousness; we simply have no such theories at all.

In the articles [1+2] the issues involved in interpreting quantum physics has been dealt with. One of the preliminary conclusions of the Reality Research conducted so far is that neither is objective phenomena caused by consciousness nor is consciousness an epiphenomenon to neural activity. The results seem to imply that both objective phenomena and subjective awareness are products of a third entity – an entity labeled ‘formless presence’ (see Figure 1).

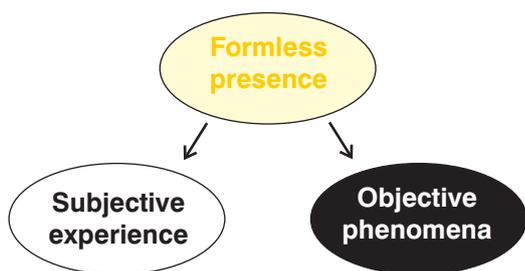


Figure 1: The formless presence precipitating as awareness and events

Down through the ages countless mystics have borne testimony to the existence of such a realm of being beyond mind and matter. It has been called spirit, the eternal now and many other names. The nature of this state of awareness is so that it is inaccessible to consciousness as such, because consciousness is an *effect* of the presence. The formless presence is, however, accessible to *experience*, but only by leaving mind and entering a qualitatively different space of being altogether. Achieving

this requires many years of dedicated practice, something which few are willing to attempt and fewer still succeed at.

VI. THE YARDSTICK OF GOOD SCIENCE

Reality Research as a discipline poses a unique challenge because of its interdisciplinary nature. It touches the fields of psychology, philosophy, physics, psychotherapy, history, narration and is related to anthropology and social studies, but is neither.

The first step in establishing Reality Research as a discipline is therefore to address the need to enlarge our notion of what constitutes good science. Modern science is to a great extent shaped by the idea, first articulated in quantum physics, that ‘*what is real is what is measurable*’. This fundamental notion has since then been somewhat adapted to fit the needs of other, less rigorous, branches of science. Yet the standards of physics have always been the basic yardstick by which good science has been measured.

The notion that ‘what is real is what is measurable’ taken at face value defines consciousness as unreal since it is not measurable. What is measurable is, at most, neural activity. But in the foundation of quantum mechanics, one of the foremost quantum philosopher, John von Neumann distinguishes clearly between mind and brain, and hence between consciousness and neural activity. They are not the same. The distinguishing characteristic is that one is object, the other subject. The subject is not measurable and hence by definition unreal.

Since consciousness and subjectivity is a fact, the above definition is arguable ambiguous. I would argue that a more appropriate definition would be that ‘what is real is that which causes observable phenomena.’ Referring to the previous section this implies what ‘what is ultimately real is formless presence.’ Since in this model this is also the source of the subject there is no ambiguity here.

In relation to the obvious need of physics to deal with quantifiable entities, we might add that ‘as far as physics goes, what is relevant is what is measurable.’

It is my hope that this distinction can resolve the ambiguities introduced a century ago by the quantum mechanical definition of reality. It is clear that this definition served the needs of the physics community at the time. It offered a clear cut definition of reality that was useful and succinct. The only problem was that it was untrue. By rejecting this fundamental premise of science whole new vistas of exploration open up because the effect of this definition of reality has influenced all other branches of human society in a multitude of ways.

Since present standards for what constitutes acceptable scientific presentation emanates from this basic perspective, it should be obvious that as the definition of reality is rejected, the standards of scientific evaluation must be transformed in order to accommodate a truer notion of reality.

VII. HARD AND SOFT REALITIES

If we define:

- **Hard reality**, as space-time events themselves, and
- **Soft reality**, as the *interpretation* of the meaning of these events

Then it quickly becomes apparent that not only is the mind involved in translating potential events into actual events by *witnessing* them, but the mind also *interprets* events and imbues them with significance.

In the context of a human reality this interpretive faculty is invariably subject to certain premises (intrinsic beliefs about reality that may or may not be true). The combined effect is that the mind not only perceives the reality that is there, but filters the perceptions in a way that effectively *projects pre-established beliefs unto raw matrix of experience*. In this manner we create a subjective reality that contains a mixture of truth and illusion as illustrated in Figure 2.

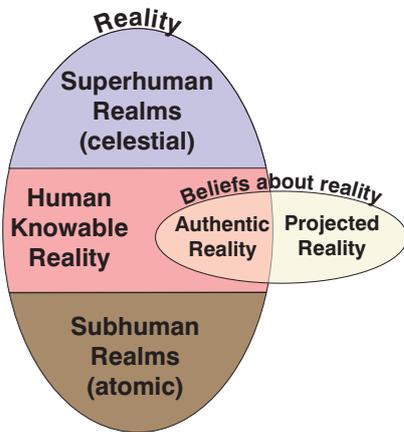


Figure 2: The nature of Mind-created reality

Figure 2 illustrates how our experience of reality (the small oval) is conditioned by our beliefs. Some of these beliefs are true, giving rise to an authentic experience of reality. Some beliefs may be fallacious, giving rise to a projected reality which is ultimately illusory.

The projected reality, thus created, is convenient because it lets us keep beliefs about reality that we value, even if they are untrue. But at the same time this illusory reality is the source of conflict, violence and death, because they invariable conflicts with other peoples realities. Insanity and mental illness can thus be seen as a severe case of projected reality leading the individual to lose his or her grip on reality entirely because the gap between the inner and outer realities becomes too great.

VIII. MIND CREATED REALITY

Now consider the following: What would happen if mind could influence either:

- **The hard reality itself** (space-time events) or;
- **The perception of events** (interpretation subject to subconscious filtering).

In either case, a feedback loop similar to Figure 3 would emerge.

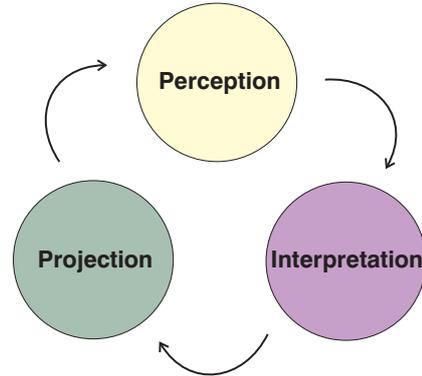


Figure 3: The self-referential nature of mind.

If the mind contained a particular belief and subsequently blocked out perceptions that contradicted this belief, then the mind could effectively lock itself into a state of mind from which it would have no escape. There would be virtually nothing contradicting its belief since everything that did so would be filtered away before the perceptions reached the threshold of awareness. This mechanism accounts for the remarkable durability of personal narratives even when they fly in the face of incontestable facts.

IX. THE POWER OF NARRATIVES

The power of the personal narrative means that content in our mind is not accessible independently hereof. The personal narrative is the individual's reality filter or conceptualization of the world. Note here that the scientific method itself constitutes a particular narrative, which imposes its own particular limitations on what can be perceived.

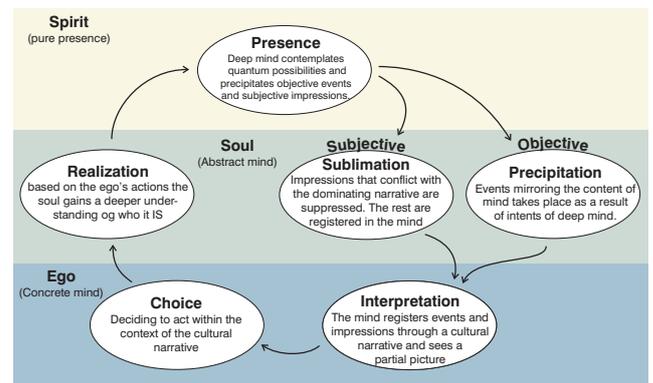


Figure 4: Cycles of creation taking place in the deep mind.

Experience indicates that when material from the subconscious, that contradicts the dominating narrative, tries to surface, it is suppressed. This is illustrated in Figure 4.

The suppression creates a state of tension in the mind, but the person in question never realizes the *cause* of the

tension because the content has been suppressed and hence never reaches conscious awareness. Recognizing this highlights the massive impact the personal and cultural narratives have on our perception of reality. It also points to the need to consider the extent to which our personal narrative actually reflects a just perception of reality.

Reaching into the depths of mind, in order to discover what is there, is not so simple, however. The power of the narrative you believe in derives its power from the fact that you believe in it. But the beliefs that dominate your mind are outside your conscious control. This obviously poses a unique challenge to the researcher. Because it means that in order to access the depths of his mind, he must *change* his beliefs – he must *change* his personal narrative.

But his beliefs and his narrative is who he is. Hence the researcher must change who he is in order to be able to fully embrace the depths of his mind. Or rather he must change who he *thinks* he is, as he discovers the true nature of his being. The beliefs about himself he must relinquish are the illusory beliefs illustrated in Figure 2. The change will therefore always be towards a more authentic and more real understanding of self, but none-the-less this is generally very difficult.

X. REALITY RESEARCH IN PRACTICE

Reality Research thus poses a unique challenge, because the researcher is confronted with his own limits of perception. The frontier is quite literally the limits of thought and the challenge of recognizing and articulating the limits of mind through mind. The self-referential issues should be self-evident.

If we accept the premise that reality is a fluid matrix unfolding partially in concordance with the subconscious content in our mind, then a question naturally arises: ‘If my experience of reality is contingent upon things I believe in, yet am unaware of, how do I discover this?’

I have discovered four main inroads to address this issue. They are:

- **The emotional inroad.** When there is incongruence between the content of the conscious mind and the subconscious beliefs, the result is emotional tension. Using emotional tension as a point of leverage the unconscious beliefs can be brought to conscious awareness.
- **The intellectual inroad.** When there is incongruence between different beliefs co-existing in one’s mind this can be used as a point of tension to discover the underlying dichotomy.
- **The action inroad.** When we ‘walk our talk’ and translate impulses into action, discrepancies between our conscious mind and the subconscious mind is brought to the surface.
- **The relational inroad.** Each individual have their own particular set of beliefs. As we engage in working together the differences in our perceptions and mindsets reveal themselves, typically through emotional conflicts. If these conflicts are handled respectfully and

competently they offer a powerful way to discover the many ways in which we cheat ourselves.

Common for all three inroads to the psyche is that fallacious beliefs or ‘projected reality’ generally reveal themselves through conflicts. Reality Research therefore has a lot in common with therapeutic work, except the goal is not to solve emotional conflicts, but to discover the underlying structure of consciousness, that reveals itself through the conflict.

XI. THE NEED FOR A NEW NARRATIVE

This present work has been carried out for independent means from 1995-2009, outside the established academic circles. The point in relation to the need for a new narrative is that the insights that have grown from the work would not have been possible within the present academic circles. The lines of inquiry that have led to the insights would simply not have been tolerated because it violates the dominant scientific narrative.

I know this, because I have, on several occasions, attempted to establish a co-operation with academia, only to be rejected because what I proposed did not match their understanding of what constituted scientific work. On the other hand I knew that the analytical and rigidly academic approach that was requested of me would eliminate all chance of getting beyond the limits of mind into the realm of pure being from whence the true dynamics of MCR could possibly be revealed.

Significantly, an important part of the overall Reality Research project conducted under the auspices of the Gaia Consciousness Institute (of which the present is but a tiny glimpse) is a completely new meta-narrative.

The new narrative takes form of a creation myth that contextualizes the sum of human experience in a way that encompasses the present scientific and political narrative, yet incorporates a much greater spiritual narrative as well. In so doing a completely new way of looking at the universe is unfolded.

This narrative is emphatically not an academic *analysis* of reality, but a narrative *rendering* of reality representing a poetic and archetypal truth. The poetic truth is important, because it provides the existential backdrop for a larger perspective on life and offers a possibility of gauging the true significance of the attendant results.

While it is obviously highly unorthodox to present scientific findings in the form of a mythic narrative, I have increasingly come to think that this is unavoidable because the result cannot meaningfully be presented within the constraints of the present scientific paradigm, no more than Einstein’s and Bohr’s findings could be presented within the paradigm of classical mechanics. To comprehend new truths old foundations must be relinquished.

Einstein and Bohr had to change the scientific narrative from what is known as classical mechanics to quantum mechanics. At the time this was quite a philosophical earthquake. However, Bohr and Einstein were able to remain securely within the overall scientific narrative

because they only dealt with the object. The subject was something which was viewed as an unfortunate appendix that could not be removed, but was never truly explained either.

The present change in narrative is far more comprehensive because it is no longer possible to remain within the strictures of the scientific narrative as such. To re-integrate the subjective dimension, which was split off by the definition of reality discussed earlier, it is necessary to create a genuine synthesis between science and religion. It is necessary to create a new meta-narrative where poetic and analytical truths alike are present in a manner that do them both justice.

XII. CONCLUSIONS

Some basic concepts of Reality Research have been presented and the challenges inherent in its scientific recognition highlighted. The dominant scientific narrative embodying the notion that 'what is real is what is measurable' has been challenged and a new definition of reality proposed. The impact of personal and cultural narratives have has been discussed and the mechanism in mind, whereby they exert their influence, have been described.

It has been suggested that we need to expand our understanding of what good science is, in order to encompass a reality where the formless presence, that is the source of both subject and object, are acknowledged as the primary reality. In so doing, we acknowledge that archetypal truth is as important as analytical truth. In so doing it becomes possible to re-integrate the subjective dimension of reality. This provides a platform for a genuine synthesis between religion and science and the possibility of opening new vistas of research where rigid academic analysis can coexist with fluid transcendental exploration of mind. This opens the possibility of a new science that embraces the deep mystery of life as well as the marvelous logic that constitutes the foundation of the physical universe.

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