

# **Can Things Get Better?**

by

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Our world always seems to be on the brink of one form of trouble or another. Yet, often surprisingly so, we seem to recover only to face a new challenge. Could it be that this apparent *dance macabre* arises from our global failure to re-envision the world as a spiritual manifestation? Can our predicament be due to our Western-scientific-based belief that the world and all its phenomena, including life and mind, fundamentally emerge out of matter? Could it be that with a different worldview things might get better? In this short essay, I will examine this belief and indicate what we might expect if we were to accept the counter-idea that matter, mind, and life all arose from a far more complex entity called *spirit* or *consciousness*.

In brief, something called *consciousness* provides the fundamental ground of being out of which all physical and mental phenomena emerge. Although many spiritually-inclined people may take this view, it doesn't seem to fit with common beliefs coming from scientific reasoning. But what about most of the world's non-science-based beliefs (if even anything like a world belief system can be imagined)? Do you the reader actually believe that mind or consciousness came first? Or perhaps better put, could such a view have any scientific, spiritual, or even logical foundation? And even if it did, would this change your view or your way of life (or the world's)?

Scientific views posit that somehow more complex lifeforms evolved from simpler lifeforms—those that existed before. This conviction, based as it is on a two prevailing belief structures—*evolution* in biology and *reductionism* in physical science, state that complexity emerges from simplicity—order arises from disorder.

One might argue that nothing is simple about disorder or complex about order. However, certainly complex organization, even though it may appear chaotic, exhibits great order. Take a string of ones and zeros making up a computer's code, for example. A cursory glance at it shows it to be disorderly but we know that not to be the case. (Otherwise how could a computer program work?) It thus seems that complexity and order are joined at the waist, so to speak; hence, conversely, simplicity and chaos must equally be joined. One more remark: As a teacher I am often praised by students because I seem to make the complex simple through word and metaphor. In actual fact, I may be doing the opposite. I simply raise out of the chaotic (and usually simply

configured and often incorrect) mire of unclear notions—in which most nonscientists embed scientific concepts—metaphorical descriptions that these nonscientists do hold or believe in.

Thus it appears as a scientific axiom (an unquestionable belief) that order and complex structures, including movements and cycles, arise out of simpler and more chaotic structures and movement. This belief holds for the *big bang* cosmology model as much as it does for the biological evolution-of-the-species model. This is indeed strange considering that its polar opposite—chaos arising from the destructive forces of entropy—appears to be fundamental to our everyday life experience. In other words, things do seem to get naturally worse—more chaotic and disorganized (and hence simpler)—unless individuals do something about them by imparting energy to the systems they wish to improve or preserve (and thereby make more complex).

Well, why do we believe in this “scientific” myth of the evolution of complexity from simplicity and its co-logical concomitants, mind from matter and life from the nonliving? Or is it just a prejudice that comes to Western mindsets inundated with Newtonian and Darwinian philosophy?

Perhaps we can trace our “scientific” faith to our early ancestors who believed in magic—they attempted to manipulate nature by any means they thought would work. When some manipulation did finally work, perhaps the need to simplify and explain *how it works* overcame the need to accept the mystical implications of *how it works* in the hope that greater control of nature would result. Through such a “needy” theory, the belief in a theoretical model—*complexity emerges from simplicity*—arose and strengthened in scientific mindsets. Hence, why believe in the spiritual realm or even why accept its opposite tenet, *simplicity emerges from complexity* (hence, matter arises from mind)?

A difficult question, but one that needs looking into. First, though, consider just how does any *belief* arise? I think that a belief reflects a vision of hope (or despair) and desire for change (or constancy)—possibly (and this is my own spin on this), a message from a future waiting to be realized. In quantum physics we deal with possible futures all of the time. These possibilities appear as abstract mathematical forms including vectors,

waves, and complex numbers, as seen from a perspective of the present moment. Today, even more than 100 years since the inception of quantum physics and its acceptance in scientific reasoning (indeed forming the base of that reasoning), even though its theoretical structures remain intact, debate still rages over what it means. Consensus indicates that whatever quantum physics means modern science cannot be useful or predictive without these abstract (neo-Platonic) possibility-forms providing the ground of all being of modern science.

Although many interpretations of quantum physics continue to circulate, several posit the notion that both future and past events play a role in the construction of everyday reality (I'll mention only physicist John Cramer's "Transactional Interpretation" and Yakir Aharonov and Lev Vaidman's "Time Symmetric Quantum Formulism"). In my view (and possibly in theirs) all possible futures are in continual contact with each and every present moment of conscious (and unconscious) awareness, kind of like the way a piece of a hologram (made from the waves reflecting off all points on an object) contains a whole picture of that object (see my book, *Matter into Feeling*).

Society as a whole behaves like the entire "temporal" hologram and hence generates a universally clear (but average) belief which tends to head the society into a specific (but also averaged out) future, while any individual in the society sees that belief in a kind of fuzzy (yet more specific about certain details but much less about others) way that rarely manifests as any individual wants. The individual belief usually differs from the mass belief in details, but the mass belief has the most power to move the society into the future. (Brain-washing results when no individual has a belief containing any structure other than embedded in the slogan-like mass belief.)

Take the United States and its beliefs for example. We each believe in "freedom" in one way or another and hence tend to move into the future where freedom is manifested. Yet freedom can have many different individual meanings; anything from freedom to defraud and commit violence to freedom to love who or what one wishes to love. Take our love affair with technology as another example. We certainly will continue to move into a more technologically advanced society as the decades roll on. While many in the world see little use for this belief, the wave of the mass mind

overcomes them leaving in its wake the distraught and disenfranchised who resort to often powerful means to halt the progression including holding up the banner of human values above technology and the employ of terrorism or misinformation.

Most likely you don't need convincing from a physicist as to how to run your own life or what you should believe. But let me persevere here. We are all concerned with good and evil. Most of us feel that with an enlightened way of existing in the world all evils would eventually disappear and all that would emerge would be a utopian world of equality, freedom, pleasure, beauty, light, and so on. Could such a world ever come into being?

I'm going to answer in the negative here, perhaps surprisingly so since after all, this article may be seen as a means to make the world a better place to live in through the acceptance of a new tenet. I'm going to suggest that in spite of the way the world may seem, at times, to be hell-bent for disaster, it remarkably is a wonderful and magical world at the same time. I am not attempting to provide a Panglossian view of this old globe. Nor do I believe in a Pollyanna view that everything is just perfect the way it is, but I will say that good and evil must coexist in order for a world of human values to exist at all—in order that even consciousness has the ability to manifest as matter in the first place. (And in order that mind appear in its material guise as memory.)

In fact let me conclude by saying that if science has taught me anything, it has certainly shown me how resilient and balanced the universe is. Fluctuations continually arise temporarily upsetting the balance, and just as quickly as they arise, forces come into existence restoring that balance. This axiom is true, seeming miraculously so, in all of the factions comprising biological and physical science. For examples, I'll mention the balancing forces of self-induction in electrical circuits that keep electromagnetic fields from growing indefinitely and thereby unstable, the resistance of life to environmental changes (thus maintaining the status quo with the arising of mutant strains from time to time), and finally the mindful resistance we all offer when faced with new ideas including these: Consciousness is the ground of all being and things will get better for most of us, but not all.