

5 page booklet for the scientifically inclined

Mind's Odyssey

From science as it sees
to the limit of own abilities
resolution of **all** doubts in the process
practical matters aside

Dedicated to my many Gurus: scientists, mathematicians, thinkers, who taught their methods, findings & the scope of those findings; sages with empirical insights who articulated them in a language I could understand and friends- their patient listening, questioning, clarified the understanding

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Preface

The booklet follows my journey. An overview of science as I see it; what the "no free will" hypothesis turned into a postulate says about our knowledge of 'reality' i.e. views about world, time and self; why that conclusion - although the best possible based on evidence - cannot be certain & needs clarity; a clue to go beyond; a simple and IMHO certain resolution of fundamental doubts while remaining within empirical + rational - no beliefs, assumptions. All that in 3 pages. Then the epilogue describes why the conclusion cannot change with new evidence. Finally a 3 facet summary in form of 3 semi-poems.

The resolution - single page Chapter 3 - stands on its own. The first two chapters merely create the context that many scientifically inclined are likely to encounter in their journeys.

The dynamic, colorful painting called existence is complex, unending, unfathomable - but the brush that draws and that which makes 'seeing it' possible are very simple to fathom

Summary: Odyssey

Started with a mysterious objective world that
I, free self, shared, explored with fellow selves
Then the realization, no evidence for 'free will',
not just all actions, but also knowing - happens
But this, a hypothesis, prone to vanish with evidence
besides, not clear what knowing is and who knows it
Finally a glimpse, The Evident is, needs no explaining
rest a play of present symbols + meanings= knowing :
Q&As; claims about- The Evident, who knows knowing,
process of symbol emergence; this very story= time & I

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1. The Model of Science As I See It

Sequence of phenomena **happens**. Most of it can be characterized as a sequence of matter-energy redistributions. This sequence has a **structure** on various scales, identified as **laws, properties**, that get refined with new evidence. 'Building blocks of matter' (BBM), extrapolating cosmos in past/future etc. are part of **evolving models** based on these laws. Any claims about "ultimate" in these, no matter how consistent the relevant equations with **known** evidence, are **speculations**. Also, BBM behavior can't, in general, **predict** emergent properties of it's collection (rigidity etc.) due to e.g. impossibility of knowing relevant **empirical features** in advance and what are likely to be fundamental computational limits.

Matter-energy **does not** characterize all phenomena. Neural activity i.e. electrochemical processes and correlated waking or dreaming sensations are **not the same** - they are two sides of a coin. Knowing everything about dynamics and information structure of the neural processes **cannot** explain- or even know about- e.g. the **evident** sense of a self in time or blueness of blue. A new property needs to be postulated, at least correlated with a class of physical processes, to complete the coverage of all known phenomena: consciousness.

No 'free will' is the best **hypothesis**. The default sense/feel of free will can be made very plausible through natural means. Non existence **can't be** proven in an unbounded scenario - there is always the possibility of new observations. But **assumptions**- God, free will etc., are not required to interfere in the sequence of phenomena to explain available evidence

Without free will (FW) the possibility of "otherwise" is just a thought - part of sequence of phenomena that happen, not something that can **affect** the course of events. So there are **no causative explanations**- even using masses/charges. It is the sense of FW that leads to assigning causative powers to masses/charges to characterize "alteration of experimental conditions **as per intent** and it's effects". Without FW even those experimental changes are part of "sequence of phenomena with no otherwise" - hence results cannot be ascribed to "inherent powers" of masses/charges etc. They are invariants/parameters that characterize mathematical patterns, e.g. causality, in the sequence of phenomena. Similarly, pattern identification, partial prediction of future phenomena etc. are also **part of** "The Sequence".

This is as far as the **objective space-time model** goes. But it leaves a few **basic** issues unresolved. There is **no way** to differentiate an objective reality from a dream - that there is an objective reality is a **belief**. Even within that belief - there is no clarity about what "matter" is. When quanta **self organize** into solids, fluids, they meet the criterion of being "objective". But on shorter scales they are **mathematical abstractions** that balance the statistics of before/after measurements. Future may resolve the quanta issue but not the other

2. Towards Resolution of Fundamental Doubts: What is Reality- World, Time, Self?

A conceptual model is the **only knowing** of 'reality'- whatever 'reality' may be. If 'sequence of phenomena with no otherwise' is taken as a **postulate**, a **meta model**, then it implies that model generation itself is part of that sequence. **As the model, so the notion of reality** = of world, time, self etc. - whether that model is consistent or not, objective or not, has free will in it or not. So in a universe with no 'otherwise', consistency, predictability of a model is of **no significance** relative to other models in **more accurately reflecting** 'reality'- because assumptions, consistency, predictions, verifications- are also part of 'the sequence'!

Note: there are a few **unverifiable** assumptions in the model of science: an objective world as opposed to a dream, objectivity of time- its existence beyond its **knowledge** in presence of relevant words, existence of other beings - vantages of sensations. The usual defense- the best a model incorporating such assumptions can do is to be consistent with evidence, make verifiable predictions- has no meaning. 'Reality' of a rational model **isn't 'more valid'!**

But these conclusions lack certainty and clarity to be 'the resolution' because: **model based understanding is incomplete by nature**. 'Sequence of phenomena happen' is not a model, but with 'no otherwise' it is. Such models can never be **known** to be complete because there is always the possibility of a **new phenomena** that does not fit the model. Be it the domain of the ultra small, the ultra large or the ultra complex, we cannot, in general, **know** whether we have reached 'The End' or even whether **there is** 'The End'. 'No otherwise' that the above 'fundamental conclusions' are based on is **vulnerable**. More importantly, none of the above clarifies what **observation of phenomena** is, what **knowing** a model/idea is etc.

Is there a way to **empirically, rationally**, resolve fundamental doubts such that the findings- **cannot be doubted, will not change with new evidence, not have clarity or logical issues** ?

Within the model of science as known, certain class of neural activity is correlated with waking/dreaming sensations (blue, 'knowing') = "**the evident**" = that which does not require explanations. But knowing everything about physical dynamics & information structure of neural activity (or future refinements) does not, **by itself**, say **anything** about 'the evident' - cannot even predict it's existence! Whereas 'the evident' **includes** neural activity. Both- the **empirical** aspect of observing relevant **phenomena**, as well as the **knowing** = conceptual understanding = **presence** of words/symbols + their meanings. Not only that but it includes the **whole of science** as known, as can be known, and also rest of life! **Therein lies the clue**.

The certainty & clarity issue is resolved by **separating the evident from the assumptions**. No theory/model that can change with evidence, no metaphysics, no hows/whys, **just 'what is'**.

3.The Resolution: Role & Limit of Symbols + Meanings aka My Mind

Evident= doesn't require (symbol/word) explanations, Knowing= symbols + meanings

Denying The Evident (see below) would be a contradiction. It is **undeniable** within words i.e. within the '**assumption** of appearance of time' required for relevant reporting to be valid:

The Evident: seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching & knowing= symbols + meanings

- = waking/**dreaming** sensations **minus assumptions** about what is evident, it's nature, to whom/what is it evident etc. Includes what words call **own body**, nearby space etc.
- Meaning= non trivial difference between **presence** of two words/symbols. Trivial difference = that in sound, visual appearance etc.
- Explicit knowledge/awareness/conscious/notion of xyz = **presence** of corresponding symbol with their meanings i.e. words do not 'merely express' what is known without words, **presence** of words **is** knowing of- intents, reasoning, planning, memory/time, questions/answers etc. Even **clarification** of 'vague feel'/hunch is as symbols/words!

The evident doesn't need justification but the answers to questions below = **notions of self, time, world** etc.- aren't **as** certain, **need justification** given multiple possible responses:

- Presence of words/symbols is evident, but how do they emerge- via free self/not?
- The Evident is evident, but to whom/what - "I"/"me", brain, space, unknowable?
- Are there other vantages of The Evident - other beings?
- Are contents of waking moments objective- persist beyond moments or dreamlike?
- Is time objective or that which is known in presence of symbols the only one?
- Do words/symbols merely reflect/express some underlying 'Reality' ?

Any response to the above & it's **justification** are **known** via "present words + meanings" & that is the **only** "knowing" there is. No other verification possible. Note:answers, justification to 'how do words emerge' is also **known** via words that emerge!.**As the emergence of words, so the 'knowing'- including notions of self, time, world etc.-** fundamental notions that **underlie almost every sentence** in religions, philosophies, **objective** science and daily life.

These, too, 'words that emerged'- **not a model** but elaboration of the **undeniable**. Realizing the **fundamental role** of 'words/symbols + meanings' and bounds of **evident verification** is the limit of 'symbols/words + meanings' as seen by themselves. When words aren't present, The Evident is **empty of** meaning, significance, division: true-false, matter-space, state/memory/time, self-nonsel, real-illusory, being-non being, Evident-not Evident!

Epilogue

The Evident = what “is” - is all there is; with **presence** of ‘symbols + meanings’ in it, the **only** “knowing” there is, playing a special role. These are just **definitions** (pointers) and their elaborations. Simplicity. There are no beliefs, nor hypothesis/claims requiring justifications.

This **doesn't have** unverifiability & incompleteness issues of science: there is nothing to verify! There are **no claims** about objectivity/not of The Evident, time etc. There are **no models** in ‘simplicity’ to change in light of new evidence. Also, all phenomena, no matter how exotic, are part of The Evident, including their “knowing” as symbols + meanings.

It ‘resolves’ key issues: 1.Ontology: metaphysics of the nature of being, 2.Epistemology: theory of knowledge, esp. with regard to its methods, validity, and scope. It eliminates the “logy” (metaphysics) from ontology by pointing to The Evident- **not making any claims** about its nature. It eliminates the “logy” (theory) from epistemology by pointing to the presence of symbols + meaning as the **only “knowing”** there is; that **every** response & **justification** to ‘how do symbols + meanings emerge’ is **also known** as symbols + meanings that emerge!

Does this mean that one can never find out The Truth about The Reality? That there **could be** The Reality, The Truth to find out about it and a one, a self, to find it out is **known only** through **presence** of corresponding symbols + meanings. **So would be contrary views**. The knowing is evident, that there is “someone” who knows is part of “knowing”- a concept, an idea, a notion. Without the presence of symbols/words, The Evident is **empty of all** of this.

In short: The Evident is - needs no explanations. The rest is **known** via play of knowing = **presence** of symbols + meanings in The Evident. Including - **opinions** about The Evident, **claims** about process of generation of symbols and about who/what knows the ‘knowing’. These too are words - **knowing** - part of that play. All reactions to this- **known** via symbols!

This is “knowing” taking itself to it's limits = end of all ‘non practical’ doubts = my surrender

Don't know waking objects persist or r like dreaming, I can't
Don't know whether time is beyond its word knowing, I can't
Don't know who this ‘I’ is except what words describe, I can't
Don't know how words emerge, meanings are known, I can't
Strangely, this not knowing resolves everything that ‘I’ sought
What is, is Evident, needs no knowing; rest, word's fairyland

Appendix: Three Semi-Poetic Perspectives

Perspective I: The Evident - With Knowing

The **Evident**, what 'is' without requiring explanations, is all there is
Contains what words on **emerging** refer to as
objects, **own body**, immediate space, words + meanings, and like
The rest is **only** in word's meanings= **knowing**
extended space beyond immediate, past-future, dark non existence,
reality/not of contents, who knows The Evident
These **very** words, as they are written, read, what's presently evident

Perspective II: The Evident - Without Knowing

The Evident - what 'is' - is all there is
Presence of symbols and meanings,
only knowing there is; absent symbols,
The Evident is **empty of all knowing** -

of intents, reasoning, planning, choices,
memory; wrong-right, true-false, good-bad,
self-nonsel, matter-space, real-illusory,
being-non being, even of birth-death

No **knowing** of these, but they 'really' exist?
No symbols- no knowing such speculations,
no notions of empty, 'knowing' &The Evident,
no questions, nor odyssey for their resolution

Perspective III: The Empty Evident