

Article

Meaning and Context: A Brief Introduction

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Abstract

In searching for what is the most natural way to regard the world, it will be shown that existence is an interplay between meanings and contexts. This interplay takes the form of consciousness, which arises on top of an infinite ocean of formless contexts. Various aspects of meaning and context will be explored, going through the emergent structure of consciousness, self-reference, the contradictory nature of the formless realm and love as the ultimate context for existence. Given the infinite ramifications of contexts being formless, only a brief introduction can ever be given.

Keywords: Meaning, context, self-reference, infinite, love.

Introduction

I will start by stating that I'm thinking for many years about the nature of meaning and context and I'm not yet satisfied with the understanding of the problem that I'm currently at. Given that it might take many more decades until I might arrive at a satisfying understanding, I consider that until that moment, it might still be helpful for other people if I share my current understanding on this issue. Part of the reason why I'm still not in the possession of the understanding that I desire might have to do with the very infinite nature of contexts that I will be also discussing in the pages that follow. Such an infinity might prevent any understanding of these issues to ever be obtained. Yet, despite this, I still believe that certain progress can be made. But instead of waiting to acquire that progress by myself and then presenting it, it might be more productive to present the problems at the present state and hope that other people might find them interesting and together we might make better progress.

The paths that I travelled in order to arrive at the present ideas are of course not linear. Various combinations of thinking and living life lead to my current ideas. Therefore, the structure of the current exposition might not fully reflect the full picture. But since a way of presenting is required nevertheless, this is the way that I consider the problems are best to be presented at the current time. For a more comprehensive understanding of these issues, my many previous papers can be read.^{[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8]}

Probably the central problem in understanding the world is to specify what it is made out of. And for this we have the history of philosophy with all sorts of attempts at an answer, such as water, air, fire, to the more recent materialist stories of atoms and energy, and also the idealist branch of everything being consciousness. While I also consider that everything is consciousness, the problem is still not properly clarified, since consciousness also needs to be made more explicit.

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What is consciousness? And why everything be consciousness? In this paper I will bring forward a more natural way of answering what the world is made out of. I will show how the most natural way is for the world to be made out of meanings and contexts. In the process of this exposition, consciousness will be shown to be meaning that arises relative to context.

The Emergent Structure of Consciousness

Before getting to talk about meaning and context we need to be aware of an aspect of the phenomenology of consciousness, so that we can later understand why consciousness itself is meaning relative to context. That aspect is the emergent structure of consciousness. The approach that I will be taking is the same that I took in previous papers^{[2][3][4][5][6]}, but since it appears that people have difficulties in seeing the phenomenon of emergence that is taking place before their very eyes, I will try to bring as many examples as possible in order to trigger the “aha!” moment in the consciousness of the reader regarding the phenomenon of emergence, the “aha!” moment itself being an example of emergence.

I think that the main difficulty, especially for someone coming from a materialist background, which at the present historical time is the dominant doctrine taught in educational systems across the world, is the “what you see is what you get” understanding of the world. If someone sees a chair, he automatically takes for granted that there is a chair in front of him. There is no questioning of this “fact” being further undertaken. Actually, this is because consciousness does such a great job at conjuring worlds, that questioning the conjured worlds doesn’t even cross one’s mind. The apparent reality of the conjured world is so powerful that even when one is presented with an image such as the duck-rabbit image, one still doesn’t see the significance of such an image. Such an image is called an “illusion”, as if there is still some image drawn on the paper and the fact that we see that image as a duck or a rabbit is an illusion. When in fact, the true significance of an example like this is the creative power of consciousness taking place before our very eyes. Such an example is no “illusion” at all, for the trivial fact that there is no image drawn on the paper at all. Everything is created in consciousness: the image, the duck, the rabbit, everything.

The materialistic minded person can even bring forward more sophisticated argumentation, such as our current physical theories, arguing that their precision is proof of the existence of the entities used in such theories. But such a type of argument was once used based on the precision of Newton theory to argue for the existence of planet Vulcan, planet which instantly vanished when General Relativity came along, nowadays the modern planet Vulcan being represented by “dark matter”, which undoubtedly in the future will turn out as just another artifact of our current theories. Actually, all our current scientific theories and their entities will turn out to be nothing more than artifacts of the true nature of reality and its functioning, namely consciousness, or how we will see in this paper, meaning and context.

Thus, the first requirement for anyone that wishes to understand reality, is to be aware of how consciousness creates everything that we see and generally experience around us, creation which, of course, is not to be understood as if consciousness creates “material” objects outside ourselves, but creates the appearance of such objects inside itself. If this first requirement is not

met, no amount of rational arguments can make one see. Thus, before continue reading, the reader must make sure he meets this first requirement.

There is also a second requirement, which is not necessarily met by someone who meets the first requirement. And this is the process by which consciousness builds up the world. Someone that only meets the first requirement might have a superficial understanding that the world is just created immediately. He might understand that the chair in front of him is just an image in consciousness, but he might hastily assume that this image just is, that is has no internal structure. And what I will be doing next is to show that the creation of the world is not “just-so”, but it has internal structure, structure that follows general rules, rules which we will later identify as the rules of how meaning is generated relative to context. We will see how consciousness is built on levels, levels which constitute an emergent holarchy in which qualities are inherited and transcended from level to level.

Because the word “emergence” is used in materialistic talks in examples like water “emerging” from hydrogen and oxygen or a flock of birds “emerging” from individual birds, it must be made clear that the correct usage of this concept is only in relation to ontological entities and not epistemic ones. Given that “water” and “birds” are just epistemic entities, applying the concept of emergence to them is incorrect. The only place where we will see that this concept makes sense is when applied to qualia, since only qualia really exist, thus have ontological status. I will take the same example that I took in previous papers^{[5][6]}, shown in Figure 1, and ask the reader once more: What do you see?

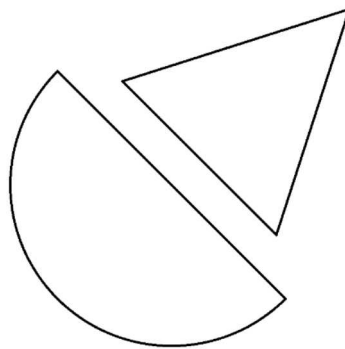


Figure 1. Emergence

Probably the first answer will be: a semicircle and a triangle. And this is a truly existing experience in consciousness. Now, let’s modify this experience and see emergence in action. I will tell the reader: It is a radio telescope. Now I will ask the reader to look again at the image. Something new happened. Now the image is not a semicircle and a triangle anymore, but it is a radio telescope. Of course, it is highly simplified, but nevertheless it is a radio telescope. For diversity, let’s alter the original experience in another direction. I will tell the reader now that that image is actually a space probe entering atmosphere. Again, having this new information, the experience of the reader changes once more and now he has a different experience when he looks at the image.

Because people seem to be having difficulties in understanding the profound significance of what is happening here, I will insist some more on it. One explanation for what is happening here that people bring, comes from a neuroscience-type of mindset, in which the brain is said to label images. Thus, such a person usually says that there is no emergence happening, but is merely the brain labeling the semicircle and the triangle as “radio telescope” or “space probe”. The reason someone can bring such an explanation is because he fails to see what is happening before his very eyes. And what is happening before his very eyes is for the very visual experience to change. There is no mere “labeling” going on, but is an actual experience of a radio telescope or a space probe coming into existence in consciousness.

We are talking about phenomenology here. “Brain labels” is an extra theory on top of phenomenology, theory which is not even correct. We are not discussing such theories here. We are only discussing phenomenology. And phenomenologically, we are dealing with 3 different experiences here: semicircle and triangle, radio telescope, space probe. Adding a side note here, the “brain labels” theory cannot be correct given how experiences are acquired, process which is at its clearest in childhood. When the parents tell to a child that that is a “dog” or a “cat”, the child has no apriori database in his “brain” from where to label the images that he sees with these words, not to mention that the child first needs to understand the words themselves. Such a chicken-and-egg situation falsifies any “brain label” theory. Something else must happen, something for which I have no explanation at this moment, but which we will later see how it must be related to the formless contexts and to love as the absolute context. Also, this makes any AI attempt futile, since AI doesn’t have access to the powers of consciousness of bringing new qualia into existence out of nothing.

To not digress further, let’s look into more details at the semicircle and triangle example and see properties of emergence in action. What we notice is that when we bring into existence the experiences of radio telescope or space probe, these experiences are not some abstract experiences, but they are based on the previously existing experience of the semicircle and triangle. Thus, we recognize that we are dealing with new experiences emerging on top of previous experiences. The way emergence happens is to include in the new experience the previous experience while also transcending it. The quale of radio telescope has inherited in itself the semicircle for its base and the triangle for its antenna. The quale of space probe has inherited in itself the semicircle for the capsule and the triangle for the trail of flames. Of tremendous importance here is that the new experiences are not reducible to the previous experience. The quale of radio telescope is not just a semicircle and a triangle “labeled” differently by the “brain”, but is a genuinely new experience that neither can be reduced to the previous experience of shapes, nor can it be predicted from the experience of shape. Similarly for the space probe and the potentially infinite number of new qualia that can be emerged from the quale of shape, such as ice cream or parachute, etc.

Before continue reading, the reader must make sure that he sees emergence happening before his very eyes. The reader must look carefully at his experiences in consciousness and acknowledge that indeed seeing a radio telescope or a space probe is not the same thing as seeing a semicircle and a triangle. If this acknowledgement is not being done, the rest of the paper will make no sense. I am stressing this so much because this is the central feature of consciousness, and people pass too lightly over it. The entire consciousness is built through emergence, in which new levels

of consciousness are being brought into existence out of nothing through a process that includes the previously existing levels of consciousness. If this simple example of objects qualia emerging on top of shapes qualia is not being understood, the more complex cases of qualities inheritance will be impossible to be grasped, thus no understanding of consciousness will be able to be achieved.

Also, when we will talk about meaning and context, we will see that this is the most natural way for the world to be. Meaning is not acquired all out-of-the-box, but is built through emergence. One cannot grasp high school calculus if he first didn't grasp elementary school arithmetic. This is because meaning is constructed through emergence, and many levels are required before a certain higher meaning is grasped. This seems so natural when we talk about mathematics that it seems pointless to even mention it in a scientific paper. But its very naturalness makes us trapped into taking it lightly and not acknowledging its profound significance. And as we are seeing here, this functioning of meaning is not restricted only to cognitive processes, but is the very engine of consciousness functioning, qualia themselves being acquired through emergence.

Having this simple example settled, let's take a more complex one to better become aware of how emergence is the central feature of consciousness, being present in all qualia. For this I will use the entire visual domain to show how it is constructed through emergence level by level. Let's have a look at Figure 2.

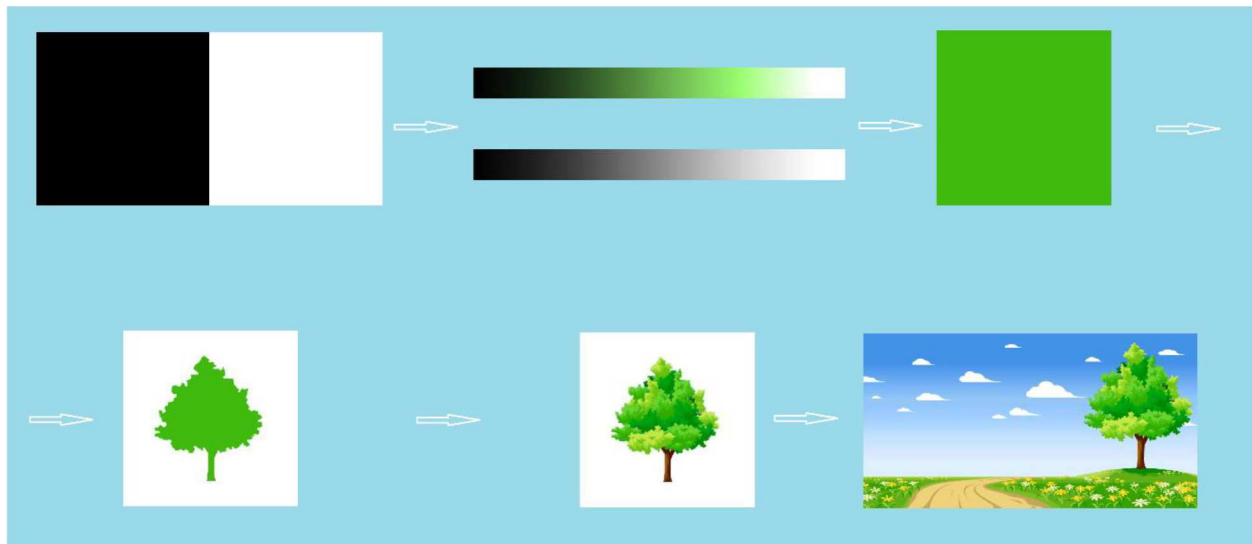


Figure 2. Emergent levels in the visual domain

What we see in Figure 2 is that the base of the visual domain is represented by the black-and-white qualia. Then the qualities of black-and-white are inherited in the emergent level of shades-of-gray. We can see this inheritance by the fact that shades-of-gray display a darker-and-lighter variability. Then the qualities of the shades-of-gray are inherited in the emergent level of colors. We can see this in the fact that a color is never pure, but displays a range of shades varying from lighter shades to darker shades. Then, colors are inherited in the emergent level of shapes. A shape is not an abstract entity but it is always created from at least 2 colors. Then shapes, like we

also saw in the previous Figure 1, are inherited in objects, in this particular case in the quale of tree. Finally, objects are inherited in the full visual scene. Notice as a side note that emergence is not linear, but from a certain level there can be a whole family of branches emerging. For example, from shades-of-gray all colors can emerge (even colors that we cannot imagine from our human consciousness), not only one. Also, from the shape in Figure 2, a quale of tree can be emerged or a quale of leaf, and so on. In principle, the number of qualities that can be obtained through emergence is infinite.

Through this example we also get a clearer understanding of what qualia are. People tend to think of qualia as being just things such as colors, while somehow the rest of the experiences are nothing more than just colors put side by side. But qualia are everything. In order to see an object is not enough to just put colors side by side, but a new quale must be emerged on top of the colors to make the object come into existence. If this wouldn't happen, we would not experience a world of objects, but an indistinct chaos of colors. And we can see this in pathologies such as prosopagnosia in which people are unable to see faces even though they are able to see the elements of a face, such as eyes, nose, mouth. The quale of face is not merely eyes put side by side with nose and mouth, but is a new level that emerges on top of the levels of the elements. Some people might argue that even though we might see just a chaos of colors we might still rationally deduce the objects to which the colors in the visual field belong to.

But such a thing would be impossible. The clue as to what object each color belongs to doesn't reside in the colors. We would have no way whatsoever to deduce rationally what objects are there in the visual field. The level of objects is an entire new qualia domain that contains in itself meanings over and above the meanings contained in colors. Without such extra meanings we would be completely helpless. To help the imagination of the reader grasp this situation, I will mention the easier example of the transition from shades-of-gray to colors. If we are presented with a gray picture, we have no clue whatsoever of how we should color that image. When grasping this impossibility of rationally jumping from level to level in the case of visual qualia, one should be struck by how a consciousness construct the world in which we find ourselves is. We are so used to take chairs and tables and buildings and trees for granted, that we don't realize how they are just objects qualia brought into existence by consciousness, objects qualia which emerge from what is otherwise an indistinct visual field of chaotic colors.

Because the understanding of consciousness is not entirely a rational process, but is a rational process applied to experiences, I will give another example in order to provide to the reader the necessary experiential data to which to relate and then to apply reason. This emergence of objects qualia from shapes qualia happens sometimes to me on floor tiles, such as the one in Figure 3.

There are high chances that any reader experienced this, thus he will better realize why it is impossible to deduce objects qualia from shapes or colors qualia. What is interesting is that the objects that I see on the tiles are influenced by my psychological state. On a certain psychological state, I clearly see certain objects related to that state. However, if I am to look in another day while I'm in another psychological state, I see totally different objects. Even more so, if I am to reconstruct the objects that I saw on the previous day, I am unable to do that, even though the shapes are still the same. Of course, I can take a picture and draw on that picture what

colors belonged to the objects in order to help myself next time in reconstructing the object. But this is already a process that involves a method of keeping in memory the extra meanings that I experienced at some point. But without such an auxiliary method, a field of colors and shapes has not enough meaning in it in order to know what objects are “out-there”. This shows that in fact there are no objects “out-there” in the first place, but they are brought into existence on the spot by consciousness depending on a complex interplay between meanings and contexts.



Figure 3. Emergence of objects from shapes

This functioning of emergence happens in all qualia domains, and a prediction is that no matter what foreign consciousness aliens might have, their qualia domains will also be structured on emergent holarchies. To give brief examples from other qualia domains: the emergence of language from sounds (2 people speaking the same language have a totally different experience than a foreigner hearing that language), the emergence of music from sounds (to hear music is more than to hear sounds, that’s why people like different types of music, because they are able for certain sounds to emerge the level of music), the emergence of the taste of chocolate from the taste of sugar, etc. A particular striking example from present-day internet is the laural-yanny case.

Though the level of the sounds is the same, some people hear nevertheless “laurel” and some others “yanny”. This shows once again how a higher level is not predictable from a lower level. And exactly like in the case of the impossibility of telling what objects are in a field of colors, it is equally impossible to tell that those particular sounds contain “laurel” or “yanny”. They don’t contain either. The sounds are just sounds. The words “laurel” and “yanny” are higher level qualia that are being emerged on top of the level of sounds. This also shows how a higher level cannot be reduced to the lower levels. One would be tempted to reduce “laurel” to the sounds “l” “a” “u” “r” “e” “l”, and “yanny” to similar sounds, which would contradict the fact that the level of the sounds is actually identical for both words levels.

To add a layer of difficulty to the problem, qualities are not inherited only on the level immediately above, but they can be inherited in any higher level, with their initial qualities modified beyond trivial recognition. For example, black-and-white manifests in the level

immediately above as the variability of shades-of-gray. But black-and-white is also inherited in the full visual scene and the way in which it manifests there is to allow for the visual scene to be seen at all. The meaning that is responsible for the qualities of black-and-white as black and white is the meaning of “being visual” (or a more subtle meaning that has to do with evolutionary reasons, to be detailed later). This meaning that lies at the base of the entire visual domain is then inherited in all the higher levels and makes them visible. In the first level it produces the qualities of black and white, because to see is at least to see black and white. But in the higher levels it contributes to making them visual.

I will give another example in this direction, in order to familiarize ourselves as better as possible with the subtlety of qualities inheritance. For this, I will take the emergent structure of the written language, and I will take the levels of shapes, letters, words and sentences. We will see what qualities are we dealing with and how they manifest themselves in the various levels that emerge along the line.

Shapes: quality of “visual objects”: entities with spatially defined boundaries.

Letters: inherits the quality of the Shapes, thus becoming themselves visual objects, and emerges on top of it its own quality of “unities of language”.

Words: inherits the quality of the Shapes, being themselves visual objects, inherits the quality of the Letters, being themselves unities of language (just more complex than letters), and emerges on top of them all its own quality of “carriers of linguistic meaning”.

Sentences: inherits the quality of the Shapes, being themselves visual objects, inherits the quality of the Letters, being themselves unities of languages (just more complex than both letters and words), inherits the quality of the Words, being themselves carriers of linguistic meaning, and emerges on top of them all its own quality of “carriers of ideas”.

One further aspect of emergence is the top-down influence in levels, in which the lower levels are influenced by the higher level. The best example in this case is the spoken language. When we speak, we don’t choose the letters or the words, but we start from the highest level of wanting to transmit a certain idea, and this selects automatically the sentences that it should contain, sentences which select their words, words which select their letters. Another example is the colored cube “illusion” from Figure 4.

In this image, the squares pointed by the arrows are blue and yellow. When in isolation, these squares look gray. But here they are getting their colors as a top-down influence from the higher level of the image. We will discuss this case later on when we will show how the emergent structure of consciousness is actually a result of how meaning appears relative to contexts. Again, this is not an “illusion”, but is as real as it gets. Those squares in the image are really blue and yellow.

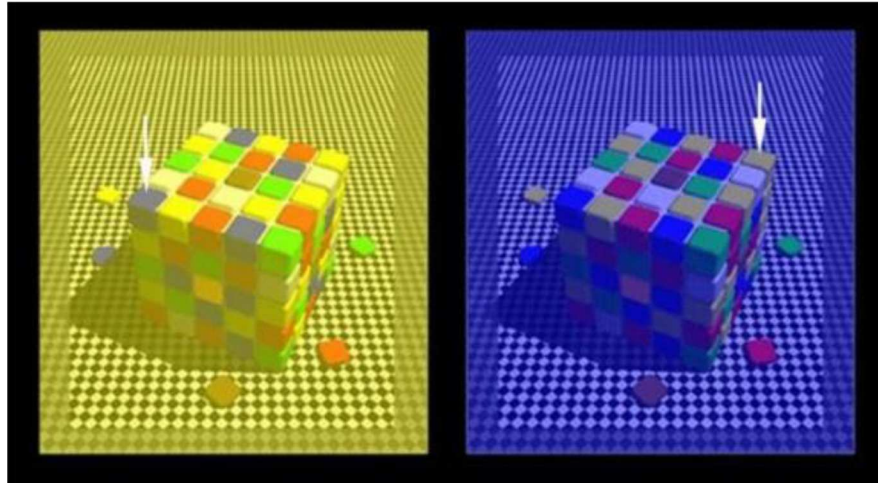


Figure 4. Colored cube “illusion”

Another point to make here is that the above emergent structure from Figure 2 was presented starting from the bottom and highlighting the various qualia that emerge as we go up the tree. From a practical point of view though, the analysis can only start from the top level, because the top level is the one that we actually experience directly. And the way in which the descent in levels is being done is to search in the current level for qualities that might come from lower levels. For example, in the quale of the full visual scene we identify various objects, then in the quale of the tree we identify a shape, then in a shape we identify a color, and so on. As was shown in previous papers^{[2][3][4][5]}, by doing this we can also reach the level of time and even deeper to the base level of consciousness which is the level of the Self.

Though for a full analysis I refer the reader to my paper about time^[5], I will give in here some examples of how time itself is nothing more than an emergent level of consciousness, in order to show how powerful consciousness is in creating worlds and how diverse the qualities brought into existence by consciousness are. They are so diverse that they tricked people throughout history to consider them different ontological categories. People saw objects qualia and they invented the concept of “matter”. They saw motion qualia and they invented the concept of “physical time”. And so on. And all these categories created stories about what the world is, that are so far away from what it actually is. To see how time is actually just another quality of consciousness let’s look at the motion “illusions” in Figure 5.

Once again, they are not “illusions”. There really is motion in them. This motion, as explained at length in the paper about time^[5], is a top-down influence in levels from the level of black-and-white to the level of time, level of time which is an emergent level of consciousness below the level of black-and-white. The specific arrangement of black-and-white in the images has the power to create a top-down influence on the level of time below the level of black-and-white and create motion in the images, in the same way that the filters in Figure 4 have the power to create top-down influence on the level of colors and make the squares blue and yellow. Time is not a special ontological category, but is just another quality of consciousness situated at a certain level in the holarchy, which behaves in the same way as all the other levels. Its particular quality of “motion” is no different than the quality of “redness”. Is important for the reader to fully

appreciate this in order to see how far-reaching the powers of consciousness are. By playing with qualities, consciousness brings into existence appearances of amazing worlds. It doesn't need to do anything else. It doesn't need to struggle to create various ontological categories, various particles and fields and space and time, etc. It only needs to play with qualities.

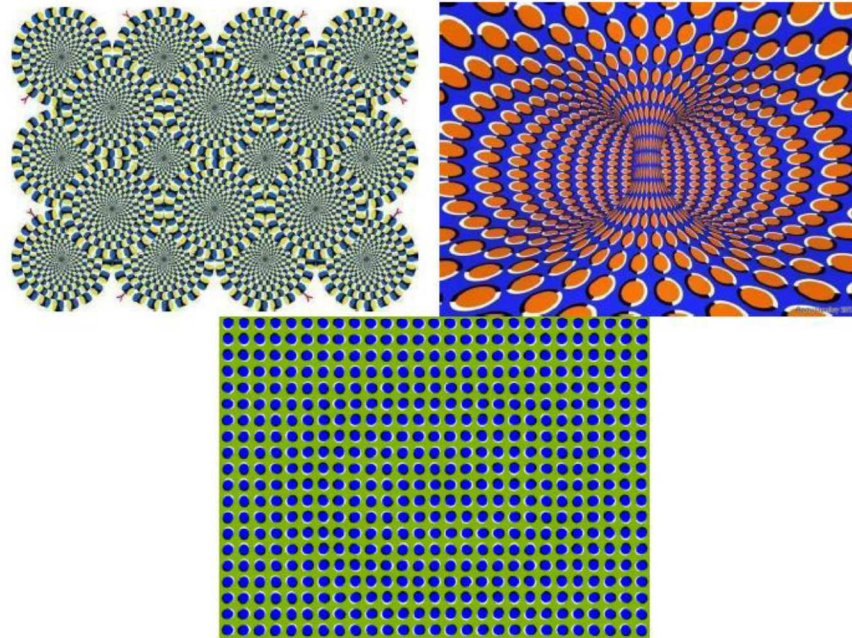


Figure 5. Motion "illusions"

Having presented all these many examples, I think that the reader has enough data to grasp what emergence is and how consciousness is using emergence to build up the world. The next step in the analysis is to offer a mechanism for emergence. The search for a mechanism will be the beginning of a road on strange realms in which contradictory properties exist at the same time. But as the presentation will go on, we will see that these conclusions are inevitable. If we are to explain emergence, by whose validity I hope the reader is convinced by now, we will have to accept that reality works based on contradictory properties, such as every-thing being the same as no-thing and other such apparent absurdities. Though at the beginning such ideas might sound wrong, we will see that, as the presentation will go on, they have to be like this. There is no other way for reality to be. Actually, it has to be contradictory in its very core to even be at all.

Self-Reference

The next step in the analysis is to offer a mechanism for emergence. How should the nature of reality be such that new qualia can emerge on top of previously existing qualia? We will see that the phenomenology of emergence will lead us to conclude the existence of an entity that includes and transcends itself, both at the same time, thus accounting for how new qualia are able to incorporate in themselves other qualia in a process that maintains the unity of consciousness. So, in order to get to a mechanism for emergence, we have to pay careful attention to what is going

on. Let's take as an example the emergence of colors from shades-of-gray. First, there is a consciousness that experiences shades-of-gray. Then, by a reason that remains unknown at the present day, that same consciousness experiences colors.

How can we analyze this phenomenon? One aspect of this phenomenon is that, as we saw above, colors include shades-of-gray while being more than shades-of-gray. Another aspect is that in this transition, the same consciousness endures. So, what we have is not only that colors include and transcend shades-of-gray, but the same consciousness includes and transcends itself. The way in which this process can happen is by consciousness looking-back-at-itself. By looking-back-at-itself, consciousness finds itself, but the very act of finding itself leads consciousness to transcend itself by including its former self. Note here that this is not necessarily a temporal phenomenon.

When we see colors in day-by-day life, the emergence of colors on top of shades-of-gray is already present. So, emergence is not to be understood in a temporal manner. Of course, some cases of emergence, like learning new concepts on top of previously existing concepts are temporal, but this is just a particular case, the most general way for emergence to be being atemporal. But even though emergence is not to be understood in a temporal manner, the analysis remains the same: the phenomenon of emergence is explainable by consciousness having the property of including and transcending itself, both at the same time. Therefore, even if we are dealing with the visual domain or the auditory domain, or any other qualia domain, the same entity lies at the center of them all. Let's call this entity: self-reference. We can try to represent it graphically as in Figure 6.

Here, interesting considerations start to appear that need to be properly understood if the rest of the paper is to make sense. One such first consideration is: Which of the two diagrams of Figure 3 represents self-reference? The answer is: both (and neither). They both are self-reference. Self-reference is an unformal entity. This means that no matter how hard we would try we cannot capture it under any formalism. To give an intuitive feel for why this is the case, let's take the following example. Let's say that you want to formalize a certain state of consciousness, like for example seeing a unicorn. One way in which such a formalization can be done is to write on a piece of paper "I see a unicorn". But such a formalization pushes you outside of the very state that you want to formalize, landing you on the new state "I draw on a piece of paper that I see a unicorn". If you try harder, and want to formalize this new state, a similar phenomenon will happen of pushing you in yet another state: "I draw on a piece of paper that I draw on a piece of paper that I see a unicorn". And so on.

No matter how hard you try, you will be kept thrown outside the state that you want to formalize. The reason for why this happens is that in this process there is always an "I" that is left outside of the formalization. Any attempt at capturing the "I" ("I see", "I draw", etc.), pushes the "I" one step backwards. No matter what formalization we would try to bring to consciousness, the "I" that is doing the formalization will always be left outside. So, which is the ultimate "I"? The one that sees or the one that draws? The answer is: both and neither. The observer is an unformal entity. No formalization can be brought for the observer. Fortunately, as we will see, this is not the end of the science of consciousness. Quite the contrary. If we take this fact of consciousness at its true value, we can make important steps forward towards a science of consciousness.

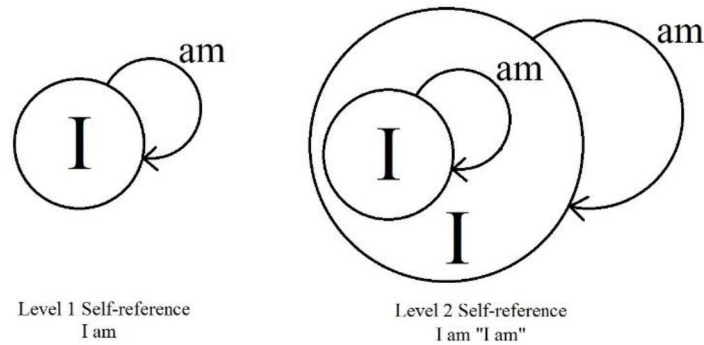


Figure 6. Self-Reference

Let's analyze a little more the nature of self-reference. There is actually a difference between self-reference and the Self, and this difference needs to be spelled down in order to make things clearer. Let's start from first principles and define self-reference to be an entity with the property of looking-back-at-itself. Let's analyze what this entails and see that starting from such theoretical first principles we can recover the phenomenology of emergence. By looking-back-at-itself, self-reference does two things. In the first place, it finds itself. The place in which it finds itself is inside of itself. So, the itself that is found inside itself is "smaller" than itself. But secondly, at the same time, finding the "smaller" itself inside itself, it also means that it is "larger" than itself. And at the same time, being itself means that it is also equal to itself.

Thus, self-reference has three properties: it is smaller, equal and larger than itself, all at the same time. Note that as long as we leave these apparent contradictory properties unformalized, there will be no contradictions, so the analysis is valid. And not only valid, but crucial for the existence of consciousness. So then, how does consciousness arise from these properties of self-reference? The way in which it happens is as follow: when self-reference looks-back-at-itself, by finding itself inside itself, the first glimpse of awareness appears: "I am". "I am", or in short, the Self, is the first object that self-reference finds when it looks-back-at-itself. The Self is the first quale that self-reference experiences.

This quale is the sensation of being alive. When we strip our consciousness of colors and sounds and touches, what is left is the primordial experience: the Self, the ontological subjectivity, the first-person perspective. Another productive way in which we can cast this phenomenon is to describe it in terms of form and formless. Self-reference is a formless entity. But by looking-back-at-itself it becomes form. Form and formless are inseparable. The formless self-reference always looks-back-at-itself, so it always becomes form. And form cannot exist any other way but by the looking-back-at-itself of the formless self-reference. Thus, form and formless are 2 sides of the same coin. Self-reference is both form and formless and neither form nor formless.

If the above considerations of self-reference are hard to wrap the head around, it is natural. In day-by-day life we are focused so much on forms (qualia) that we developed the non-contradiction principle in which no two qualia can be identical. Being thus used to handle the forms, we find ourselves in difficulty when getting in contact with the unformal realm. I actually think that this is the main reason why the science of consciousness is still struggling to be born.

By being used to employ formal entities in our sciences, we have a tendency of hoping to do the science of consciousness in the same manner. I think that if this obstacle is surpassed, rapid advances will be made in giving birth and developing the science of consciousness. Thus, let's see what science we can do by operating in the unformal realm.

The first step in validating the above analysis of the unformal nature of self-reference is to see how emergence is obtained from it. The step from self-reference to emergence is straightforward. As we saw, the first looking-back of self-reference gives birth to the Self. But self-reference can continue to look-back-at-itself. Since now it already has the "I am" object inside itself, the next looking-back will put self-reference in the new "I am "I am"" form, form which includes the previous "I am" form and at the same time transcends it. From here on out, self-reference can go in various directions. At this moment it has 2 objects inside itself. It can either look-back at only the second of them and become "I am "I am "I am""", or it can look-back at both of them and become "I am <"I am "I am" & "I am">". And so on.

We thus recognize two aspects of emergence: the quality inheritance from one level to the next one and the ramification of levels. Having now the manifestation of self-reference at our disposal, we can express for example the emergence of colors from shades-of-gray as a looking-back-at-itself of self-reference from the state "I am shades-of-gray" to the new state "I am colors & I am shades-of-gray" (or better: "I am colors in virtue of being shades-of-gray"). Seeing thus that emergence can be explained by self-reference, we can become more confident that the suggestion of accepting unformal entities in our science is most probably correct.

There is one more way in which the unformal properties of self-reference can be expressed, which is illuminating into making the reader more acquainted with the bizarre nature of the unformal realm. Because self-reference is unformal, it is not a thing. A thing is an object, a quale, a form. But since self-reference is a precursor of forms, self-reference is not a thing, or better put: no-thing. Equally, because by the mechanism of looking-back-at-itself self-reference enriches consciousness with all the possible qualia, self-reference is also forms. And even more: it is all the forms. All the qualia that ever existed and will ever exist in my consciousness and in all the consciousness in the world are created by self-reference looking-back-at-itself; are self-reference. So self-reference is also all the things, or better put: every-thing. In short: **self-reference is no-thing and every-thing, both at the same time.**

Maybe in the end of this section it is helpful to point out the mistaken way in which self-reference is employed by people. People usually talk about self-reference in relation to examples such as "this sentence is false" or "the set of all sets", being amazed at how such paradoxes are possible. But such paradoxes are illusions, tricks of the mind. The reason is simple: they are bad ontological constructions. When people create examples such as "this sentence is false", they somehow also attribute to them ontological status separated from consciousness. When they say "this sentence is false" they somehow think that there really is a "sentence" out-there, that self-refers to itself. But this is false, is just a trick of the mind. There is no "sentence" out-there with an ontology separated from the consciousness that thinks this sentence.

Therefore, applying the concept of self-reference to such a "sentence" is an erroneous way of employing self-reference. Self-reference is only one, and that is the one described in this section.

The reader must become convinced that indeed this is the case, and drop all the erroneous ways in which he used this concept in the past.

Dynamics of the unformal realm

Before getting to cast the analysis in terms of meaning and context, we need to be aware of one more element of phenomenology that derives from the above considerations of self-reference. In my paper about unification^[6] I gave more examples, showing even how telepathy is such a manifestation of the properties of self-reference, but for this paper I will only select one such example that has a rich enough phenomenology to highlight the type of dynamics that takes place in the unformal realm.

The example that I am about to present starts from the observation that our consciousness is a unification of smaller consciousness. The reason that we both see and hear is because we are a unification between a consciousness that only sees and a consciousness that only hears. Split brain patients also expose other such unifications of consciousness that take place in a healthy individual. Of course, these are the simplest examples of consciousness unifications, but the phenomenon of unification is more subtle. The visual field itself is a unification between smaller consciousness that each see individual objects. But it is even more intricate than this. The example that I will present will show such intricacies of unification. For even more details of unification, I refer the reader to my paper about unification^[6].

The example is a type of error that we all make from time to time, and it happens in the written qualia domain. It is when for example, instead of writing “tight lie”, we end up writing “light tie”. The first thing to notice about this particular kind of error is that it is structured, it is not random. We can see that it is a very specific switch of the first letters of the two words, such that the resulting erroneous quale is also meaningful. If the switching of the first letters would not have resulted in a meaningful result, they wouldn’t have switched. Thus, this error cannot be explained in terms of “brain” making a bad “computation”. Something much deeper is at work. We will see that we need to employ the entire previous analysis of self-reference in order to explain it. Thus, what superficially might appear as an insignificant error, not worthy of taking into consideration, it is actually of profound importance and has the power to illustrate the deep workings of self-reference, and ultimately of reality.

The first thing is that we can start to spot the workings of the “every-thing” property of self-reference. Let’s go into details and see exactly what is happening. This type of error is a consequence of how unification works based on the unformal properties of self-reference. As we saw in the emergence section, in the written language qualia domain we have the holarchy letters -> words -> sentences. The way in which the transition happens from level to level is by unifying certain elements in a level and then transcending and including them by bringing into existence a new meaning/quale. For the “tight lie” example, the level of the letters is composed of the individual qualia “t”, “i”, “g”, “h”, “t”, “l”, “i”, “e”. Let’s call this level 1. Then these individual qualia are unified into the words “tight” and “lie”, which in turn are unified into the group of words “tight lie”. Let’s call these levels 2 and 3 respectively. This is what would happen in a case in which no error appears. But sometimes, for unknown reasons at the time of writing this

paper, something is happening with the unification, and a different final quale of “light tie” is obtained.

What we see is that the qualia from the level 1 are unified in different qualia from the level 2. But the reason that drives this erroneous unification comes from level 3. The reason why it comes from level 3 is that level 3 is the one that establishes what the final group of words should be, namely “tight” first and “lie” second. Therefore, what happens is that the highest level scrambles all the unifications that happen on the lower levels. The unifications don’t happen sequentially, but they happen all at the same time. This is also one consequence of the every-thing property of self-reference. There is not a first unification of letters into words and only then of words into group of words.

There is not a first unification of “t,” “i,” “g,” “h,” “t” into “tight” and of “l,” “i,” “e” into “lie” and only then of “tight” and “lie” into “tight lie”. If that would have been the case, then “tight” and “lie” would have been already settled, and the unification from level 2 to level 3 would have only had at its disposal the ability to only unify “tight” with “lie”, so the error couldn’t have taken place. But since the error does take place, and since we can clearly see that the switching of the first letters is influenced by level 3, then level 3 must have the ability to influence all the levels that are part of its holarchy. Thus, when the final quale “tight lie” is created, all the previous levels are still up for grab and the final level can still scramble them.

This process might sound similar to the superposition found in quantum mechanics, the difference being that in quantum mechanics the superposition happens between elements from “the same level”, while here we are dealing with a generalized version of superposition in which elements exist in superposition both with their peers from the same level and also with elements from higher and lower levels, the process of looking-back “collapsing the wavefunction” and giving a definitive result which depends upon the entire holarchy of levels that are in superposition before the moment of looking-back. I will not pursue this line of thought in this paper, though some readers might find it intriguing to be pursued in their own work.

Having explained in little more detail the process of unification, let’s see now how exactly the “every-thing” (together with the “no-thing”) properties of self-reference come into play in producing the error. To explain better what is happening, let’s remember the question regarding Figure 6. Which of the two diagrams of Figure 6 represents self-reference? The answer is: both (and neither). To get an even clearer picture of this, let’s represent self-reference in a more complex example. Let’s see this in Figure 7.

The same question: Which of the many elements of Figure 7 represents self-reference? The answer is: all of them and neither of them. We can take the smaller elements to represent the letters in our “tight lie” example, then the medium elements the words, and the 2 big elements the level of the group of words. At each step along the way, each element is self-reference itself. Since each element is self-reference itself, then each element on its own must have the properties of self-reference. Each element on its own is no-thing and every-thing both at the same time. Up until the final step in which a quale is actually experienced, all the levels that go into that final quale are in the undetermined state of being no-thing and every-thing both at the same time. Up

until the final quale of “tight lie” is about to be experienced, all its component sub-levels are nothing and every-thing both at the same time.

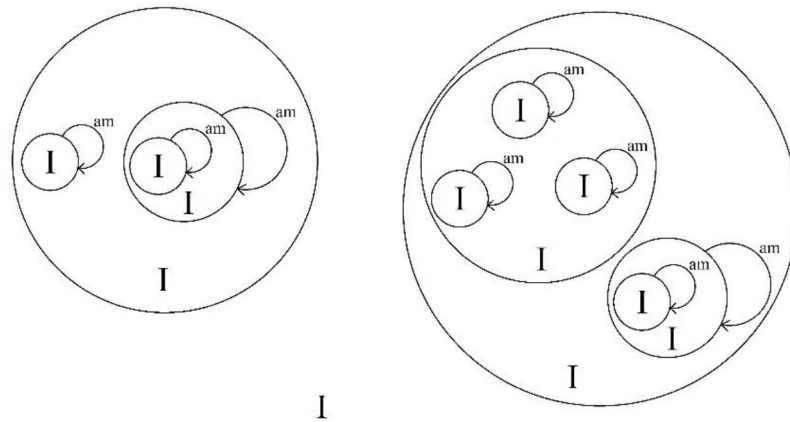


Figure 7. A more complex example of self-reference

Therefore, when the error does happen and the final quale “light tie” is experienced, the sub-levels are free to be arranged in any possible way. The sub-levels not having a definite state, the error is allowed to happen, and sometimes it does happen. One aspect of consciousness that might contribute to structuring consciousness in normal cases is attention. Attention might act as a limiting factor in what the outcome will be. If attention is concentrated, then the levels lose their absolute freedom and become restricted into creating the result intended by attention. Of course, other factors might be at play as well. Unfortunately, the complete answer will have to wait to be uncovered by future generations of thinkers. But what this paper proposes is that part of the mechanism of how these errors happen and how unification and ultimately consciousness works is by the interplay between the unformal properties of self-reference.

Thus, we can see that explanations of the type “brain bad computation” are nowhere near capable of explaining such phenomena. Such phenomena are not possible to be explained in formal terms. They need dynamics that happen in the unformal realm where contradictory properties can exist at the same time. Even on these grounds alone, materialism cannot be true. Actually, even an idealist theory of consciousness that tries to explain consciousness solely on formal terms is equivalent to materialism, and has no chances of success. An adequate theory of consciousness needs to take into account its unformal dimension.

There are many more such examples to be given, some maybe even more revealing than this one, and for this I refer the reader to my paper about unification^[6]. But this example has enough phenomenology in order to be ready to start the discussion about meaning and context.

Meaning and context

We now have plenty of phenomenology of consciousness and insights into how this phenomenology is constructed from the unformal realm. But this phenomenology is in terms of

“qualia” and “emergence”, which are not that natural. After all, why would the world be made out of qualia and why construct qualia through emergence? It seems as question begging as the stories of materialism. Thus, we need to search for a more natural way of regarding the phenomenology discussed throughout this paper, in order to see its necessary nature and thus to answer the begging questions. Thus, by recasting the entire analysis in terms of meaning and context, we will explain why the world is necessarily made out of qualia and why it necessarily is constructed through emergence.

The first step is to establish that qualia are meaning, thus reducing the ontological category of “qualia” to the more natural ontological category of “meaning”. This was first done in my very first paper^[1], and then here and there in some of my other papers^[8], but I will give again the examples that establish how qualia are meaning. The most obvious one is the place where the concept of meaning is usually employed, and that is in language. Language is by excellence a meaningful phenomenon. But language itself is a phenomenon taking in place in consciousness, is a form of manifestation of consciousness. Thus, the language qualia are the most straightforward examples of meaning.

The next easiest example is in cases such as the duck-rabbit image, as in Figure 8. This is a visual quale, but what is interesting here is that the particular quale that we get to experience depends on us attributing meaning to the image. The moment we attribute the meaning of “duck”, that same moment we experience the visual quale of “duck”. The moment we attribute the meaning of “rabbit”, that same moment we experience the visual quale of “rabbit”. Thus, visual experiences themselves are being modified according to what they mean. Actually, visual qualia themselves are a form of meaning.

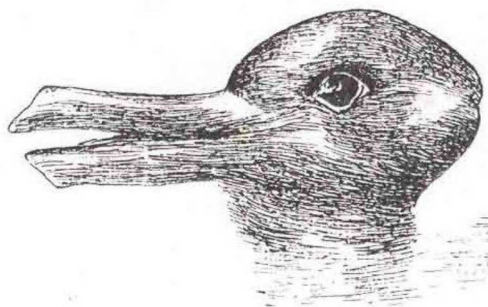


Figure 8. Qualia are meaning

Another interesting example from the visual domain, one that also points towards possible origins to meaning, is the one in Figure 9.

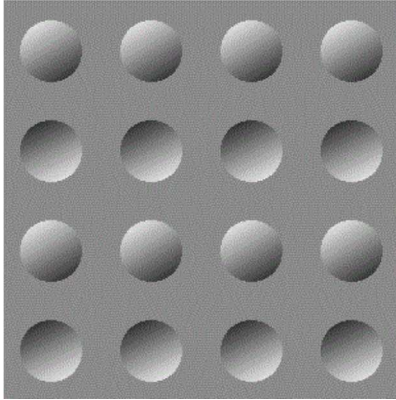


Figure 9. Qualia are selected by evolution for meaningful reasons

What we see in Figure 9 is that some rows are bumps, some others are dimples. Why is it like this? The explanation comes from evolutionary reasoning. The only source of light in our evolutionary history was the Sun, and the Sun was shining from above. Thus, if we were to look at a bump on a wall of stone, the light pattern would have been the one in rows 1 and 3. Similarly, if we were to look at a dimple in a wall of stone, the light pattern would have been the one on rows 2 and 4. Therefore, analyzing the light pattern, consciousness created the qualia of bumps and dimples. And nowadays is enough only to see the same light pattern displayed on a computer screen for consciousness to bring to our experience the qualia of bumps and dimples. Thus, our experiences are not random, but they serve meaningful evolutionary reasons. This second example shows both that again qualia are meaning, and also that meaning is related to evolution.

Getting to evolution, and taking as a case study more primitive qualia, the color pairs red-green and yellow-blue are not random, but are qualities selected into our consciousness also by evolutionary processes. As meanings selected for evolutionary reasons, we need to search for their origin in the functions that they serve for us in nature. The pair red-green appears in nature mostly in the case of fruits in trees, fruits being red and leaves being green. The fact that the colors red and green are complementary colors in colors theory, and the fact that they also appear as pair in nature must be a question begging correlation. And the explanation comes from evolutionary reasoning. Since our ancestors needed to eat, they also needed a way to identify what food means. They needed something to draw their attention immediately such that they don't waste much energy and starve to death.

A solution that evolution brought was to bring into existence color red. Color red signifies importance and draws the attention immediately. Thus, our ancestors could spot immediately the food that they needed. Also, in order to maximize the identification of food, consciousness brought into existence color green for the surrounding, in order to maximally contrast with red. Thus, fruits were colored red and leaves were colored green. The meanings that we can identify for this pair of colors is that red means "importance" and green means something like "the opposite of red" or "enhancing the identification of red". Thus, the colors red and green in our consciousness are not random. They serve precisely identified evolutionary purposes. Any other

colors would have failed the identification of food. Red is red precisely because of the evolutionary purpose that it serves. Similarly for green.

The second pair of colors, yellow and blue, serve a similar role, this time regarding the identification of Sun in the sky. Similarly, the fact that yellow and blue are complementary colors in colors theory and the fact that they also appear as a pair in nature in the case of the yellow Sun in the blue sky, is a correlation that begs the question. And the explanation is similar. The Sun, as the only source of light in nature, had to be identified by a color. And that color was yellow. Also, in order for yellow to be maximally contrasted from the surrounding, the color blue was brought into existence for the sky. One might wonder why yellow and not some other color. And I will ask the reader to look at all the colors and see which one is intuitively “the brightest”. And that is yellow. Yellow is a bright color in the way that red or green or blue or other colors are not. And it is not a coincidence that it has this quality of brightness. The reason is that it had to signify a source of light, and thus it came to look the way it does.

One might still wonder why not white directly, since white is the brightest color possible. The reason is that black and white serve different purposes. They are even more ancient colors, that must have appeared with the first beings that saw light, like fish under ocean that only needed to differentiate between the water surface and the depth of the ocean. Thus, white has a more primitive meaning, something like “something” or “object”, while black has the meaning of “nothing” or “lack of objects”. Thus, when the beings got out of the ocean and needed a more precise identification for the Sun, white was already used for other purposes, and with the birth of the world of colors, a new quale was required in order to serve the function of identifying the Sun in the sky. And that color was yellow. Thus, yellow has the meaning of “source of light”, while blue has the meaning of “the opposite of yellow” or “enhancing the identification of yellow”.

We thus see that even more primitive qualia are also meanings. And this is true for qualia in general. The next step in the analysis is to explain how does meaning originates. One such reason is evolution, but “evolution” is again an ambiguous term, and given the fact that time itself is a quale in consciousness, evolution cannot be the one described today by Darwinism, but it must be an atemporal kind of phenomenon. Actually, evolution must be a side effect of the workings of meaning inside consciousness. Thus, “evolution” is not the primary selector of qualia/meaning. The primary selector, as we are about to see, must be an interplay between meaning and context. And this is the most difficult part of the paper, for which I don’t have the full picture, and for which I hope the inspired reader will contribute to the development of the theory. Nevertheless, I will present what I understand so far about the interplay between meaning and context and leave many unsolved problems for the future and for other people.

Let’s start by having an yet another look at self-reference and answer the questions posed at the beginning of the paper, namely what is consciousness and why everything must be consciousness. As we saw, self-reference can be described as both form and formless and neither form nor formless. This poses difficult problems related to the concept of “being” and the proper usage of the verb “to be”. Strictly speaking, being is what exists, what is a well-defined entity, an entity with a well-defined quality. For example, red exists, the taste of chocolate exists. These

are entities with well-defined qualities. You can pinpoint them in your consciousness and say: This is red and nothing else; This is the taste of chocolate and nothing else.

When getting to self-reference though, things become trickier. Self-reference is what the saying “The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal name.” and what other such spiritual ideas pinpoint to. Strictly speaking, self-reference doesn’t exist. But this only means that it cannot be pointed to. But this doesn’t mean that it doesn’t have effects upon the world of forms. Actually, even using the word “it” to refer to it is not correct. But we have to deal with it however the limits of language and of forms allows us to. What is important in science is not to have a definition for everything, but to find truth and accept it however it comes. And then, if possible, to use that truth to make predictions. Thus, let’s see how we can still do science despite these limitations.

We discussed self-reference in terms of looking-back-at-itself, including and transcending itself, form and formless, no-thing and every-thing, but there is an yet one more way, and that is meaning and context. Self-reference can also be regarded as the absolute context and the absolute meaning both at the same time. When self-reference first looks-back-at-itself, it defines itself relative to itself. The “I am” form that is first experienced by self-reference is a meaning that is defined relative to itself as a context. Self-reference becomes the Self by taking itself as a context and then understanding that relative to itself as a context, it also has the meaning that it is itself, thus that it is the Self. And here we see where the problems with contexts lie. When people usually talk about contexts, they talk in relation to words having meaning relative to the context of the sentence, such as “I saw a rock on the ground”/“I’ve been to a rock concert”, the word “rock” acquiring its meaning relative to the sentence of which it is part. And the problem seems clear enough and even trivial.

But we will shortly get into more details and see that actually it is a difficult problem. And this difficulty steams from the very original context of self-reference itself. When self-reference defines itself relative to itself, it presents the same contradictory duality that we saw in the initial analysis. While the meaning that self-reference finds that it is, namely the Self, the “I am”, is a form, the context relative to which this meaning is defined, is formless. Thus, we have a first alarm bell that contexts are actually something subtler, that they are actually formless entities. And by being formless, they slip into the unformal realm dynamics and all of a sudden we have difficulties into manipulating them, since they get into the territory of being no-thing and every-thing both at the same time, and other such contradictory properties, that from the form realm our faculty of understanding is incapable of handling them the way it can handle the forms.

Getting to the original questions, consciousness is the result of self-reference looking-back-at-itself. Each time self-reference looks-back-at-itself, it results in a form. That form is a form of consciousness. Consciousness is the result of the form-producing process of self-reference looking-back-at-itself. The reason why these forms are by necessity consciousness and not some kind of other third-person kind of entities is because the quality of the first form created by self-reference, namely the Self, is by its very meaning ontological subjectivity, first-person perspective. Because of how this meaning is defined relative to itself as a context, it, by necessity, feels ontological subjective. Thus, the subsequent looks-back-at-itself of self-reference will all include the quality of ontological subjectivity, and thus all existence will be rendered

ontological subjective, thus consciousness. This is why everything that exists is consciousness, because all the forms that can exist are created on top of the primordial form of the Self, and they all inherit by necessity the quality of ontological subjectivity. We thus see that idealism versus materialism is not a matter of fashion or taste, but is a matter of logical analysis. Idealism is the logical way for how the world can be. The eternal logical entity self-reference, by having by internal logical definition the property of looking-back-at-itself, by logical necessity then generates all the forms that can exist, and those forms are by necessity ontological subjective, thus consciousness. There can be nothing else but consciousness.

There is an extra subtle aspect of existence, that we need in order to understand the interplay between meanings and contexts. While consciousness is all that exists, this only means that consciousness is all that can be pointed to. But this only refers to the form part of reality. In a way, consciousness is a tautology: form is what can be pointed to, thus form is all that exists. But is not a tautology in the trivial sense of $1=1$, but is a more subtle tautology that is inextricable linked with its formless part. While indeed all that exist are forms/consciousness, there “is” also the formless part of self-reference that is responsible for the generation of forms. But the formless part being formless, the verb “to be” is not applicable to it. We cannot pinpoint to it and say “this is formless red” in the same way we can pinpoint to red and say “this is form red”.

The formless part of self-reference is not a thing, but is rather an ocean of mystery. It is an ocean because it cannot be described in a “localized” way in the way in which forms can be described, by using the qualifier “this”. And it is a mystery because we cannot use our faculty of understanding to make sense of it. Our only chance to deal with it is to see its effects upon the forms. And here lies an important distinction between the formless realm and materialism. Because, upon seeing this paragraph, someone might get the feeling that while I pretend that consciousness is all there is, at the same time I’m somehow stating that there is still something outside consciousness, namely the formless part of self-reference. But consciousness indeed is all there is. Because “is” is a qualifier that is applicable to forms. And forms are by necessity ontological subjective, thus consciousness, thus consciousness indeed is all there is. The formless part of self-reference is not amenable to the verb “to be”, thus, strictly speaking, it doesn’t exist. Thus, it cannot be said that there “is” something outside consciousness. And someone might wonder at this point why materialism might not be that formless part of self-reference.

The reason is that, as materialism is viewed today, it talks about entities that indeed exist outside consciousness, like particles and energy and space and time, etc. But the formless part of self-reference is different from such entities that materialism conjures outside consciousness. At a pragmatic level, the important distinction between the formless part of self-reference and materialism is that the formless part of self-reference always works towards producing forms within consciousness, while the particles of materialism have an agenda of their own that is not necessarily conducive to consciousness.

These considerations can also bring insights into other long-standing problems of consciousness, such as free will. Besides the standard options of free will existing or not, we can now have a third option: free will not existing, namely not being a form, yet still being able to act on the forms from the formless realm. Free will can be considered as a context that is able to view multiple potential meanings at the same time and then act towards actualizing one of those

meanings. This is also an elegant solution, because it is able to provide a technical precise answer to the question if free will exists, and that is No, while at the same time maintaining the sense of mystery that have fascinated philosophers throughout history regarding its nature, also making the mystery technical precise, transforming it from an epistemic unknown to an ontological unknown, namely the formless part of self-reference that by its very ontology cannot be known by the faculty of understanding. (As a side note, the faculty of understanding is also self-reference itself, is the process by which self-reference understands itself as meaning relative to itself as context.)

Having these ontological considerations, the most obvious question at this point is how are we able to handle the ontological mystery and make any progress whatsoever in understanding consciousness. And the answer is to analyze the various ways in which meanings are generated in consciousness. And for this we have as data the emergent phenomenology in which higher meanings are including and transcending lower meanings. We have to be careful though. As we saw in the section regarding the dynamics of the unformal realm, the phenomenology deals with superposition intra and inter levels, thus it is not at all an easy problem. And to make things even more complicated, contexts can extend between individual consciousness, as I described in my paper about telepathy^[7]. To give the reader the proper dimensions of the difficulty of the problem, I will describe here one of the examples. Of course, the paper contains more examples, which can give the reader a more comprehensive understanding on these phenomena.

What I describe in the paper about telepathy^[7] is an experiment that I undertook in order to understand more about how meaning is generated and how telepathy works. For this purpose, I entered in relations with multiple girls at the same time, without them knowing one about the others. The reason for doing this were the above considerations of the colors red-green appearing in order to help the animal avoid death, or generally of getting in the danger of dying. I reasoned that if I subject myself to the danger of the girls finding about each other, and thus getting anyone hurt, including myself, meaning will be generated in my consciousness that will help me avoid such dangers.

The second reason was that I already knew that I have telepathies when I'm in relationships, thus I wanted to see what kind of telepathies appear if I involve more than one girl. The results were quite interesting, and one of them made clear to me the extent of what contexts really are. Namely, while previously I was viewing contexts as something present in one's own consciousness, like the above mentioned example of "I saw a rock on the ground."/"I've been to a rock concert.", now I saw clearly that contexts are something more profound and that they are actually formless entities. I will describe this specific result in order for the reader to see how deep the problem of contexts goes.

The event was as follow: Amy was on a trip for the week-end, and I went to spend the week-end with Emma at her place. At a point I got a call from Amy, which of course I couldn't answer, Emma being around. I was worried that if I don't call Amy soon, she might suspect something. Then, a few minutes later, a neighbor calls Emma to tell her that her car was hit in the parking by another car. She went down to see what happened, and I took advantage of the situation to call Amy and talk to her for few minutes, before joining Emma in the parking lot to settle the accident.

We can see that this case cannot be explained by classical telepathy, since classical telepathy assumes sharing of meanings, but in this event, even though the people that took part in it (me, Amy, Emma, the driver, the neighbor) were connected, they were not connected by shared meanings, thus we must have been connected by something formless, namely a context. What is interesting and useful as a phenomenological data point, is that the influence goes both ways. Is not only that contexts are the main players and they just generate meanings and that's it, but meanings on their turn impact the contexts.

Here, my desire of Emma not finding about Amy, influenced the context of all of our lives and created meanings in each consciousness partaking in the event in order for my meaning to be fulfilled. Of equally great importance is also the fact that from a particular meaning the context cannot be necessarily deduced. None of the consciousness that took part in the event could have possibly deduced what was happening to them. Only I could have seen the entire situation, and this was only because I was specifically looking for it in the first place. Otherwise, I would have equally been blind to the entire state of affairs, and I would have been just a puppet like everybody else. And clearly in other events in my life I'm a puppet of who knows what historical and cosmic contexts that probably orchestrate cosmic symphonies of billions of consciousness.

The main lesson from this experiment is that there is not a 1-to-1 correlation between contexts and meanings, but there can be all sorts of relations. And this is possible precisely because contexts are formless. Since they are not forms, they are able to entertain multiple forms at the same time. And those forms can be as different from each other as the meaning of my desire of Emma not finding about Amy, the meaning of Emma going to see her car and the meaning of the driver turning the wheel in the wrong direction.

In case someone might be skeptic of this result of my experiment and of the interpretation that I'm giving to it, there is no problem, because upon deeper reflection such a skeptic should see that this result is identical in its essence to the error example that I described in the section about the dynamics of the unformal realm. The reason why I also gave this extra example is to make the reader as aware as possible of what meanings and contexts are. Even if we are philosophical idealists, we somehow still tend to think of the world being made out of individual consciousness somehow separated one from another by biological bodies. But "biological bodies" is itself just an idea in consciousness, thus consciousness are not separated by such "biological bodies". Idealism properly understood doesn't talk about consciousness separated by "biological bodies". Idealism properly understood is actually about ideas/meanings.

The interaction happens between meanings, without any other extra specification of whether those meanings are in any way related to "biological bodies". And even though in the error example given in the section about the dynamics of the unformal realm, those meanings that take part in it are actually independent meanings with no relation to any "biological bodies", the reader might still have the inertial intuition that the error happens "in my consciousness". It doesn't happen "in my consciousness". It happens directly between meanings. "In my consciousness" is an extra idea added by the inertial belief that there is some kind of 1-to-1 relation between consciousness and biological bodies. But this idea has nothing to do with the fact that the interaction is between meanings themselves, not between "biological bodies". That's why I also brought this telepathy example, to better highlight that the meanings are not related to

“biological bodies”. This example in its essence is no different than the error example. Thus, it’s irrelevant if a skeptic doesn’t believe it. The analysis and its conclusions remain the same. Probably the reason why there appears to be biological bodies with individual consciousness is that the interaction between meanings and contexts favor the grouping of meanings in systems that appear to have individuality, thus having as a side effect the appearance of biological bodies and of evolution.

One thing that we need to be careful are the examples of the type “I saw a rock on the ground.”/”I’ve been to a rock concert.”. Such cases seem to suggest that contexts are actually forms, the word “rock”, which is a form, getting its meaning from the sentence of which it is part, which is also a form. But this is not quite what is happening. The moment we focus our attention on the word “rock” in order to assess its meaning, the sentence slips out of focus and goes into background becoming formless. So, while we have the meaning of “rock” in our conscious attention, the sentence is lost as a form and becomes formless. Thus, the context is also formless in such examples.

Other such example is the colored cube from Figure 4, where the same thing happens: when we focus our attention on the yellow and blue squares, the cube falls into background and becomes formless. Thus, the context of the cube that is responsible for the yellow and blue squares is also formless. One more example is when walking in the city and heading towards a certain destination. What we experience in our direct consciousness are the qualia from the street level. Yet, we still know where we are heading, because on the back of our mind there is the context of the map of the city which exists in a formless state and from which it guides our orientation through the experiences of seeing the city from the street level. Contexts are always formless and meanings are always form.

Another interesting consideration of the properties of self-reference explored in this paper is their relation to teachings coming from spiritual practices, namely I being God and Infinity and Love. I will talk about the Love aspect. I will start from the human type of love and then go to the absolute type of Love. One aspect of human love is of interest here, and that is the generation of meaning. When we are in love, our entire life becomes meaningful to a degree that is not normally when we lack love. Thus, even in our human limited consciousness, love seems to be about meaning generation. Of course, the meaning that love generates in us is also limited as our human consciousness is. But in principle we can generalize this and postulate a Love that is so absolute that is able to generate all the possible meanings in the world, basically powerful enough to create the entire world out of nothing.

A Love of such power would obviously be equivalent to being God. This seems not such an outrageous generalization. But even so, it would be nice if we can ground it in some more robust philosophy or other methods. One such other method is the experiences obtained on certain psychedelics. I never took psychedelics, thus I cannot speak of how those experiences feel and how much validity is in them. But I suspect they are valid, because they are identical to the conclusions about self-reference that I deduced solely through reason and normal life experiences, as detailed throughout this paper. And they can also be cast in terms of absolute Love bringing the entire world into existence. Self-reference being the absolute context, it is not only responsible for bringing the Self into existence, but as absolute context, it equally applies to

all the possible qualia. When a quale is brought into existence, it is not only brought into existence relative to smaller contexts, like the blue and yellow squares in the colored cube being brought into existence relative to the cube, but they are at the same time brought into existence relative to the absolute context.

Thus, all qualia being brought into existence relative to the absolute context, we can take the absolute context to be absolute Love. And this is interesting. If the same ideas are arrived at by utterly different methods, like reason, meditation, psychedelics, then the chances of those ideas being correct is high. And because such ideas are arrived at by different routes, each route can inform one another of its own unique aspect, and thus a fruitful science of consciousness can be done. What my analysis offers that the spiritual path doesn't offer, is a systematic way of doing science, in which the world is not randomly brought into existence by Love, but is brought according to specific rules of interactions between meanings and contexts.

So, what exactly are those specific rules of interactions between meanings and context? Unfortunately, as stated from the beginning of the paper, my insights end here. At the moment I have no such specific rules to offer to the reader such that he can then go into lab and develop some quantum mechanics experiment beyond present day quantum mechanics and see that indeed such rules make correct predictions not explainable under current quantum mechanics. Nevertheless, I think that this paper brings a valuable collection of phenomenological data points, from which the more intelligent reader than me can deduce a theory that can then be tested in various experiments.

Discussions and conclusions

Let's do a quick review of the ideas discussed in this paper, to bring in a more condensed form the main ideas. At the center of existence we have self-reference defined as the logical entity with the property of looking-back-at-itself. Such a logical necessary entity, by its very nature, acts as both meaning and context and defines itself as meaning relative to itself as context. Such a reflection of itself unto itself gives birth to the Self, which is a meaning that, because of its very self-definition, feels like the sensation of being alive. But self-reference eternally looks-back-at-itself, it doesn't stop at the Self. It continues to define itself relative to itself. This time, having the Self object inside itself, its context also changes, and the new object that is brought into existence is defined relative to the enriched context, and it takes the form "I am "I am"". The process then continues indefinitely and the entire world is brought into existence.

One problem the reader might notice is that this mechanism seems to produce only endless strings of "I am"s, and clearly our consciousness doesn't appear this way. This is a general problem of any theory of consciousness, being it philosophical or spiritual, how to get from the One to the Many. I can see two solutions to this problem. One is that the formless part of self-reference being, among other things, free will, at some points along the emergence, free will chooses one meaning over the others and then the symmetry is broken and consciousness such as ourselves start to appear. The second solution is that there might be complexly irreducible states from which various worlds then evolve. Given that self-reference is the absolute context, it can act as a base for various complexly irreducible states to be defined to the absolute context. And

then such states can start to evolve meanings by the act of free will. I will give an interesting such example to illustrate how such a complexly irreducible state can be like. I will describe a telepathic predator-prey relationship in which the meanings in one change the meanings in the other and vice versa.

One consciousness, which will be the predator, has the visual experience of a white disk on a black background. The predator interprets this disk as the source of energy, thus it will try its best to “arrive” at it, thus it will act in the direction of increasing the size of the disk. The other consciousness, which will be the prey, has the visual experience of a black disk on a white background. The prey interprets the disk as being a predator that is hunting it, thus it will try its best to “run away” from it, thus it will act in the direction of decreasing the size of the disk. We can see what dynamics this situation creates: as the predator approaches the prey (by increasing the size of its white disk), the prey will feel being approached by the predator (by seeing its black disk increasing); as the prey runs away from the predator (by decreasing the size of its black disk), the predator sees the prey running away from it (by seeing its white disk decreasing).

Both consciousness will be connected in a complexly irreducible telepathic relation in which both act at the same time on the size of the disk. Note that the 2 consciousness don't live in “the same physical world”. They each live in their own consciousness. But they are connected through a shared context. Such a connection will create in each of the 2 consciousness the impression that they live in the same physical world and that they are hunting and are being hunted. The predator will hunt the white prey and will try its best to “approach” it, while the prey will try to avoid the black predator by “running away” from it.

I think this is a revealing example of how the appearance of a physical world can be generated starting from consciousness living in their own internal worlds. In order for consciousness to interact there is no need for a “physical world” to act as a stage for their interactions. All that is needed is a common context that is able to then generate entangled meanings in what are otherwise independent consciousness living in their own internal dreams. Also, this example shows what an interaction truly is. At a superficial level, people might tend to regard interactions in a kind of physical way, of requiring physical touch (whatever this might mean, like exchange of virtual particles, etc.). Or at a social level, an interaction between consciousness might be thought of as consciousness talking between each other. But these are pseudo-interactions. A true interaction is one in which a single context generates multiple meanings, and then consciousness by acting on their individual meanings they then in turn affect the context and the context further affects the other meanings that it generates. In day-by-day life this mechanism is obscured by the amazing complexities of our consciousness. But it can be revealed from time to time like in the case of the telepathy experiment that I undertook.

Such interactions between consciousness through shared contexts are possible because at the base of the entire world there is the formless part of self-reference which acts at the absolute context for all the consciousness in the world. Also, as we discussed, each consciousness along a holarchy is self-reference itself. Basically, an individual consciousness only ever interacts with itself. A consciousness only changes its own qualia through free will. But because qualia in different individual consciousness are connected through a shared context, an act of consciousness inside itself is then felt in the other consciousness connected by the shared

context. Overall, the absolute context, together with other mysterious properties that the formless part might entail, like free will, imagination, creativity, and other such active powers, then give birth to an infinite world of relative contexts and meanings, in a never-ending unfolding of stories through which self-reference knows all that it can be.

Having all these phenomenological insights that this paper brings, the interested and the more mathematical-oriented reader can try to come up with some more rigorous theory that can then be tested in practice and bring science into its next stage. Such a theory will not be able to be fully formalized. It would have to contain at places “black boxes” in which the mystery to happen. But it should be able to predict types of results. The reason why I use the phrase “types of results” and not “precise results”, is because its results will have to be experienced by the consciousness designing the experiment first hand. The predictions will be something along the line: “if I put myself in such and such danger, I expect to experience in my consciousness such and such qualia to save me from the danger”. Of course, as the science of consciousness will progress, the theory and the predictions will become more refined than this crude example, but it will still be a participatory science in which consciousness will become directly involved in their experiments. In the end, infinite worlds await to be explored by the eternal self-reference, in an eternal process of self-knowing and self-loving.

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