

HIGHEST GROUND

Rodney Ferguson

*I'm so glad that I know more than I knew then,
Gonna keep tryin'
Till I reach my highest ground.*

Stevie Wonder

ABSTRACT: I believe that life, consciousness, and free will are intertwined. Our current scientific efforts at understanding them are undermined by studying these as discrete phenomena. It is my contention that although science, particularly quantum physics and biology, has made some strides in how the brain may work, this effort will not yield the desired outcome. Only by raising the consciousness level of all humans will we begin to fully understand human consciousness.

KEYWORDS: Life; Free will; Consciousness; Quantum physics; Quantum biology; Mind, Human development; Universal education

MY ARGUMENT IS THIS:

1. Happiness is primordial
2. Happiness created Being
3. Being is the universe
4. The universe is Art
5. Universe created life
6. Life, consciousness and freewill are the same thing
7. Studying (guessing) what life, consciousness, and/or freewill is, at this stage of knowledge, premature because we don't have the scientific tools capable of answering that (or these) question(s), even with quantum mechanics, quantum biology, etc.
8. What we should do is to learn how to exploit consciousness, like we exploited, say heat before we understood it, to make our lives better.

9. We are racing towards a technological singularity.
10. We should be racing toward a spiritual singularity.
11. All of humankind can get to this singularity by working toward worldwide happiness
12. This happiness will have an emergent property more “godlike” humanity; that is the highest ground.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The question is why? The presumptive answer is that He would be happier with something rather than nothing. The Bible never tells this because this would mean that at some moment in time God is incomplete, and that happiness is greater than God because God “needs” happiness. God is happy because it is good. One would assume the goodness of creation makes God happy. Therefore happiness is the foundation of Being. Happiness is a state that God seeks. Happiness is more fundamental than God. If God seeks Happiness, then Happiness exists previous to God or is greater than God. The Old Testament writers refused to admit this.

Since ‘nothing’ is as simple as it gets, we would not expect it to be completely stable. In some models of the origin of the universe, the vacuum undergoes a spontaneous phase transition to something more complicated, like a universe containing matter. The transition nothing-to-something is a natural one, not requiring any external agent. As Nobel Laureate physicist Frank Wilczek has put it, “The answer to the ancient question ‘Why is there something rather than nothing?’ would then be that ‘nothing’ is unstable.

From:

http://www.csicop.org/sb/show/why_is_there_something_rather_than_nothing

Can Happiness exist without consciousness? Unhappiness is Unstable Nothingness, so Unhappiness doesn’t exist. Happiness is stable because it is fulfilled by Being.

What is happiness, from a non-religious point of view? **Happiness is the ground state of Being.** The ultimate reason for Being is Happiness, the ultimate teleology. Happiness is fundamental/primal. Philosophical answer: If the science is right above, the question is why is something more stable than nothing? Why does the universe have “emergence” or Self Organization? How can humans and other animals create? In the religious answer is the philosophical answer. It is the “why” of being or the teleology of Being. Happiness needs to be fulfilled. Being fulfills Happiness. Much like nature abhors a vacuum.

Happiness has been redefined by humans. This is recent and false. “Published in 1943, Sartre's opus magnum, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, had a significant influence on philosophical thought and intellectual life in the second half of the twentieth century. His principal goal in this book is to “repudiate the spirit of seriousness” of traditional philosophy as well as of bourgeois culture (Sartre 1992a [1943]: 796). The spirit of seriousness assumes (1) that there are transcendent values that exist antecedently to humans, and (2) that the value of a thing is part of the actual being of the valued thing. Sartre's view, in contrast, is that all values are generated by human interactions in situations, so that value is a human construct with no extra-human existence in things.” From <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/authenticity/#SarDeBea>

I believe that (1) Happiness is a transcendent value that exists antecedently to universe, and (2) that the value of a thing is part of the actual being of the valued thing.

If Being fulfills Happiness, what is Being?

Being is art. We are the blind touching a painting. We don't know how-the best we can do is appreciate what we think we understand. The closest we can come to describing Being is either through metaphor or describing different aspects of Being. "Being is art," seems the most compatible with the possibility of happiness. "Being is art" is the most potent metaphor in this respect for obvious reasons and for some reasons that are more complex.

Before we discuss the implications of "Being is art," a clarification of terms is most important at this time. "Being is art" is somewhat misleading because of our everyday conception of art. When we think of art, we think of man-made expressions of emotion and intellect limited by the medium of choice and the artist's ability. "Art" in Being is art means an art form that is all inclusive, totally involving, an art that is emotion, that is intellect, that makes you smile or cry because it is your reality and your life. You feel the loss because it is your loss; you feel ecstasy because it is your ecstasy, you feel the boredom because it is your boredom. Everyday art is not an illusion and neither is the art of Being. It is real and it can be seen, felt, smelled, tasted, and heard. Both senses of art exist whether they are appreciated or noticed by sentient beings or not. The short hand term for "Art" in "Being is art" is World Art. World in the sense that it is our world of which this art is composed. World art is completely engaging and demanding, yet we can, to differing degrees, detach ourselves from it because world art is a way of seeing Being that frees us to be open to a broad range of possibilities. It gives us a better idea of our place in the world and a better sense of ourselves. World art is what painters, novelists, and sculptors try to capture-existence showing itself as art.

The relationship between feeling, mind, perception and "Being as art" is of utmost importance. This relationship is the most fertile ground for exploration of Being is art. Art in its regular sense tries to evoke feelings that we are capable of having in our everyday lives. In a movie we may cry, or laugh or get angry. The same is true in our lives, in reality, in Being. In Being, however, feelings have consequences because they affect our decision making and hence our actions. The depth of feelings is the degree to which they influence our future.

Experience is Being manifested through the flux of ever-changing activity. Humans have choices in how they can interpret reality. They can look at a certain event in number of ways. In fact, their whole approach to life and how they view the events thereof is to some degree a matter of choice. Of course there is an objective element to existence and events, but that objectivity is of secondary importance to the overall influence they have on us. In fact, the degree to which an event is or can be interpreted and reinterpreted measures its reality for us.

I am stressing the native human ability to interpret reality because it is essential to keep this fact in mind as I define and explain Being in more detail. Philosophy and science are themselves an interpretation of reality, but so is art. Recently, philosophers used the analysis of language to investigate how we interpret reality, because humans are both part of reality and reality's natural interpreter. By studying language, philosophers witness our changing relationship to creation. In short, philosophers explicate that relationship.

Scientists study reality using mathematics, measurement, instrumentation, and experimentation to plumb the mysteries of physical being. The scientific method of observation, theorizing, experimentation, and refinement is the cornerstone of the scientific endeavor. Although science seeks objectivity in that it strives to explain how reality is, science itself is a reflection of how we interpret reality at given times. Science has an historical component. As Kuhn argued in *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, the history of science is not one of progress toward an ultimate understanding of reality, but a history of revolutions where one interpretation of reality is overthrown by another interpretation incommensurable with the former. My view is that science does progress to the degree that by continually looking at reality, we get more information about reality. Much like a child growing up, begin to grasp more and more about the world by being open to different perspectives that different scientists present. Will we achieve some ultimate understanding of perhaps one grand unified theory that is the basis for all reality? And if so, what work is left to do afterwards? If there is such a law, then why does it exist? In fact, why do any laws of physics exist? The only thing that both scientists and lay people can appreciate is the sheer beauty of existence,

whether it boils down to one set of elegant laws or not. And it seems that the deeper our understanding of nature, the more beautiful it appears to be.

Art is an ongoing attempt to express how we see the world, much like science and philosophy describe and explain how we see the world. Unfortunately, scientific description and philosophic explanation do not stress the aesthetic nature of reality. It falls to the artist to explore the aesthetic nature of reality. The artist must interpret reality in a way that we can take measure of its value. This is not to say that philosophers and scientists do not appreciate the beauty that their work uncovers, but this kind of beauty is hard for the lay person to understand. In fact, I think what drives most scientists and philosophers is a profound understanding of how beautifully complex, yet simple the world is. But this beauty is most fully expressed in terms that are complicated by jargon, and therefore difficult to understand. This terminology masks the true nature of these enterprises. The processes of description and explanation of science and philosophy seek to uncover but one truth in all its manifestations and implications, that Being is art.

The most interesting thing, however, is that every existence, that is everyday Being can be and should be seen as art work, in short, world art or better: “The Universe as Art.”

ACCORDING TO *WIKIPEDIA*:

The earliest phases of the Big Bang are subject to much speculation. In the most common models the universe was filled homogeneously and isotropically with a very high energy density and huge temperatures and pressures and was very rapidly expanding and cooling. Approximately 10^{-37} seconds into the expansion, a phase transition caused a cosmic inflation, during which the universe grew exponentially. After inflation stopped, the universe consisted of a quark–gluon plasma, as well as all other elementary particles. Temperatures were so high that the random motions of particles were at relativistic speeds, and particle–antiparticle pairs of all kinds were being continuously created and destroyed in collisions. At some point an unknown reaction called baryogenesis violated the conservation of baryon number, leading to a very small excess of quarks and leptons over antiquarks and antileptons—of the order of one part in 30 million. This resulted in the predominance of matter over antimatter in the present universe.

Also from *Wikipedia*:

The **history of Earth** concerns the development of the planet Earth from its formation to the present day.^{[1][2]} Nearly all branches of natural science have

contributed to the understanding of the main events of the Earth's past. The age of Earth is approximately one-third of the age of the universe. An immense amount of biological and geological change has occurred in that time span.

Earth formed around 4.54 billion years ago^{[3][4][5]} by accretion from the solar nebula. Volcanic outgassing probably created the primordial atmosphere and ocean, but the atmosphere contained almost no oxygen and would have been toxic to humans and most modern life. Much of the Earth was molten because of frequent collisions with other bodies which led to extreme volcanism. One very large collision is thought to have been responsible for forming the Moon. Over time, the planet cooled and formed a solid crust, allowing liquid water to exist on the surface.

The first life forms appeared between 3.8 and 3.5 billion years ago. The earliest evidences for life on Earth are graphite found to be biogenic in 3.7-billion-year-old metasedimentary rocks discovered in Western Greenland^[6] and microbial mat fossils found in 3.48-billion-year-old sandstone discovered in Western Australia.^{[7][8]} Photosynthetic life appeared around 2 billion years ago, enriching the atmosphere with oxygen. Life remained mostly small and microscopic until about 580 million years ago, when complex multicellular life arose. During the Cambrian period it experienced a rapid diversification into most major phyla. More than 99 percent of all species, amounting to over five billion species,^[9] that ever lived on Earth are estimated to be extinct.^{[10][11]} Estimates on the number of Earth's current species range from 10 million to 14 million,^[12] of which about 1.2 million have been documented and over 86 percent have not yet been described.^[13]

TRINITY – METAPHOR FOR THE ONENESS OF LIFE, CONSCIOUSNESS AND FREE WILL

Life, consciousness, free will are all chemical reactions. Free will and consciousness and life are one in the same. The opposite of free will is determinism which means, in humans, there is a strict causal connection between brain states. Even if that's true, that does not mean there is a strict causal connection between behavior states. This is important, because on a deep physical level almost anything is possible; there is only emptiness and the structure of physical laws. Therefore being part of the universe means you have no fixed path that you must follow. You can change anything, even yourself. Once you know this is true you have the freedom to be happy.

My argument for life and consciousness being one same is that I think even viruses are conscious. Most scientists don't consider viruses to be "alive" because they lack certain life-like features. I am no expert so I will quote liberally from someone who is:

Consciousness in Humans and Elsewhere (Barry Blumberg, Ph.D.)

This article was adapted from a lecture given by Barry S. Blumberg, M.D., Ph.D., at the 2nd Annual Workshop on Geoethical Nanotechnology, July 20, 2006, at the Green Mountain Retreat of Terasem Movement, Inc., Lincoln, VT. Baruch Samuel Blumberg, M.D., Ph.D. was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology/Medicine in 1976 for his contributions in discovering the Hepatitis B vaccine. In this essay, Blumberg describes the complex mechanisms by which the Hepatitis B virus is able to survive, thrive, transmit and replicate itself. These mechanisms are so complex that the virus seems to have a plan, a strategy, tactics and an intentional drive - which are all characteristics of a conscious being. Blumberg poses the question, should we therefore consider HBV to have a consciousness? In other words, just because something behaves as though it has a consciousness, is it indeed conscious?

INTRODUCTION

During the course of the research on the Hepatitis B virus (HBV) that my colleagues and I have conducted for many years^[1], several questions have arisen that relate to the subject of consciousness. HBV is a very small virus whose genome consists of only 3,200 base pairs and four reading frames that produce about 8 proteins. This is the smallest number of base pairs of any human pathogen with the exception of the Hepatitis D virus (HDV)^[2], which has only about half the number of base pairs as HBV. HDV is a strange virus that can only infect people that are already infected with HBV, or by co-infection with its larger liver-bound companion virus. Despite the apparent simplicity of structure and information content, HBV has a complex lifestyle, which has developed to allow it to interact successfully with its primary host, humans.

The issue that relates to the topic of geoethical nanotechnology and consciousness is that the easiest way to explain HBV's complex mechanisms of environmental interactions is to infer that the virus or swarm of viruses has a plan, a strategy, tactics, and an intentional drive. The question is; what is the difference between explaining the actions of an organism as exhibiting a plan, and the organism actually having a plan? I use the terms *strategy* and *tactics* in the military sense. Strategy refers to the plans made before engagement with the enemy, such as long range planning, politics, logistics, communications, transport to the scene of battle. Tactics refer to the more direct and short term plans and actions when the enemy is in sight and engaged. Biology, and in particular immunology and infectious disease, frequently uses the terminology of hot and cold war, a heritage from the early days of microbiology, which started as medical microbiology with the concept of a war on infectious agents foreign to the host. My understanding is that having a plan is a characteristic of consciousness. If an organism is aware that it exists, then there is a "motivation" to plan for a somewhat predictable, yet mysterious future. It is a characteristic of sentient life itself. Does that mean that HBV has a consciousness?"

My short answer is emphatically... YES!

What about freewill?

I seldom have the same thoughts in the same order. The collusion of the outside, ever changing environment and my internal states pretty much guarantees that my thoughts will not follow the same pattern. Even uninfluenced mental states could have the same antecedent thoughts, but may have entirely different ensuing thoughts.

Well what about addictive thoughts, like "I need a cigarette," or "I need a drink?" We have all seen or experienced certain events that trigger the same thought over and over again. You know - conditioning.

Some conditioning is an artificial state, or at least a manufactured state where the person is trained, by himself or others, to behave in a certain way, under a given set of circumstances. The easy answer is that you can always give up a degree of your freedom, but not all of it, because as soon as the stimulant stops, your brain returns to its normal creative and free functioning. The deeper answer is that even when you are in the throes of conditioning, not every thought flows through your brain in lock step fashion. The alcoholic who craves a drink, for instance, may really want a drink badly, but nonetheless takes a path through different thoughts to reach the same ultimate conclusion. There are different forms of consciousness and free will like there are different kinds of life. Freewill in human beings is an expression of evolution. How we learn and how we choose are manifestations of evolution on a moment to moment scale. Other animals have free will too, but it is hard for us as beings so dependent on thoughts flowing through our heads to envision free will without the ability for internal monologue or language, for that matter.

How does a one-celled organism make decisions?

Making a decision is just choosing among alternatives. You can only tell when someone is deciding after the decision has been made. Otherwise, what you see is someone in thoughtful repose, say before the easel. In this case, the painter is only thinking. Deciding is an action. Once the paint of the appropriate color makes it to the brush, then and only then has the painter made a decision. My point is that one-celled organisms decide, but they might not ruminate. Also, I think looks can be deceiving. The artist is looking for the best color. Now all decisions we make either aid in our survival, or the decisions we make will be mistakes that limit our ability to survive and be available for reproduction or we may choose something that has no species survival

implications whatsoever. Most decisions we make as human beings are of the third type. We are survival driven, but most decisions we make don't have a serious impact on immediate survival. To make the survival decisions is free will. Determinism is an over-inclusive theory built on dubious chains of causality.

What does causality mean?

Causality is the statistical connection between a cause and its effect. Some events have a very high statistical connection, and some events have a low likelihood of connection. If I jump up in the air while on the Earth's surface, have a high statistical likelihood that I will come back to the ground. However, it is very unlikely that I will reach the top of the Washington Monument. Causality is just some events following others. The fact that some events follow each other in a seemingly causal manner doesn't mean that these events will ALWAYS follow. The universe is like the stock market with less volatility. On a very deep level there are no laws, however, in short time frames we can make very accurate predictions. The longer the timeframe and the greater number of intervening steps between first cause and last event, the less likely one will be able to make an accurate prediction. Human behavior is the result of an almost endless chain of events and we have absolutely no way to make accurate predictions over a long period of time.

Freewill is more than a lack of predictability. Freewill means that we, as humans, have the power to make decisions.

The will is the impulse of survival, which is a living organism's version of happiness. When we are cognizant of our own ruminations leading to decisions, the will is an important part of the thought process, but only part. We can override the will with self-awareness. When we are self-aware, then we can perceive our free "thinking" which leads to free action. The will then has to figure out next what to do to survive. Human will is happiness in human form. Your thoughts and your actions influence your will's interpretation of the outside world on a moment-to moment basis so your body can survive on a moment-to-moment basis. Happiness comes from feeding the will the right information, in the form of your thoughts and actions, so it makes the best decisions for your survival. The more positive thoughts and actions you perform, the better happiness will work for you. In unhappy people, an internal battle is being waged between happiness and self-consciousness.

We can influence our will through our thoughts and actions. And luckily, we have control over our thoughts and actions.

Freewill is learning through decision making and learning by doing. All creatures have this ability to a certain degree. Different animal species enjoy different

dimensions of consciousness and free will. Bad things happen so we learn; others die so we may live-the price of free will, life and consciousness.

But freewill has to be more than a learning exercise.

Human free will is the ability to be happy and creative in any situation. You don't really have to do much except channel your thoughts in the right direction. This will take some effort. When building Hoover Dam, engineers to build diversionary tunnels so the men could work in a dry space. First they had to create the tunnels, then force the Colorado River into those tunnels. They then blocked the river from taking its normal path by dumping tons of rock and dirt in its way. In order to get around the obstacle placed in its path, the river flooded into the diversionary tunnels. You can block the river too, but you can't stop it. The energy from the river can be tapped however; it just has to be diverted into the right direction. Thoughts do not flow in a stream; they flow like a mighty river, in fact like a waterfall. Imagine your thoughts as Niagara Falls. The deafening roar, the sheer force of tons of gallons of water flowing over the falls per second is akin to the thoughts flowing through you brain. Power companies exploit the power of the water to make electricity and ultimately to make money. They provide the energy so others can do work. So what they do is take a free energy source and change it into money. It was their ability to tap into that source and harness that power that makes them rich today. What you have in your brain is an end product of all of the creativity and force of the universe. People who have tapped into that power and have honed it are the rulers of the world. The question you have to figure out is, "How do I tap into that power source most efficiently?" Your talents and your skills are how you tap into that source. You have natural abilities that must be developed in order for you to fully exploit the immense power of Aesthetic Completion. Distractions and perceived responsibilities all may hinder you from living to your fullest.

Okay, here you are, alive in your body with the river of consciousness (i.e. thoughts) flowing through your head. You know you can think about something different. You can push your thoughts into a different direction. You can force yourself to think about what to cook for dinner or the last good book you read, or you can just listen to your thoughts pass by. It is important to know that you have freewill and it is part of happiness. When you look at the Big Bang theory or evolution or even neurobiology and cognitive science, you get the distinct impression that your experience of freewill is illusory because of all of the scientific machinations. Happiness is a way of looking at the big phenomena of existence in a way that includes freewill and its power as something part and parcel of the scientific world. I am not trying to invoke any kind of anthropic principle, but what I am saying is that through happiness

we can see how that free will is placed firmly within the understanding of the universe as science sees it today. Free will is not something extra! Free will is our power, and we got it from the universe through evolution. Freewill is the method we have as humans to learn about the world. Freewill just a learning tool; and we learn by doing, and making decisions.

So, since life, consciousness and freewill are one and the same, and present day science is incapable of understanding this trinity of phenomena, then what can we say about consciousness.

To quote Wittgenstein, "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent."

However, I think quantum is going in the right direction. The fact that human observation plays a role in determining results is a fantastic thing, but my feeling is that this is just the tip of the iceberg.

CURRENT QUANTUM WEIRDNESS

- (1) A particle can be in two places at once
- (2) You can never be certain where a particle is
- (3) The power of observation
- (4) The measurement problem
- (5) Virtual particles can pop into existence
- (6) Quantum Tunneling

In the current phase of quantum physics, we can take advantage of quantum phenomena to create things and measure things accurately. In the next phase of quantum physics, we should strive drive quantum events. We should be able to make particles pop into existence or kill Schrodinger's cat with our minds. What I am arguing is that instead of forcing the current square peg of today's science into the round hole of consciousness, we should focus on improving everyone's conscious minds to solve the problems that science is currently trying to solve.

HOW DO WE DO THAT? THE SHORT ANSWER IS HAPPINESS.

Ground 0 = Where we are now.

Ground 1 = Universal literacy

Ground 2 = Psychological Counseling for all those who need it.

Ground 3 = Universal Secondary and Post-Secondary Education

Ground 4 = Universal Training on Martin Seligman's Character Strengths and Virtues

Ground 5 = Broader experimentation with non-traditional medicine and cures (psychedelics, meditation, etc.) with requisite testing

Ground 6 = Universal effort for self-improvement, including but not limited to intellectually, spiritually, psychically, etc.

Final Ground = Universal happiness, and therefore, greater collective power and understanding.

- A. This may include psychic powers such as apportation (materialization, disappearance or teleportation of an object), aura reading, out-of-body experiences, bilocation, etc.
- B. Human intelligence throughout the universe.
- C. These things may be emergent properties of higher universal consciousness.
- D. A higher universal consciousness will yield the ultimate understanding of consciousness. Much like we have come to understand heat by using all humans using various forms of heat from the harnessing of fire to the power of the atom, we will come to understand consciousness by growing it all human beings.
- E. This is not a mere prediction or scientific experiment. It must be a goal. I have written a book on happiness and give away free secondary education on the Internet to make it happen.

To come full circle, I believe happiness is the foundation and teleological purpose for the universe. When humankind aligns itself with happiness, it aligns itself with the universe and I think wonderful things will happen. Our quest to understand consciousness only through modern science, even quantum mechanics, I fear will come up short. Completely understanding consciousness to the degree that we understand, let's say heat, will not happen until we take full advantage of the consciousness we have and can develop together.

“I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am.” – John Mbiti (African philosopher and writer)

In short, to solve the problems of life, consciousness, freewill and many others, including our own long-term survival, we will have to take a more African perspective.