

INTRODUCTION

In 1859, Charles Darwin published a book titled *On the Origin of Species*. In that book, Darwin proposed a theory of natural selection or “survival of the fittest” to explain how organisms evolve into different species. The book you’re now reading is a sort of cosmic version of Darwin’s treatise and could have been titled *On the Origin of Reality*, inasmuch as *its purpose is to present a theory that explains how existence evolves into reality*. In Darwin’s theory of natural selection, the mechanism underlying organic evolution is *mutation*. In the theory presented in this book, the mechanism underlying existential evolution is *self-relation*.

Some people are curious about the nature of their surroundings, while others aren’t. One attitude is ultimately no better or worse than the other; each just leads to different activities. Darwin was no doubt a curious person. I, too, am one of the curious people. Among other things, I’d like to know where I am and how I got here. It would also be nice to know just what “I” really is!

Through the efforts of modern science, it has become apparent that we reside on a planet in a solar system which resides in a galaxy, which itself resides in a universe full of such galaxies. Science tells us that the stuff which is found in this universe—e.g., the planets, the stars, our own bodies—is composed of energy in the form of matter. Together, all of this energy and matter is called, collectively, *physical reality*.

For the past hundred years or so, physicists have been trying to develop a *unified-field theory*, a theory that would show how all the different types of energy are manifestations of a single underlying field or force. In this way, physicists are seeking to account for the whole of physical reality within the context of a single unifying physical principle. So far, they haven’t been successful, and even if they were, such a theory wouldn’t account for everything that’s known to exist in the universe, for the universe also contains the *nonphysical realities* we call awareness and consciousness.

In order to satisfy my curiosity, what I wanted was not a unified-field theory, not a way of explaining only the physical aspects of existence, but a *unified reality theory*, a way of explaining both the physical and nonphysical aspects of existence within a unifying context, as the manifestations of a single underlying reality. Being a do-it-yourselfer, I took it upon myself to develop such a theory. This book is the result of that effort.

The context within which this unified reality theory is developed here is *existence* in the largest possible sense. In our day-to-day lives, while

we encounter countless realities, both physical and nonphysical, all of these realities occur within the unifying context of existence. That is, there exist different realities, but *what all realities share in common is that they exist*. Existence is the common denominator of all realities, and so it's the starting point from which the unified reality theory is developed here.

Thus, this book is titled *Unified Reality Theory* because within it I present a unified model of reality that explains reality as *the manifestation of a singular or unitary absolute existence which has consciousness as an attribute that's intrinsic to its nature*. It's subtitled *The Evolution of Existence into Experience* because this unified model of reality is developed by describing how that absolute existence *evolves* from an undifferentiated state of consciousness into a differentiated state of awareness of experience—a differentiated state that's not other than what we, in this moment, are aware of as *experiential reality*.

The puzzle

Constructing a unified model of reality is to some degree analogous to assembling a picture puzzle. The first thing we generally do when beginning to work on a puzzle is get all the pieces out of the box and laid on the table. We then orient all the pieces face up so that we can use the bit of image appearing on each piece to help connect it with all the others. Next, we usually put together the outer rim of the puzzle first, so as to define the boundaries and provide context for the inner construction. We can then begin to build from the rim inward, or some inner portions may be fitted together easily because their connecting pattern is quite distinct. Eventually, a unified and cohesive picture emerges as we join the individual pieces together into an interconnected whole.

The sequence of events in assembling a picture puzzle may vary from person to person, yet there remain basic steps we must take if we're to eventually come to the point where we've completed the picture. Thus, in order to complete the picture, we must first accept that the disconnected pieces in the box represent different somethings which have the *potential* to come together as an interconnected whole. We recognize this potential because we understand that at one time all the pieces existed as an undivided whole which was then cut up, thereby creating the now-separate pieces. Recognizing that all the pieces existed previously in a state of unity allows us to feel comfortable that our effort of reconnecting the pieces will eventually result in their assembly into a completed picture.

Likewise, if we're to undertake the task of constructing a unified model of reality, we must begin with an assumption and an acceptance that the different pieces of reality we have to work with did at one time, in some way, exist in a state of undivided wholeness. Unless we make this assumption at the outset—namely, that what we experience as the apparently separate pieces of reality have the potential to come together in the form of an interconnected, unified whole—then there's really no point in our taking the pieces out of the box in the first place.

The process of existential self-relation

According to the unified model of reality presented in this book, the fundamental underlying process by which existence has evolved into what we experience as the seemingly separate pieces of reality is really quite simple. That process involves *existence repetitively and progressively forming relationships with itself*, analogous in a limited way to the repeated and progressive twisting of a rubber band upon itself.

A rubber band, as it exists whole and untwisted, represents *absolute existence*—i.e., existence prior to having formed any relationships with itself. Now, if we take a rubber band and twist it once upon itself, we cause it to form a relationship with itself, and in so doing, we've created a level of rubber-band reality. Likewise, when existence forms relationships with itself, what's created are *levels of reality*. Thus, reality equals existential self-relation—i.e., reality equals existence coming to exist in relation to itself.

The first twist of the rubber band creates the first relationship of the rubber band to itself by causing the rubber band to form two relative halves or poles. This first twist is analogous to the first relationship existence forms with itself, creating the *first level of reality*, or the *first stage of existential self-relation*, as depicted in **figure I-1**. This first stage of existential self-relation contains the fundamental relationship that's the basis of all other relationships existence forms with itself. This fundamental relationship, this duality, is implicit in all the existential relationships and levels of reality that follow.

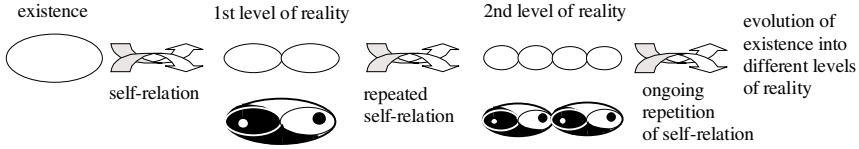


Figure I-1 The fundamental relationship that existence forms with itself to create reality is represented by the T'ai-chi T'u symbol (or yin/yang diagram). Existence evolves into what we eventually experience as reality as this fundamental relationship is repeated endlessly, creating different levels of reality composed of progressive stages of existential self-relation.

The rubber band, no matter how twisted it becomes, always remains whole, always remains what it is, while simultaneously becoming something else in relation to itself, something different that emerges, extends, and evolves from the whole, composed of relationships that the whole forms with itself. The twisted rubber band is still just what it is, still just a rubber band; but once it's twisted, it's that and something else as well. Likewise, existence, having formed a relationship with itself, is still just existence, but it's that and something else as well, the "something else" being reality.

The more the rubber band is twisted, the more relationships it forms with itself; and the more relationships it forms with itself, the more *differentiated* it becomes. Yet no matter how twisted the rubber band becomes, it always remains whole, always remains just what it is. When existence forms relationships with itself to become reality, the outcome is the same: The more relationships existence forms with itself, the more differentiated it becomes, creating different levels of reality. Yet no matter how differentiated it becomes, existence always remains whole, always remains just what it is.

What needs to be made clear at this point is that absolute existence isn't actually a physical reality that can be twisted upon itself like a rubber band. The twisting of a rubber band is used here as an *analogy* to illustrate the abstract concept of existential self-relation. However, absolute existence is intrinsically able to form relationships with itself, and one result of those relationships is the creation of our experience of physical reality. That is, physical reality *is* existence, for there's nothing else; however, physical reality is existence that has *evolved* into what we are able to experience as reality, by forming relationships with itself.

Thus, *existence becomes reality through a process of self-relation*. What we're experiencing now as reality is a *relational level of existence*, a particular type of existential relationship built and resting upon several prior stages of existential self-relation. As we exist now, we're like a

rubber band that has become very twisted upon itself. This in itself isn't a bad thing, nor is it a good thing; it's just what is. More specifically, it's what is, as it is, in relation to itself.

The stages of existential self-relation

This process of existential evolution through repetitive and progressive self-relation will be described in this book as occurring through four different stages, steps, or levels, as depicted in **figure I-2**.

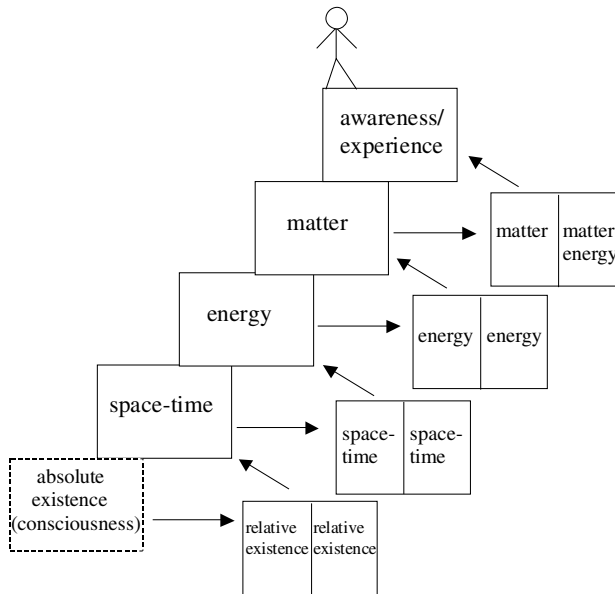


Figure I-2 The basic outline of the stages, steps, or levels through which existence evolves to eventually reach an experience of itself. Each set of relationships that existence forms with itself (boxes on right) becomes the next step (boxes on left) in this evolutionary process. Existence in this way evolves by picking itself up by its own bootstraps. When consciousness-existence reaches the top of this evolutionary staircase, it functions as awareness and is able to interact with, and so experience as reality, the stages of existential self-relation through which it has evolved and which now support it.

As will be described in detail in part I of this book, the first set of relationships that existence forms with itself creates the underlying framework or *structure* of reality. We experience this structure of reality as *space-time*. Using this first set of relationships as a foundation, existence then forms a second set of relationships with itself. This second set

of relationships, occurring within the context of the first set of relationships, results in differentiation of the structure of reality. We experience this differentiation of the structure of reality as different forms of *energy*. Then, using this second set of relationships as a foundation, existence forms a third set of relationships with itself. This third set of relationships, occurring within the context of the first and second sets of relationships, results in further differentiation of the structure of reality. We experience this further differentiation of the structure of reality as different forms of *matter*.

As will be described in detail in part II of this book, the first, second, and third sets of relationships that existence forms with itself allow existence to form a fourth set of relationships with itself. This fourth set of relationships that existence forms with itself consists of the relationships that are responsible for *experience* itself. It's at this fourth stage of existential self-relation that there comes to exist an awareness of the other three stages of existential self-relation as experiential realities.

As existence evolves by forming these different sets of relationships with itself, existence differentiates, but it never actually becomes divided or separated from itself. As will be described in this book, what we experience as the apparent separability of existence from itself at the physical level of reality is simply an unavoidable by-product of the process by which experience itself comes to exist—i.e., it's an artifact created by the way in which existence forms relationships with itself at the fourth stage of existential self-relation.

Hidden simplicity

Although reality may thus be the result of a very simple process, explaining that simplicity to individual beings who experience reality as we do necessarily involves some complexity. It's one thing to make a statement, and another thing to provide evidence that the statement is true. If all we needed was to state the essential nature of reality, this book would be exactly one sentence long: "Reality is the result of a process whereby existence repetitively and progressively forms relationships with itself." But what does such a statement mean? By itself, not much. For that statement to have meaning, it needs *context*. For any model of reality to be meaningful, that model must be *relevant* to the reader's experience of reality.

Our goal in this book is to examine the simple process of self-relation that underlies the evolution of existence into experience, and thereby allow the reader to see beyond the complexity apparent in experiential

reality into the underlying simplicity and unity of existence that's the foundation of all levels of reality.

If the essential nature of reality is truly as simple as it's here being described, as simple as repetitive and progressive self-relation, as simple as twisting a rubber band upon itself, then why has this simple truth remained hidden? Well, just because something is simple doesn't mean that it's obvious! Underlying simplicity is often obscured by a superficial complexity, or a perspective that introduces complexity. A tree is a relatively simple structure, but if we have only a perspective from above, through the leaves, then that unifying simplicity is hidden from us by the apparent complexity of all the different leaves. Conversely, if we look at the tree from below, from a position of "standing under," the complexity of the different leaves is then seen within the context of the underlying and unifying simplicity of the trunk, and can then be literally "understood."

Experiential reality is itself the leaves that obscure from view the underlying simplicity and unity of existence. On the one hand, humanity's approach to understanding the tree of reality through *science* has generally been from above—i.e., from a position of standing over rather than standing under—viewing and describing reality as seen through the leaves of experience and experiment. As a consequence, scientific descriptions of reality have tended to grow more and more complex, even though science has uncovered many of the branches that connect the different aspects of physical reality. On the other hand, humanity's approach to understanding the tree of reality through *spirituality* has generally been from below—i.e., from a position of standing under—viewing and describing the leaves and branches of reality as they extend from the unity of the trunk. However, in our modern world, dominated as it is by the advancements of science, the approach to reality through spirituality has become unpalatable and unacceptable to many people because it lacks the tangibility and verifiability of scientific experience and experiment and also fails, in most cases, to account for what we understand about physical reality.

This book has been designed to appeal to both the scientist and the spiritualist, because it integrates the perspective of each approach into a coherent and consistent model of reality. The tree of reality has grown out of existence and is composed of existence coming to exist in relation to itself. The unified model of reality presented in this book merges the perspectives of science and spirituality and thereby demonstrates that the descriptions of reality presented by science and spirituality are not mutually exclusive or opposed, but rather are complementary, because

each description arises from a different, yet valid, perspective upon the same tree of reality.

The relational-matrix model of reality

The idea that the universe consists of existence forming relationships with itself isn't exactly new; Taoists have understood this idea for at least a couple of thousand years. What's new here is that this idea of the universe being constructed through a process of repetitive and progressive self-relation is presented in this book in the form of a detailed and defined structural model which, once developed, will be correlated with our current understanding of physical reality, as described by science in general and physics in particular.

That detailed and defined structural model, called the *relational-matrix model*, will be shown to be especially useful in explaining some of the more interesting and perplexing aspects of what we experience as physical reality, such as the nature and relativity of time, wave-particle duality, and the speed-of-light constant. In addition to using the relational-matrix model to explain the basis and nature of our physical experience, we'll use this model to explain the basis and nature of our mental and emotional experiences as well.

On the basis of our individual experiences, we each have our own ideas about the nature of reality, about the way things seem to be ordered in the universe and, possibly, beyond. In presenting this unified model of reality, my goal is to take the reader on a journey from wherever they are with regard to their own ideas about the nature of reality, toward a final destination—to a point where everything that we experience as reality can be seen to be inseparable parts of an indivisible, interconnected whole.

If we're to undertake this journey together, we first need to establish common ground, a conceptual base camp, from which the reader can then feel safe in venturing forth into new conceptual territory. Part I of this book, wherein the relational-matrix model of reality is developed and then related to space-time and physical reality, represents the establishment of such a base camp.

Following that, in chapter 1 of part II, and using the relational-matrix model developed in part I, we'll examine the relationships that are responsible for experience itself. Once the basis and nature of experience have been explained, we'll then, in chapter 2 of part II, examine the more nebulous concepts of consciousness and awareness, again using the relational-matrix model developed in part I as the basis for our

analysis. *Thus, the relational-matrix model of reality developed in part I will serve as the conceptual framework for the construction of the unified model of reality presented in this book as a whole.* This is appropriate, for as will be shown, it's existence in the form of a relational matrix that functions as the framework upon which reality itself is constructed.

In chapter 2 of part II, we'll also examine mental and emotional experiences, including their relationship to consciousness, awareness, and the relational-matrix model of reality developed in part I. In this way, we'll seek to account for the existence of the three fundamental *experiential realities*—i.e., physical, mental, and emotional—within an interconnected, unifying framework that shows the relationship of each experiential reality to the other, and of all three to the underlying whole.

Ultimately, what we'll show is that reality as a whole can be coherently and consistently accounted for only if we understand that the singular existence from which all levels of reality extend through the process of repetitive and progressive self-relation isn't other than consciousness itself. Thus, we'll demonstrate that consciousness doesn't somehow arise at some later stage in the evolution of existence, but rather *that the evolution of existence into experience isn't other than the evolution of consciousness into awareness* and that experiential reality itself is what's created at a certain stage in the evolution of consciousness-existence. In other words, what we'll show is that consciousness isn't a product of the machinations of physical reality but, on the contrary, that *physical reality, as we experience it to exist, is itself a product of consciousness*, albeit consciousness existing in relation to itself.

Following certain sections throughout the book, there'll be *conceptual checkpoints* where the most important points made in the preceding sections are reviewed, so that the simplicity of the various concepts presented regarding the unified model of reality isn't lost in the complexity of the statements necessary for their proof. These conceptual checkpoints review the essential concepts that the reader needs to keep with them in order to make it to the next clearing, the next level of understanding, regarding the unified model of reality being developed in this book.

There's one indispensable instrument that you, the reader, must carry with you at all times when undertaking such a journey. Please take with you an open mind. Without one of these handy, it's doubtful whether you'll make it very far. However, if you're reading these words, it's more likely than not that you already have one. In that case, take care not to lose it along the way, for the path to our final destination involves many small journeys, and parts of the path may at times seem treacherous and thick with confusion before each new clearing is reached.

With that said, let's press on.