

Introduction: Ultimate Reality, All Of It

Life surprises. Surprises are sparks.

Rain falls from a sunny sky. Streets and sidewalks are speckled. You look up. A small, ragged, roiling cluster of gray to black slides under the blue. Displaced, you think. Sunny or cloudy skies, few things are as clear as a theory or a slogan.

Refusing shortcuts to certainty, keeping our eyes wider open, always benefits us, maybe not as painlessly as we'd like. The moment itself, the "now" New Agers keep talking about as if it's a thing, may be overrated, even impossible, a tempting illusion that can't last any longer than it can make itself true. The moment has a chance to be real, but we'd have give up past and future, both of which we need for knowing who and what we are.

It's like uncertainty in quantum physics. If we know one thing, we're forced into ignorance about something else, something vital. We can't be inside an infinity of past and future, real and irrefutable, and an anchored moment simultaneously. If one thing is real, the other can't be more than fuzz.

Reality is a fluid, an all things everywhere in motion kind of concoction. Viscosities vary. Speeds change. Degrees of mix shuffle up and down a scale. Pause it never does.

We will never see reality pause because, when it does, it collapses instantly into indistinguishable fodder for some next something else.

Fizz!

Everything gone, and you're out the door with it. No post game analysis. No fingers to point. Motion is essential, forcing definitions to declare themselves by creating realities, sort of like a convention where everyone has a different favorite candidate but you have to vote anyway, exposing a universal tie. The television networks can't even break for commercials. There are as

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many balloons as not-balloons. The anchors have a terrible time, and the commentators babble like idiots.

Without definition, it can't be matter. Rules are rules. Without matter, no reality. Simple, yes? How about this? Matter itself is illusion. Actually, it's more like magic, and tracing that magic, such as why it occurs at all, is something that can wake us up in the middle of the night in a very strange place. We're living perilously in the God or not-God neighborhood.

It's profoundly unsatisfying to know that there is nothing to hold onto. There's no rock where you can attach yourself, which is why religion and myth are so successful in offering moorings. As if the proselytizers owned some real estate they can share.

We evolved belief systems because they make us feel better when the truth is impossible. We're told that belief in God, by one name or another, requires faith. In reality, it demands separation and a set of brakes.

God isn't interested in comforting beliefs that deny what we know. How could It be otherwise? God wants only knowing. "For that is the truth of it," as Saul Bellow's Mr. Sammler acknowledged, praying for Ilya Gruner, "that we know, we know..."

I'll be using that popular noun, God, for convenience. We need a common point of reference, but please discard any ideas about old, ornery pricks on thrones where gravity is optional. Throw out ideas about gender of any kind. The creator of gender can't have one. Dismiss kindly spirits who dispatch angels to guide us toward convictions against our will. Cart out like garbage the maker of rights and wrongs, the arbiter of morals or taste. Let go of the heavenly intermediary's hand.

It's not that these are less than true. It's that they're only references, mostly weak ones, incomplete, and while it's always helpful to observe signposts, it's more important not to forget what they are: indicators, pointers, icons – limited. Arrows aim at a greater presence. In this case, much greater, the signposts becoming dwarfs.

Reality, I suppose, is a term much more easily left out of the conversation. Nobody knows what it is, although we're always immersed in it. Ultimate reality is everywhere and everything, the thing itself. On a small scale, we all know what it's like to step back and have an objective look at a container, a subject or a structure. The cliché, thinking outside the box, feels natural. But ultimate reality is a box out of which we can never step, even for a casual curbside smoke.

Reality permeates, boundlessly energetic. It's essence trickles down from the wing of a bird to an unobservable point of energy and ramps back up to infiltrate what we see as a universe. It does so in steps so tiny and powerful, human brains of this millennia will never see them. The increments are so inconsequential, we can't even honestly call them steps. More like virtual steps disguised as quantum leaps.

When we talk about mountains, moons, cells, even quanta, we're talking only about chunks of reality identifiable with the limited tools evolution has given us. We aren't talking about reality itself because reality can't be isolated or made up of parts. Reality is the ever-changing fluid we've adopted by creating our own symbolic version.

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Symbolic versions are allowed to have parts, making them both neatly convenient and not really truthful. Our minds are creation's greatest tools for awareness, but they can fairly be compared to the first aquatic creature that struggled ashore in evolution's march into complexity. We find a long beach full of hazards that must be crossed before we sprout wings, let alone all the other tools we'll need. Our tools always tell us where our brains are going. Tools never deviate too much from the base or they become useless, unable to continue as prototypes for evolution.

Reality is God's own splash into what we'd otherwise call nothingness. (As we're only beginning to get a handle on ultimate reality, imagine how tough to define nothingness is going to be.)

Splashed into space was a composition of rhythmic energy, vibrations everywhere. Pollock, Jack the Dripper, got close to that moment. Ineffable knowing might have driven him crazy. In the initial outburst of rhythmic energy, complete in itself, variations erupted into clumps of cosmos, representations we call matter. Density and heat differentiated into the variations we call color, taste, sound and temperature. God has no limits. The universe expanded with infinite variation.

Eventually, life sucked together enough chemistry to make something new. Fluids can't pause. Life keeps moving, definitions swelling, until presently we have you, here, now, looking at this book. The only mistake you can ever make is in forgetting you were and are some of that initial splash. You are the splash becoming aware of itself. You are not alone.

You imagine extrasensory perception or the wholeness of conscious awareness being shared. Ultimate reality is ripe with these things. How could it not be? If reality has no holes, you can never escape or stumble into one. You might as well embrace awareness and claim some of the fun.

Imagine yourself a single young man at a party. The room is densely populated with attractive women. Your only dilemma is about which one to ask. But you must ask, that's the thing. The alternative is sloth and infectious disinterest. Infect yourself with indefatigable interest by making choice after choice after choice.

Ready to get started?