

5. *Being Alive*

The various substances and systems of our world are complex. Wading through the physical world's increasing layers of complexity we find a point where the organisation of matter becomes what is called 'alive'. The level of complexity that warrants the classification of 'being alive' is a decision made by biological science, but it is not a simple or 'matter of fact' distinction to make. For example, our planet functions as a system, which is called Gaia, and this complex system is classified as not alive because one of the biological requirements of being classified 'living' is that a 'being' must have the ability to reproduce. Our planet, in the plainest definition, does not reproduce but it does meet many other requirements of the definition. Importantly, when the Earth is compared to other planets in our solar system it stands out as the only one known to support life. If the life supporting systems of our planet failed could it be seen to 'die'? If so, in this sense it could be considered 'alive'. It seems wrong to separate the Earth systems, such as the weather, the atmosphere, land and ocean, as separate to life as it is because of them that life can exist.

The classification of life used by biology is designed by humans and we must realise that when we design a classification it is only a point of reference for us humans and not an actual fact in nature. Nature does not make a distinction between living and non-living and nor does it distinguish between being and nonbeing; living is a part of 'existence'. It could be said that existence is pointless unless it is witnessed by life. Nature exist if no one were here to observe it but what a shame to have such beauty without an eye to see it.

Life is made of the PieCEs. At a *physical* level we are made of the building blocks of the universe; the atoms and the molecules. It is said that if we were to purchase all the materials that make a

human being it would only amount to a few dollars worth of chemicals. We are made of: Water, Carbon, Calcium, Nitrogen, Iron, Phosphorus & Trace elements, listed in order of quantity. These ingredients are mixed in such a way that they become alive and this is, for now at least, a recipe that only the reproduction process of living beings can create. If all the ingredients that make a human were mixed together in a large pot they would not combine to form a person because life is not that easy to replicate. We are not just atoms and molecules hooked together; we are colonies of living cells, all of which is made of atoms. There is a formula embedded in the DNA of our cells that provides the information for how the materials go together and, as yet, we humans are unable to replicate this process, at least not without first using materials from an existing living being.

The information contained in life's DNA is the *concept* of life. We can only speculate about the existence of life beyond the examples found on Earth but if there is other life in the universe, if it is not engineered with DNA their will be another information source that provides the *concept* that it follows. As for us here on Earth, the variety of information exhibited by DNA makes individuals and species different from each other.

Yet this alone does not explain the unique *essence* that each of us has. It does not account for identical twins for who, even when they have exactly the same DNA are never the same in *essence*. Even though two or more things, living or not, can be identical they will never have the exactly same *essence*. Although Quantum Theory, in the field of 'Entanglement', states that one entity can exist in more than one location, or two locations at the same time, every entity has its own unique *essence* in that we have entity A in locations B & C or AB & AC, they are distinct.

The classification of 'being alive' is exactly the same as defining 'being', except living has the extra *essence* of life. Life is one more aspect of the realm of potentiality; it is an extra aspect superimposed onto mere being. Lets suppose we create a robot

that is capable of everything that a person is capable of... Would it be alive? Well yes! If it can do everything we can than it is just as much alive as we are. Our technology is nowhere near advanced enough to be able to create such a being but if it were, at what point is the machine instilled with the essence of life? As stated at the beginning of this chapter 'living' is purely a definition created by biology so, other than a human based definition, we cannot truly define exactly when life is present.

The most basic form of existing is 'being' and being is made of PieCEs. Being is simplicity extending into complexity and 'life' is a more complex form of 'being'. Life is also made of PieCEs. Life is an extension of being, this is easy to see, but is consciousness an extension of life or is it just the essence of life in a different form? Should this book be called "Life, Being, Conscious"? If consciousness is not just life's essence then we would have to ask ourselves "is there an extension of consciousness?". If being is primary, life secondary and consciousness is the next level then perhaps there is more! Being that being, life and consciousness are aspects of the realm of potentiality there is no reason for there not to be more, but also likely is the possibility that this is all there is.

8.5.2012