

## Cooperative Reality

“The only thing that will redeem mankind is cooperation.”

- Bertrand Russell, 1872-1970 -

There is a range of beliefs concerning reality varying from completely objective and uncaring reality to a reality that is completely of our own making. Completely objective reality says that reality is completely independent of our perception. Gravity is gravity, light is light, dark is dark, soft is soft and hard is hard no matter what. No matter what you want reality to be, it simply “is what it is” and you must learn to live within its unchanging and uncaring rules. While many would claim to believe this, some of the same people will appeal to one god or another for exceptions when they feel the need. That is, they consider reality uncaring, but believe there is a god who cares and can alter reality if given enough reason to do so.

With objective reality, if you fall off of a thirty story building you to fall at an acceleration of 32 feet per second per second and impact the ground at about 30 miles per hour. Strangely enough, as much as we claim to believe reality is completely uncaring and objective we look for a loop hole. So, if this happens the tendency is to pray to your god in the hope that he might arrange for a truck full of mattresses to reach the impact point just as you do and save your life. You will survive by coincidence while objective reality was going to uncaringly kill you.

At the other extreme we have a reality that is completely of our own creation. In this reality if you step off of the edge of a thirty story building you will only fall if you allow yourself to fall. If you choose not to fall and believe completely that you are not required to obey the “law of gravity” you simply will not fall. Also you would not fall if you didn’t realize you were standing on thin air. This would look something like the typical Wyle Coyote versus Roadrunner cartoon character scenario. This is the case where Wyle Coyote, in the process of chasing the Roadrunner, steps off the edge of a cliff but doesn’t fall until he realizes what he has done. After looking down and seeing there is no ground he finally plummets into the canyon below. Until he realizes there is no ground he is not required to fall. Then, once he believes he can no longer continue to stand on thin air he drops like a rock.

As it tends to be true with most extreme beliefs, perhaps the truth is somewhere in the middle. If this is true, what would that middle ground between a universe of uncaring rules and a self created universe with no objective rules?

Cooperative reality could be a middle ground. In a cooperative reality there are a lot of seemingly objective rules which are applied a large percentage of the time, but they really are not objective rules as much as they are rather stringent guidelines. These guidelines would be applied with sufficient rigor to give all the appearance of objectivity but there would be room for amazing coincidences that invalidate them from time to time.

In the movie, “The Matrix” Neo is embedded in a reality that seems quite objectively real and consistent. Only later is he made aware that, while he might not exactly break the rules of his

reality, he can bend them. In a cooperative reality what we perceive as rules would also be capable of bending from time to time. Now if this is the case we should see evidence that the rules are not completely unforgiving and steadfast. For example, if someone parachutes out of a plane at 14,000 feet and their chute does not open they would hit the ground at a terminal velocity of around 200 km/hr (approximately 120 mph). No one should survive that impact, yet there have been survivors of such parachuting accidents. Not many, but a few. So it would seem that the “rules” regarding such a situation are not completely objective and just possibly reality cooperated with certain individuals to allow them to survive certain death (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/17113222/>).

If a pleasure boat sinks and a couple of people manage to make it to a lifeboat but are not found within 60 days there is no reason to expect they would still be alive. No life raft is provisioned for such long term use. Exposure to the elements in the open ocean should directly cause death. In 1989 A Florida couple had their pleasure boat sunk by whales off Costa Rica and survived 66 days at sea by eating raw fish and drinking purified water. William Butler, 60 years old, and Simone Butler, 52, of Miami, recovered at a hospital in Golfito, Costa Rica, after being rescued by a Costa Rican Coast Guard ship. Their boat had been sunk about 1,200 miles from Costa Rica, and no one knew that they were missing. During the ordeal they survived multiple shark attacks that punctured their raft which they kept repairing. In a completely objective reality there was no reason why they should have survived.

Extensive brain damage will kill a person, and a person with about 75% of his brain missing should not survive. Yet a man in France with an extraordinary amount of his brain missing not only survived but had no significant indication of having a problem. After going to the doctor in regard to a weakness in his left leg subsequent CT and MRI scans showed that his brain only consisted of a thin shell of brain matter surrounding a central water filled cavity where most of his brain should have been (<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,290610,00.html>). In a completely objective reality this man should have been dead, vegetative, or severely disabled. This man was a husband, father and a civil servant despite the fact that his condition probably stemmed from surgery he underwent at 6 months of age.

Everyone has heard of situations someone is dead for a minute or two and is resuscitated. While this is still somewhat rare it certainly doesn't defy the laws of nature or reality. However, if one is brain dead for hours and rigor mortis is setting in it would defy everything we know for such a person to return to life. However, exactly this has happened to a woman in West Virginia in May of 2008. In this case the woman's heart stopped three times and she was brain dead for 17 hours at a hospital. Rigor mortis had set in and the family was discussing donating her organs when she suddenly woke up. She now appears to be in good health (<http://www.boingboing.net/2008/05/23/woam-comes-back-to-1.html>).

Can such a situation happen again? In an objective reality it certainly would not seem so, but it already had happened back in 2001. On November 30, 2001 in Nigeria, Daniel Ekechukwu, pastor of a Pentecostal church was killed as a result of a car accident. For two days Daniel did not breathe, his heart had stopped beating. It was in a hot climate, not suspended animation in an ice chamber. He had been injected with a harsh chemical to keep back mortification. As a corpse he was carted around for hours, pulled about, and lay in an airless narrow coffin for hours. He

should have had severe brain damage, but he is alive now without any ill effects.  
(<http://home.tiscali.nl/tdruiter/testRMb5.htm>).

If cooperative reality can bend the rules with respect to those things we would consider virtually absolute, perhaps those things that are less critical are also subject to a little bending as well. Could bones bend and skin stretch to allow for shape shifters? Could aliens arrive from other star systems despite the obstacles? Could some UFOs actually be alive? Perhaps not with objective reality, but then again maybe reality isn't all that objective, hard, and concrete.