

Paradigm Explorer



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The Scientific & Medical Network

NETWORK CALENDAR 2021

Wednesday May 26, 7.30-9.30 pm	Dr Patrick Curry - <i>The Experience of Enchantment</i>
Saturday May 29, 4.00-6:30 pm	Debashish Banerji, Elias Capriles, Lewis Mehl-Madrone - <i>Cross-Cultural Indigenous Perspectives on Consciousness, Healing and Transformation</i>
Wednesday June 2, 7.30-9.30 pm	Federico Faggin - <i>Consciousness, Free Will, Meaning and Information</i>
Wednesday June 9, 7.30-9.30 pm	Dr William Bloom - <i>Polyvagal Theory and the Soul's Journey</i>
Saturday June 12, 10.00 am -12.30 pm	with Resurgence Trust, Soil Association and Real Farming Trust, Dr Vandana Shiva with Satish Kumar, Helen Browning, Colin Tudge – <i>Regenerating Soil, Regenerating Health</i>
Wednesday June 16, 7.30-9.30 pm	Dr Yvonne Kason - <i>Defining Spiritually Transformative Experiences – My Inner and Outer Journey</i>
Wednesday June 23, 7.30-9.30 pm	Prof Susan Schneider – <i>AI and the Future of your Mind</i>
Wednesday June 30, 7.30-9.30 pm	Michael Jawer – <i>Sensitive Soul</i>
Saturday July 4, 10.00 am -12.00 pm	Dr Susan Jamieson - <i>Transforming Consciousness for Healing</i>
Wednesday July 7, 7.30-9.30 pm	Dr Sarah Myhill - <i>The Energy Equation – from Naked Ape to Knackered Ape</i>
Thursday July 8, 5.00-6.30 pm	Galileo Commission, Nicholas Maxwell - <i>The World Crisis – And What to Do About It: Transform Universities to Transform the World</i>
Wednesday July 14, 7.30-9.30 pm	Dr Shantena Sabbadini – <i>Quantum Physics and Taoism</i>

LONDON - CLAUDIA NIELSEN

email claudia@pnielsen.uk

Until further notice our talks will be online. Bookings are made on the London Group page of the SMN website and the Zoom link is sent with confirmation of registration. Cost is £9.95 for a regular ticket and £4.95 for concessions. Information is circulated to the London Group as well as a wider list. Friends and non-members are always welcome.

For more comprehensive information on presentations (to include synopsis and biographies) plus summaries of past ones, go to the London Group page of the SMN site at www.scimednet.org.

Please note that sometimes talks have to be rescheduled and information is sent via email so even if you are not in London but would like to be kept informed of changes, please send me an email and I will put your address on the circulation list.

UPCOMING EVENTS - 2020

MAY

17th Prof. Robert Romanyshyn *The Frankenstein Prophecies*

JUNE

21st Prof. Tod Desmond *Psyche and Singularity: Jungian Psychology and Holographic String Theory*

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Notice to Contributors

All proposed contributions should be sent to the Editor by email as a Word and/or PDF file.

For further guidelines please email: dl@scimednet.org

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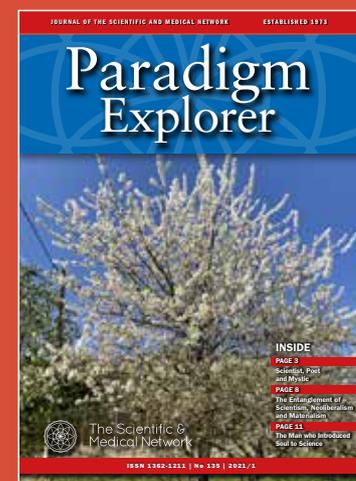
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Engaging with our new website

New tools, opportunities and approaches

Paul Filmore, Chair - chairman@scimednet.org

This editorial explores some ideas of how we can use the potential of our new website. Utilising the strength and diversity of our membership, we have the opportunity to begin to develop creative and inclusive ideas, and possible solutions, to offer towards the many crises that face our society. As an educational charity, having promoted diverse and visionary talks for almost fifty years, we have a large, and relatively untapped, library of speaker material. In addition, mostly within our conferences, we have explored ways in which thoughts and collective understandings developed within the conferences can be shared, and then published in our journal. With the recent introduction of webinars, more members than previously have the opportunity to attend SMN talks. The Zoom format, however, can tend to reduce two-way communication, so personal and group high-level processing of talks, enhancing a synthesis and a collective understanding, may have a more limited opportunity to occur. My suggestion is to re-explore the potential, here, in an online setting, of the Bohmian Dialogue process, to allow us to more deeply and more sensitively communicate together within Zoom.

To record the fruits of this communication and develop and deepen it further, we can use the social media tools very recently activated on the new website. The tools on the website allow the establishment of subject interest groups, and within these groups, using focused posts, members can share ideas and collaborate. There is, in addition, the facility to share collaboratively produced documents within the interest group, which can be taken forward to wider audiences for dissemination or further discussion. Using Bohmian Dialogue in this way is new territory for us, and so, to support this development, I have already started a new subject interest group: 'Practical Bohmian Dialogue', to further our understanding, and for the sharing of good practice.

The SMN is not new to the work of the physicist David Bohm, the subject of a number of Network talks. For many years, I ran a forum on Bohm Dialogues from my university, which convinced me of their potential. Bohm prophetically said: '...it is proposed that a form of free dialogue may well be one of the most effective ways of investigating the crisis which faces society, and indeed the whole of human nature and

consciousness today. Moreover, it may turn out that such a form of free exchange of ideas and information is of fundamental relevance for transforming culture and freeing it of destructive misinformation, so that creativity can be liberated.'

David Bohm, in his book *On Dialogue* (1996, Taylor & Francis), explains that his use of the word 'dialogue' has a different and deeper meaning than that commonly used. Referring to the Greek root *dialogos*, he suggests an alternative to the usual translation of *logos* ('the word') as, the 'meaning of the word'. Then he suggests that *dia* has the meaning of 'through', rather than the usual translation of 'two', so therefore a dialogue can encompass a group of people. He further suggests that, when the spirit of true dialogue is present, there is also present a special sense within a single person, or a flow of meaning within a whole group, which he describes as a 'stream of meaning'. This '*shared meaning*' is the 'glue' or 'cement' that holds people and societies together'.

Bohm then contrasts this 'shared meaning' or 'glue' to our usual activity of 'discussion' (which has the same root as 'percussion' or 'concussion') and which, as he explains, 'really means to break things up'. I like his description of a discussion as a game of ping-pong, where one may reject, or take up, another's ideas to support one's own. In Bohm's view, the conventional approach is to win the discussion game! In contrast, in a dialogue, 'we are not playing a game against each other but *with* each other', so nobody is trying to win, and everybody wins if anybody wins.

When practised correctly, Bohmian Dialogue can bring about a sense of the collective dimension of being human, a qualitatively new participative feature, bringing 'some sense of coherence and order' - a shared meaning. To get to this point, in Bohm's view, we have to first understand, acknowledge, and utilise dialogue to surface, and release, our hold on our basic assumptions or mind-sets. Bohm states that these basic assumptions are strong within us, encompassing assumptions about the meaning of life, our

religious interests, our country's interests, our self-interest and so forth. Bohm states that basic assumptions are defended when challenged 'with an emotional charge'. They are programmed into us as opinions we identify with, and are experienced as 'truths'. As Bohm says, why react to defend them? 'If the opinion is right, it doesn't need such a reaction. And if it is wrong, why should you defend it? It is as if you yourself are under attack when your opinion is challenged..... In the dialogue we create an empty space where we don't have an object, we don't have an agenda or a programme. We just talk with each other, and we are not committed to accomplishing anything. Nobody has to agree to anything. We simply listen to all the opinions. And if nothing seems to get done we don't care, because the process of dialogue is going to affect us at a much deeper level if we can create an empty space. Listening to all the opinions will bring us together.' And in a dialogue session, if we give space, 'people will gradually learn to give space to the others to talk.

Bohm concludes his book by saying 'The question is really: do you see the *necessity* of this process? That's the key question. If you see that it is absolutely necessary, then you have to do something. The point is that love will go away if we can't communicate and share meaning.' As an example and very pertinent to the SMN and the Galileo Project, Bohm as a physicist reflects back as to how different physics could have been if Einstein and Bohr (and their respective research groups) had not shunned each other over their basic physics assumptions on quantum theory and relativity. If they had managed to suspend their opinions by dialoguing, then we might have had a new physics! As Bohm says 'The love between Einstein and Bohr gradually evaporated because they could not communicate.'

In conclusion, I would like to warmly thank the team who have given us our fully operational website, with the added extra functionality of social media. It is now for us to enjoy exploring the site and experiment in using it.



Scientist, Poet and Mystic

Complementary Ways of Knowing and Being

Marilyn Monk

This article, developed from a presentation at the 40th Anniversary Mystics and Scientists Conference in 2017 presents Marilyn's original take on the relationship between science, the arts and mysticism as complementary opposites. Note: this article is illustrated with some of Marilyn's own paintings.

The Scientific and Medical Network

The Scientific and Medical Network (SMN) was originally brought into being in 1973 by George Blaker (civil servant at the Department of Education and Science) together with Dr. Patrick Shackleton (physician), Sir Kelvin Spencer (former chief scientist at the Ministry of Power) and Dr Peter Leggett (mathematician and aeronautical engineer and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Surrey) with the aim of establishing an interdisciplinary network for discussion of wider issues beyond science and medicine. The vision, in the words of George Blaker, was to achieve 'a new renaissance of human creativity in all directions, and, in particular, and most crucially, to an understanding of the paramount importance of the utterly neglected spiritual dimension which alone could transform intellectual knowledge into wisdom'. The SMN today continues its holistic purpose as an interdisciplinary networking forum and educational charity exploring science, medicine, philosophy and spirituality.

In practice, orthodox science and medicine have always been confined to testable hypotheses concerning how things work. Both scientific and medical research involve a rational, logical, experimental approach to provide reproducible results based on factual evidence. This is the definition perhaps of objective truth - 'reproducible by anyone anywhere'. This methodology must be used in the spheres of science and medicine for our material world to work safely for us in every way. At the same time, these rules of scientific

research impose considerable restrictions on scientists and medics in the way they think and go about their work. However, despite these rules, there is no denying that there are moments in research when an intuitive sense of knowing, a 'gut feeling' or a 'hunch', seem to want to inform one's experimentation and interpretation. In addition, a serendipitous event - some transmission of a universal knowing from the whole - may lead to an unexpected breakthrough in one's research. But, due to the aforesaid need for reproducible objective truth to ensure safety in technological and medical progress in our lives, we learn early on, as budding scientists and physicians, that we must not bring the subjective and the supernatural into the lab or the clinic. We may feel or sense other forms of knowing but we do not speak of them. To experiment on humans, or technology supporting human life, without proof of reproducibility and safety can be disastrous and, indeed, criminal. So, in the early days the SMN was a sort of secret society with members joining by invitation.

So why did I join the SMN? This is simple for me to answer. Looking back, I was aware as a child that life was expansive and multifaceted. I was always a scientist - a biologist observing and experimenting with the lifestyles of ants and worms and spiders and loving all the wild animals I encountered as I rode my pony through the Australian bush. And I was always a poet - writing poetry, painting, drawing, playing the piano and ballet dancing. And I was always a mystic - feeling more 'at home' with the animals and the trees in the temperate forests of the mountains, or lying on the lawn outside our house

at night gazing up at the milky way and watching the shooting stars - so wondrous and awesome with the sense of being transported out of one's personal self. Then as, my life took the path towards science, and I moved to live in the city, I was aware of a loss of the other parts of me - the poet and the mystic - and especially as these parts of my being seemed to be prohibited in the realm of science.

Three realms of knowing and being - Scientist, Poet and Mystic

But then an expansion of consciousness returned to me in the 70s when I was introduced to the Rajneesh ashram in Pune and chose to live there for several months each year. Here, through meditation, group activities and communal living we were encouraged to de-condition ourselves back to moment-by-moment authenticity in the present. I learnt that I need not consider myself programmed to be only the scientist. I could be all three parts of me - the scientist, the mystic and the poet. But back in the lab there were difficulties with my wearing of orange-coloured clothes, the mala, and the need to change my name to help with re-inventing myself - the characteristics of followers of Rajneesh at that time. So, back at the ashram in Pune I asked a question about this problem and in response Rajneesh answered me in one of his daily discourses. 'Man is a three dimensional being', he said - 'scientist, poet and mystic'. He made it clear in his discourse that these three realms are separate and complementary ways of knowing and being. I understood that it was important to be appropriate - not to take the mystic into the lab, not to take the scientist into loving relationships - and to know from which of these three ways of knowing and being I was coming from. Problem solved. So liberating! I could live in these three realms in life with their different meanings, activities and friendships. But was there a place where they could come together?

Conflict between science and spirituality?

In the early 80s, while visiting the Open University to give a lecture there, I met Mae-Wan Ho - then a lecturer in genetics at that institution. Mae-Wan amazed me with her open-minded breadth and depth of knowledge in biology and genetics and her ability to question the current dogma and consensus reality in every way. She

was also an artist and a poet. It was Mae-Wan who introduced me to the Scientific and Medical Network - a wonderful network providing a wide umbrella to encompass these three aspects of ourselves - our scientist, poet and mystic - with openness, rigour and respect. I felt like I had come home. I also became clearer about the divisions between these realms in the outside world. Often they are pitted against each other - science versus religion, mysticism and the paranormal versus science, science versus the humanities. In the latter case we remember the two cultures of C P Snow of 60 years ago about the increasing division between humanities and science. And we even see these rifts within the Network today. Science may be criticised as reductionist, materialistic, mechanistic - the home of sceptics. Spirituality and mysticism may be criticised as 'flaky', ill-defined, subjective and lacking evidence and proof. For example, the conflict between orthodox science and the paranormal.

These differences between science and spirituality are real. Science is materialistic because it is concerned with the material world of existence. Science is reductionist because in research we can usually only examine one variable at a time in order to research what that particular part is doing in the whole (although with new high-throughput techniques this is changing). Scientists are sceptics but surely scepticism is needed to keep our world safe. On the other hand, mysticism is not delving into parts of things and how they fit together, but is concerned with expansion beyond our individual consciousness - outside of our individual selves - into a realm of all-knowing interconnectedness. Mysticism is seeing from the whole rather than knowing from the part. Both science and mysticism are concerned with the unknown - science approaches the unknown from observation of the parts and mysticism approaches the unknown by dissolving into the all-knowing whole. But does that mean they need to be in conflict with each other? Certainly not within the SMN. Surely these different ways of knowing and being are complementary. However, the SMN is rightly very concerned about the significance of the imbalance of science and mysticism in our lives and seeks to expand our consciousness into the whole for greater balance and overall wisdom.

In 2017, the SMN Mystics and Scientists conference was concerned about the

conflict between science and spirituality. The subjects under discussion were 'the quest for unity and integration' and the question - 'how are we reconciling science and spirituality'. Given my own lifetime experiences, and the contribution from my spiritual teacher 40 years earlier, my contribution at that conference - covered here in this article - arose from those statements. I questioned whether science and spirituality could be unified and integrated. And, do they need to be reconciled? I could already see that science and spirituality are separate and complementary realms of knowing and being. In a way they are opposites. Science is effort and concentration, and spirituality is dissolving into the unknown. Science is the reproducible-by-anyone-anywhere objective truth that makes our material world work safely for us. Our mystic is transcendent into the cosmic all-knowing interconnected whole. Then there is our poet - the lover of beauty and affairs of the heart - our creative inner experiential subjective realm. What is the problem? And, in particular, I wondered whether the problem could be within us as well as out there?

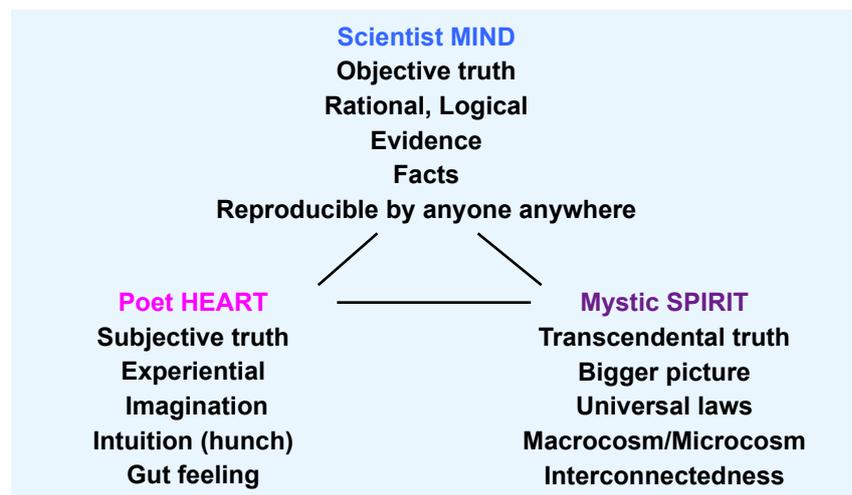
I represented my scientist, mystic and poet in a triangular relationship as shown in the figure below. For me, the three realms of knowing and being are three aspects of truth. The scientist is concerned with objective truth - rational, logical, relying on facts and evidence, and reproducible by anyone anywhere. The poet is subjective truth - experiential, imagination, intuition and gut feeling. The mystic is transcendental truth - seeing the bigger picture, universal laws of microcosm and macrocosm, and the interconnectedness of the whole. I propose that all three realms are of equal importance to us individually and collectively. However, today it is clear that the three realms are out of balance due to the predominance of materialistic science. But could these parts be out of balance, or even in conflict, within us as individuals? Certainly there is evidence of conflict within. My scientist may weigh up the pros and cons of a life decision such as moving job or location - the finances, the housing, travel arrangements, and so on - and then my poet may object emotionally to a move away from family and friends and local activities. Thankfully my mystic can see the bigger picture and may be able to resolve the issue by looking further down either road in time when results of opposing choices may be clearer.

I propose that everyone lives in these three realms of knowing and being. One is a scientist when following a cooking recipe or weighing up the pros and cons of making a life decision. One is a poet in making life more beautiful - a beautiful house, a beautiful garden, loving dancing, singing and playing. One is a mystic in being aware of the wonder and beauty of creation. So looking at these three parts within ourselves we can begin by asking "Am I mainly scientist, mystic or poet?" What determines these realms within our selves in any case? And then we could ask - are these realms ever in conflict within? Because if a house is divided against itself that house cannot stand (Matthew 12: 22-28).

Who am I anyway and do I have a choice in that?

So we could look at these three realms of knowing and being within ourselves and ask - am I mainly scientist, poet or mystic in my approach to life and the way I live my life? What determines who we are anyway? This question could inform a separate discussion but to summarise here - we are determined by the interplay at the interface between our genes and our environment. Epigenetic programming of our genes (expression ON or OFF) is determined in adapting to our experienced environment (physiological, neurological and psychological) throughout our existence - in the womb, in early childhood, and in service to local community. In the latter environment, we take on a role and wear the uniform and behaviour of that role (all the while programming expression of our genes to fit the role). In addition, we are programmed by the adaptation to life of our ancestors passing by epigenetic gene programming through eggs and sperm (so-called Lamarckian inheritance). It is a fact that each one of us is just one in hundreds of possible versions of ourselves we could have been according to these variable environments. I would be an entirely different person if I were brought up by Bedouins in the desert or in a Mexican drug cartel.

It appears you have no choice in the matter. You are just one version of 100s of possible versions of you. But is this entirely true? Could we take charge of our thoughts and behaviour? Is it possible to change the programming of our genes, our selves, and our future? Could conscious change in our selves, through learnt skills in self mastery, even lead to



directed evolution of future generations and aimed at maximum wellbeing? The bad news is that changing who we have ended up being in life is very difficult. Such a change is called a 'turning point' and is very rare. Turning points are known to happen when an individual is completely removed from his origins and needs to re-invent himself to fit in with a new environment. For example, a turning point might be observed in young men after a prolonged period of military service. The barriers to change include habit - we are stimulus/response machines in that the way we respond to a particular stimulus gets wired in (so that we don't have to think about it). Also even if the way we respond to a particular stimulus may be wrong - inefficient and lacking pleasure - we have established faulty sensory perception in that what is familiar feels right. Then peer group pressure keeps us from changing as people who know us expect us to stay the same. However, the good news is that self-mastery leading to change can be learnt and self-mastery can lead to a change in habitual response and in epigenetic gene programming.

Self Mastery and the Alexander Technique in the realm of science

Frederick Mathias Alexander, an Australian actor, had a problem in that he would lose his voice due to acting on stage. Unable to get help or advice from the medical world as to how to solve this problem (other than resting his voice), he set out to carefully analyse what he was doing when reciting on stage that might be causing this problem. He noted that he tended to take up a theatrical position that might restrict his voice box. So he tried doing something different in response to the stimulus to speak. This did not work. Eventually he found that the solution was

not doing something different in response to the stimulus to speak, but to 'not do' what he was habitually doing in taking up his acting position - which was pulling the heavy weight of his head back and down on the delicate vertebra at the top of his spine. The essence of his work is - *eliminate the wrong and the right will come through of its own accord*. Poised and balanced use of the self is our birth-right. The effort to get things right - the effort to end-gain, the 'doing' - is the problem.

From these painstaking experiments came the Alexander Technique for poised and balanced use of the self in daily life and its activities, whether these be physical activities, thoughts or emotions. Essentially it involves what Alexander called 'inhibition' - which is putting a pause or hiatus between stimulus and response, then giving powerful directions from the mind to eliminate any unnecessary tension and thus restore the natural postural reflex (passing through the spine) and then - continuing these directions as a highest priority - choose appropriate relaxed and poised response to the stimulus. One can initially anchor Alexander Technique practice to particular stimuli - using a pen, cleaning teeth, reading a book, answering the phone, hitting a golf ball - whatever - and then spread it to more and more activities so that eventually the new choice of response is wired into the brain as a new chosen and better habit. It is about *being the best me I can be*. So change is possible with the application of such a technique of self-mastery. Neuroscience is beginning to see the value of the Alexander Technique and has invented a new term - Free Won't - and considers Free Won't to be even more important than Free Will. Of course, Alexander technique belongs in the realm of Science. One of his books is entitled



'Conscious Constructive Control of the Self'. I found this title and the book so inspiring that I undertook the three-year daily training in Alexander technique in the 80s, while at the same time continuing work in my lab at UCL (so very long days). There is a lot more to say about the technique and its relevance to how we live our lives but here we will return to the three realms of knowing and being. Although Alexander Technique belongs to the realm of science, we can see how it intersects with the realm of mysticism - for example right mindfulness, awareness, consciousness, alertness, watchfulness and witnessing.

More on science

Although one does not have to work in a lab to spend time in the realm of science, this has been my own major life activity - 60 years of scientific research in universities in Melbourne, Edinburgh, Paris, and London. I started work on DNA replication and repair in Melbourne, then in London and Edinburgh, working with bacteria and their viruses and plasmids. In the 70s I moved to the more interesting (in terms of tricks and 'clever' behaviour) slime

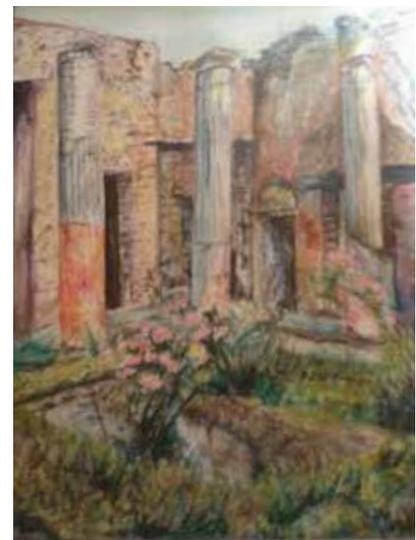
mould amoebae and established the parameters of its aggregation into a higher order multicellular structure. Then I was transferred, after an MRC Unit closure, to University College London where I established techniques to study the regulation of gene expression (epigenetics) in embryonic development. I always found it amazing how things happened by serendipity - like gifts from 'out there'. For example, I made a mistake with a concentration of isotope which led to the technical breakthrough of the first single cell molecular techniques applicable to the very few cells in the study of embryology.

Other times I would start researching an hypothesis and the results would prove my hypothesis wrong and then take me way out into an entirely new discovery about something else that was ground breaking (e.g., paradigm shifts of late origin of the germ line, and deprogramming in development - one knows when one has made a paradigm shift in science because nobody believes you). An added bonus of a technical or theoretical paradigm shift is the immediate clinical applications - in my case, the pioneering work establishing preimplantation diagnosis, epigenetic deprogramming to stem cells and

regenerative medicine, and the isolation of new embryo/cancer genes hopefully leading to a prophylactic cancer vaccine in the future. Although I obeyed the rules in orthodox science, and kept my poet and mystic visibly out of the lab, I was so influenced by my poet (the love of the beauty of life) and my mystic (who kept sending me the serendipitous gifts). Certainly the ways of knowing and being in science are not solely reductionist, mechanistic and materialistic. Sceptic? Yes - but that's good. I see science as born of wonder and driven by curiosity - a creative exploration of the unknown. Certainly science does not de-mystify existence. By expanding the boundaries between the known and the unknown science makes the mystery ever bigger.

About the realm of the poet

One does not have to have paintings in a gallery, novels and books of published poetry, symphonies and ballets to one's name, in order to occupy the realm of knowing and being of the poet. For me it is the creative process that I love - painting, making tapestries, playing the piano, planting flowers - so many ways to be creative. Creative activity is very human - although not exclusively human, e.g., the effort some birds take to make a beautiful bower to attract their mate. In terms of life activities in the realm of the poet, my own best example is the training I undertook as a Psychosynthesis Counsellor in the 90s. This training was devised by Assagioli, who was influenced by Freud, and then Jung, and then eastern mysticism and, like the SMN, psychosynthesis is a very wide umbrella. Psychosynthesis covers past childhood issues, present existential issues, and future potential (what makes your





When I visited the ashram in Pune in 1976 it was to see my brother-in-law who lived there. I had no intention of following a guru but I was completely bowled over in his powerful, loving, and mystical presence. I joined in the meditations - some of them traditional meditations like vipassana and zazen, and others specifically designed for westerners by Rajneesh himself. The ashram also attracted a number of group leaders from Esalen in the States so there were many new-age groups one could attend. But for me I just wanted to listen to the wisdom contained in his discourses. I guess one could say that the ashram at that time was a meeting of East and West in a blending of techniques that heighten awareness.

Finally

I have presented the idea here that the whole human is three-dimensional - living equally in three realms of knowing and being. The realms of scientist, poet and mystic are separate, opposite and complementary ways of knowing and being. It is important to experiment and know where you are coming from. Certainly, the scientist, poet and mystic talk to each other - influence and inform each other. But it is inappropriate to attempt a synthesis, to attempt to merge, blend, integrate, or reconcile. They are already reconciled. It may be useful to consider the origin of conflict as aspects of the self, as discussed here, which are then reflected in the external world. As within so without and 'a house divided against itself cannot stand'.



heart sing). It has a strong spiritual input and an emphasis on the inner subjective experience (in the realm of the poet). To quote Assagioli - "Before being able to communicate psychosynthesis to others we must have experimented with it in depth on ourselves - intellectual knowledge is not sufficient". The influence of the science and the mystic on the realm of the poet is well known in art - paintings from the west, like those of Picasso, taking things apart, and paintings from the east where everything is present together - people, animals, forests - all busy in various activities together. My own paintings that adorn the walls of my house are mainly of my beloved horses (a few of these paintings are included in this article).

And the realm of the mystic

We are all spiritual. We are all mystics. One cannot escape the influence of the whole - of creation - to which we belong. We all have the occasional peak experience of ecstasy from out of the blue - the exhilaration of just being alive and part of the whole. Some of us choose to meditate. Some of us join others on a mystical or spiritual path - e.g., follow a spiritual master, join the local church or other religious community - in the scheme of things. My major experiment in this realm was my time during the 70s in the Rajneesh ashram in Pune, India. Rajneesh was a professor of philosophy in India. He attracted many western followers to Bombay to listen to his talks and eventually the followers created the ashram in Pune.



I wonder whether there is a need for a balance of the three realms for optimal well-being, both at the individual and collective levels. But, outside of our individual selves there is clearly a problem of imbalance in respect to the three ways of knowing and being in our collective humanity and this imbalance is causing huge problems in our lives and on our planet earth. The SMN is facing up to these problems today - not by denying the value of our science and medicine but by shifting emphasis in the direction of wisdom from the greater whole.

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The Entanglement of Scientism, Neoliberalism and Materialism

Joan Walton

This article builds on a presentation given by Joan to the Galileo Commission and to the Annual Gathering in 2019. It provides a more comprehensive context and analysis of neoliberal and mechanistic drivers of what some people are now calling our polycrisis.

Introduction

If we are to overcome the many global crises that threaten planetary life, which include climate change, ecological destruction, terrorism, and pandemics similar to the one we are currently experiencing, it is helpful to have a comprehensive diagnosis of the underlying reasons for these threats to our existence. Anne Baring, in an article I would strongly recommend, 'A Crucial Time of Choice'¹, uses a Jungian analysis to offer an archetypal overview of the emergence of these crises. She tells the story of the separation of masculine and feminine archetypes, reflected in the image of a God or Goddess, and how this separation has had such a deep impact on Western civilisation.

In this article, I should like to offer a complementary but more recent account, not just of how we come to find ourselves in this dire situation, but how it is sustained and strengthened on a daily basis. My argument is that, over the last 100 years, there has evolved an intertwining relationship between a mechanistic Newtonian worldview, neoclassical economics, and a neoliberal

ideology that was born in 1939 and now has achieved global domination. The beliefs, values and social structures, which have been created as a consequence of this intertwining, promote competition and individualism, and resist any worldview that sees personal and planetary wellbeing as interconnected.

I am aware that politics is not often included in SMN conversations. Perhaps those of us who wish to explore frontier issues of knowledge prefer to see ourselves as separate from partisan activists who engage in the world of daily politics. However, an assumption underpinning this paper is that **separation is an illusion**. I am flagging up from the outset that I think those of us who are passionate about expanding science, and creating a postmaterialist paradigm, need to be knowledgeable about the intrinsic relationship between political practices and the perpetuation of the materialist scientific paradigm that is so deeply entrenched in our society. I hope that, by the end of this article, you will understand the reasons why I have come to this conclusion.

The intertwining of Newtonian science, neoclassical economics and neoliberalism

The starting point of my account is 1687, when Isaac Newton's book *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, was published. This contained the comprehensive mathematical theorising and applied physics, which formed the basis of many of the technological and medical advances that transformed the quality of human lives in the following centuries. The successes were major and numerous, resulting in the formation of a 'Newtonian worldview', in which it was believed that the principles of Newtonian science – separation, determinism, reductionism – were the underpinning principles of all existence. This worldview increased its influence, leading to 'scientism', which is, according to Habermas, "science's belief in itself: that is, the conviction that we can no longer understand science as one form of possible knowledge, but rather must identify knowledge with science" (1986:4).

At this point, it is useful to connect again with Anne Baring's article. She writes: "Materialist or reductionist science – a further example of a powerful, dominating ideology – built on the flawed or unbalanced foundation bequeathed to it by patriarchal religion, has dispensed with both God and the soul. It tells us that the universe is without life, purpose or meaning. When the physical brain dies, that is the end of us. The highest authority is the rational mind. We are separate from the world around us. The Master Story is technological progress."

Most readers of *Paradigm Explorer* will know that the evidence to challenge a materialist scientific worldview is extensive. The report of the Galileo Commission² contains detailed arguments to support the revision of this materialist paradigm, as do many books and articles. Despite this, it continues to dominate the mainstream mindset. As a consequence, quoting Carl Jung, "As scientific understanding has grown, so our world has become dehumanised. Man feels himself isolated in the cosmos, because he is no longer involved in nature and has lost his emotional 'unconscious identity' with natural phenomena"³.

Findings from quantum physics have challenged the principles of classical science, instead revealing a participatory universe (Wheeler, 1994) in which there

is an inseparability between knower and known. A key term in quantum physics is entanglement, where there are no individual particles, but instead an inseparable whole. Carlo Rovelli, an Italian theoretical physicist, in his recently published book, *Helgoland*, develops the idea of a relational cosmos, where "people are interacting with other people, who are interacting with their world. This is the place where science comes to life"⁴.

Despite both scientific and experiential evidence for the interconnectedness of all life, demonstrating, as David Bohm phrased it "*an undivided and unbroken whole*" (1980:158), the materialist scientific paradigm continues its domination. After puzzling about this for a long time, I engaged in an in-depth search for literature that would help me understand the reasons why. This led me to the work of Edward Fullbrook, visiting Professor at the University of West England and Director of the World Economics Association, who sees the teaching of economics as a major element in perpetuating scientism. He writes:

"From the 1960s onwards, undivided allegiance to the determinist-atomistic narrative became, with few exceptions, a basic requirement for making a career in economics... Economics...remains locked in the same narrative dogmatism from which physics escaped a century and a half ago.....At great cost to humanity, economics in its traditional centres moves ever further away from the ethos of science and becomes ever more ruthlessly devoted to scientism..... Scientism is always a farce, but in this case it is one leading humanity towards devastation. We, economists and non-economists, urgently need to understand this intellectual cult threatening us all" (2016:1-2).

Fullbrook traces the beginnings of this allegiance to the 'determinist-atomistic narrative' to the end of the 19th century, when "economics was touting itself as a science on a par or near par with physics" (2007:161). He is referring to the co-founders of neo-classical economics, William Stanley Jevons (1835-1882) and Marie Leon Walras (1834-1910), whose original theorising was explicitly built on scientific principles. When introducing his theory of economics, Jevons wrote, "But as all physical sciences have their basis more or less obviously in the general principles of mechanics, so all branches

and divisions of economic science must be pervaded by certain general principles... the mechanics of self-interest and utility (1871 [1970]:50).

Walras wrote in a similar vein: "This pure theory of economics is a science which resembles the physic-mathematical sciences in every respect" (1874 [1984]):71).

Jevons and Walras then proceeded to define a model of economics, based on free market principles, which would demonstrate that relationships between different aspects of the economy were analogous to the cause-and-effect relationships between objects studied by classical science. Fullbrook argues that the significant aspect of the economic theories developed by Jevons and Walras was that they relied on a Cartesian split between the will of the human being, and the natural world inhabited by that will:

"This Cartesian self is mandatory if economic relations between human personalities are to be imagined as isomorphic to those between Newtonian bodies, that is, interacting but without altering their individual identities" (Fullbrook, 2016: 60).

The commitment to the mechanistic principle of market forces guided the meeting of economists in 1938, where the term 'neoliberal' was first coined (Monbiot 2016a). Neoliberalism remained a relatively low-profile concept, as the UK government was engaging more with Keynesian theory as a means of dealing with the economic consequences of the Second World War. However, the idea was developed more fully at the conception in 1947 of the Mount Pelerin Society in Switzerland, attendees at which included Frederik Hayek, Ludwig Van Mises and Milton Friedman, all of whom were to be influential in the development of neoliberalism (Mirowski & Plehwe 2009).

Over the following decades, the members of the Mount Pelerin Society continued to advance their theories. Milton Friedman, writing in 1966, reinforced the belief that his notion of a 'positive economics', as distinct from a 'normative economics', was as reliable as any of the physical sciences in terms of its ability to analyse and accurately predict: "Positive economics is in principle independent of any particular ethical position or normative judgements....Its task is to

provide a system of generalisations that can be used to make correct predictions about the consequences of any change in circumstances. In short, positive economics is, or can be, an 'objective' science, in precisely the same sense as any of the physical sciences" (1966:4).

It was not until 1979, though, when Margaret Thatcher was elected Prime Minister, that "the dramatic consolidation of neoliberalism as a new economic orthodoxy regulating public policy at the state level in the advanced capitalist world occurred in the United States and Britain" (Harvey 2007:22).

For the last 40 years, neoliberalism has increasingly promoted the separatist, reductionist and deterministic assumptions of classical science in its adherence to the efficacy of market forces, and its promotion of those principles throughout all institutions, including education, health and social welfare (Brown 2019, Daza 2013, Giroux 2014, Monbiot 2016a).

The relationship between neoliberalism and the materialist scientific worldview

For the last two decades of the 20th century, when the neoliberal ideology was strengthening its dominance, firstly in the UK and USA, but increasingly having global impact, the term 'neoliberalism' was little known. George Monbiot suggests this was a strategic decision to prevent the public from understanding what was happening. He states that, in the transition from social democracy to neoliberalism, "the movement lost its name. In 1951, Friedman was happy to describe himself as a neoliberal. But soon after, the term began to disappear..... Charles Koch, (one of the richest men in the world who co-founded the Tea Party movement), in establishing one of his thinktanks, noted that 'in order to avoid undesirable criticism, how the organisation is controlled and directed should not be widely advertised'" (Monbiot 2016b).

Even in the academic world, neoliberalism as a concept or political ideology was not much explored in the early days of the Thatcher era. Venugopal (2015) discovered that from 1980-89, there were only 103 Google Scholar entries in English with the term 'neoliberal' in the title. While writing this article, I found that, between 2010 and the present, there were 340,000 entries. A search for 'neoliberal'

in the title of books on Amazon, written in English, showed over 1,000 results, with the majority being published in the last 10 years. There has been an explosion in awareness of the political ideology that is reinforcing the mechanistic, materialist paradigm in our society, in the meanwhile, blocking attempts to create a new, more nurturing, compassionate worldview.

It is not possible, in this short article, to write a comprehensive review of the literature that has been published about the nature and damaging impact of neoliberalism and contemporary political structures. However, I will provide a snapshot of a few, to give the reader a sense of what is being written and researched.

Professor Wendy Brown, of the University of California, Berkeley, has written two books (2015, 2019), detailing the historical unfolding and destructive social consequences of neoliberalism. In the preface to the first book, she states: "as a normative order of reason developed over three decades into a widely and deeply disseminated governing rationality, neoliberalism transmogrifies every human domain and endeavour, along with humans themselves, according to a specific image of the economic. All conduct is economic conduct; all spheres of existence are framed and measured by economic terms and metrics, even when those spheres are not directly monetised. In neoliberal reason and in domains governed by it, we are only and everywhere *homo oeconomicus*, which itself has a historically specific form" (2015: 9-10).

Brown's introduction to the second book talks about "neoliberalism's relentless diminution of nonmonetised existence, such as being knowledgeable and thoughtful about the world" (2019:6). Professor Raymond Geuss, from the University of Cambridge, reviews her work: "Brown deepens the conceptual analysis and criticism of neoliberal ideology, now on the point of becoming the dominant way people think about themselves, their lives and their social world. In illuminating detail, she also discusses the real and horrifying social changes taking placeThis book helps us understand the world we have increasingly been forced to live in, and to begin the process of thinking about what might be done to revitalise our political imagination and practices."⁵

Dr Philip Roscoe, Reader at the University of St Andrews, in his book *I Spend, Therefore I am*, states that neoliberalism derives from two assumptions: "The first, explicit, claim is that people are self-interested and respond to incentives. Economic models have a mechanistic tone, with people assumed to react to stimuli with the same predictability and regularity as a motor and its switch. The second assumption is of fundamental individualism: the idea that people take their own decisions, individually responding to the incentives they find around them. All kinds of motivation, whether hunger, greed or malice, generosity, compassion or love, can be reduced to variables in the model" (2014:48).

Of major relevance to an organisation named "The Scientific and Medical Network", the practice and content of science itself is being increasingly analysed in relation to the influence of neoliberalism. For example, in a highly rated academic journal⁶, *Social Studies of Science*, a special issue in 2010 was dedicated to investigating the impact of neoliberalism as a regime of scientific management⁷. The overall message is the need for an urgent exploration of how external political-economic forces of neoliberalism are transforming the methods, organisation and content of science. The claim that many make for science to be 'objective' and 'value free' is not only challenged on philosophical grounds, but is in fact shown to be subject to political exploitation and manipulation. **In such a context, when the activities and funding of mainstream scientists are so carefully managed, what likelihood is there that expanding our understanding of science, as explored by the SMN and others with similar interests, has any chance of obtaining interest other than by those on the margins of society?**

This is not just the rational rejection of new ideas about reality by individual scientists. This is an ideology that seeks to control what goes on within institutional systems and structures, and in the process, permeates the brains of individuals within those institutions. Ideas of freedom relate to the operation of mechanistic market forces, not to the creative thinking and imagination of individuals and social groups intent on forming a safer and more spiritually aware world for all. Through their ideology, social policies, and economic decision-making, the neoliberal politicians, and those with vested interests

in the system as it currently exists, perpetuate the materialist worldview that is proving so destructive to our wellbeing.

What can we do?

In 1994, Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson published a book *Spiritual Politics: Changing the World from the Inside Out*. The main message was that we could change the world by changing our inner selves. “Overreliance on archetypically masculine expressions of energy, such as dynamic will and power, is transformed into a balanced masculine-feminine expression that enhances the nurturing, intuitive, and inclusive qualities in both men and women in order to solve the global problems we face..... Passive dependence on political leaders is transformed into personal empowerment” (p.21).

I read *Spiritual Politics* in 1995, the same year as I joined the SMN. I truly believed, at that time, that meditation, connecting with an inner source of guidance, and working with others to achieve positive social change, would contribute to the larger endeavour of achieving the global shift in consciousness that McLaughlin and Davidson write about. At the beginning of the new century, I met regularly with a group of like-minded others over a three-year period, to explore how we could collaboratively contribute to this process. But although I felt that my experience within that group was personally transformative, and it gifted me with deep and abiding friendships, I look at what is happening in wider society, and see only an intensifying of problems. Danny Dorling, Professor of the University of Oxford, researches the quality of lives of citizens in the UK. In his 2019 book, *Inequality and the 1%*, he provides evidence to show that since the great recession in 2008, the gap between the richest 1%, and the rest of society, has increased dramatically. However, the inequality is not just about economics. Whilst the rich have found new ways of protecting and increasing their wealth, the life expectancy, educational and work prospects, and the mental health of the majority, have been adversely impacted.

I have no easy answers. However, what I would like to put forward is a request: and that is, please look for ways to connect with others, perhaps in unexpected places, with whom you might not normally think of connecting. At the beginning of this paper, I stated that an underpinning

assumption for me is that separation is an illusion. Quantum physics shows us this, in revealing the inseparability of the knower and known, subject and object, particle and wave. Giles Hutchins, in his book *The Illusion of Separation*, explores the view that the source of our current social, economic and environmental ills springs from inherent flaws in how we see and construct the world. I think most readers of *Paradigm Explorer* would agree with this. Separation, though, works in multifarious ways. As someone who joined the academic world late in my career, I can feel the separation from some members of the SMN, whom I hear dismissing the Academy, due to its resistance to, for example, ideas of a postmaterialist science. But it's important to realise that the Academy, as a social institution, is also subject to the neoliberal agenda. Professor Pat Thomson, from the University of Nottingham, provides a well-researched account of what is currently happening in the UK education system, particularly in schools. She writes: “while neoliberalising states promote and foster international and intranational markets, they must attend to their own internal operations.... A market must be created for state-provided services ... to ensure contestability, efficiency and effectiveness” (2020:29). Professor Henry Giroux, an American academic, in *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education* (2014), reveals how neoliberal policies and practices have radically reshaped the mission and practice of higher education, through market-driven educational policies.

My experience, though, is that there are many individual academics working within universities who are aware of this, and are striving to find their own forms of resistance. They may be coming from different places, and tackling the problem in different ways, to members of the SMN. But what they have in common is an understanding of the threats to social and planetary existence, and the realisation of the need for a different worldview. If we are to survive those threats, we need to realise the bigger picture, and craft stronger and diverse alliances. How can we create shared ground, that will allow those of us who understand the severity of the crises we face, to find ways of constructive collaboration, despite the different paths we have been on prior to achieving that realisation, and probably also a difference in views about how best to move forward?

My wish is to increase mutual understanding in ways that dissolve boundaries between apparently separated groups of people. In my university role, I am including ideas about consciousness and spirituality in my research and teaching; and in my postgraduate courses on research methodologies, I am adding a ‘participatory consciousness’ research paradigm to the more traditional ones of positivism, interpretivism and critical theories. In my role here, as a long-term supporter of the SMN, currently on the Board of Directors and a Member of the Galileo Commission Phase 3 Steering Group, I would like to create awareness of, and interest in, some of the issues with which academics are grappling. One of these issues is the impact of neoliberalism, on all aspects of our world, which includes how its ideology and practices create seemingly impenetrable barriers to a planetary transformation in consciousness.

I would be interested to hear how readers of this article respond to the notion that politics is an entangled dimension of reality, and what ideas there might be for integrating this theme into conversations about expanding science within a postmaterialist paradigm?

Postscript

Following comments by a reviewer, I would like to add the following points. When I am referring to a ‘Newtonian paradigm’, I am referring specifically to the principles of separation, determinism and reductionism that were integral to Isaac Newton’s science, and were directly influential in the formation of neoclassical economics, explicitly influenced by Isaac Newton’s science by Walras and Jevons. I fully acknowledge that Newton himself was something of a mystic, as are many scientists, and would himself have wanted to separate out his scientific views from his metaphysical beliefs (as do many scientists).

I would also like to add that I do not see the Newtonian paradigm as being solely responsible for the current lack of interest in spirituality, nor the aridity of our culture when we come to look at deeper levels of reality, including a reality that extends beyond this embodied one. The growth of postmodernism in the last fifty years, with its emphasis on subjectivity and the relativity of knowledge, began as a counter-narrative to modernism, with its belief in the idea of an ‘objective’ reality which existed independently of

the observer. Unfortunately, although postmodernism has taken on board the principles of interconnectedness, entanglement, and ethics being integral to the universe, with a commitment to issues such as social justice, it still has materialist foundations in that it, often tacitly, excludes consideration of a transcendent reality. I will address this issue in a follow-on paper entitled Postmodernism and Transcendence in the next issue of Paradigm Explorer.

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Endnotes

- 1 Paradigm Explorer 2020/3
- 2 <https://galileocommission.org/report/>
- 3 Jung, C.G. *Man and His Symbols*, p. 95
- 4 Neil Gaman, Back cover Helgoland.
- 5 Brown 2015, back cover.
- 6 Scopus rating: History- 2 out of 1259; History and Philosophy of Science: 5 out of 149.
- 7 2010 vol 40(5), pp 659-675.



A Cornish Cove - Pauline Passmore



The Man who Introduced Soul to Science: Gustav Theodor Fechner

Charles R Fox, O.D., Ph.D.

This article provides a fascinating insight into an important but relatively neglected figure.

In Carl Gustav Jung's autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1961/1989), he talks about his medical education. Jung originally entered medical school intending to pursue internal medicine; as he progressed, he was invited to become an assistant to Fredrich von Müller and was on the path to specializing in this field. Throughout medical school, he was uninterested in psychiatry, a field generally held in contempt by the medicine of the time. What shifted his medical specialization to psychiatry was preparing for the state examination. As he was finishing up his exam preparations, he had a revelation upon read Krafft-Ebing's *Lehrbuch der Psychiatrie* (Textbook of Psychiatry, 1879).

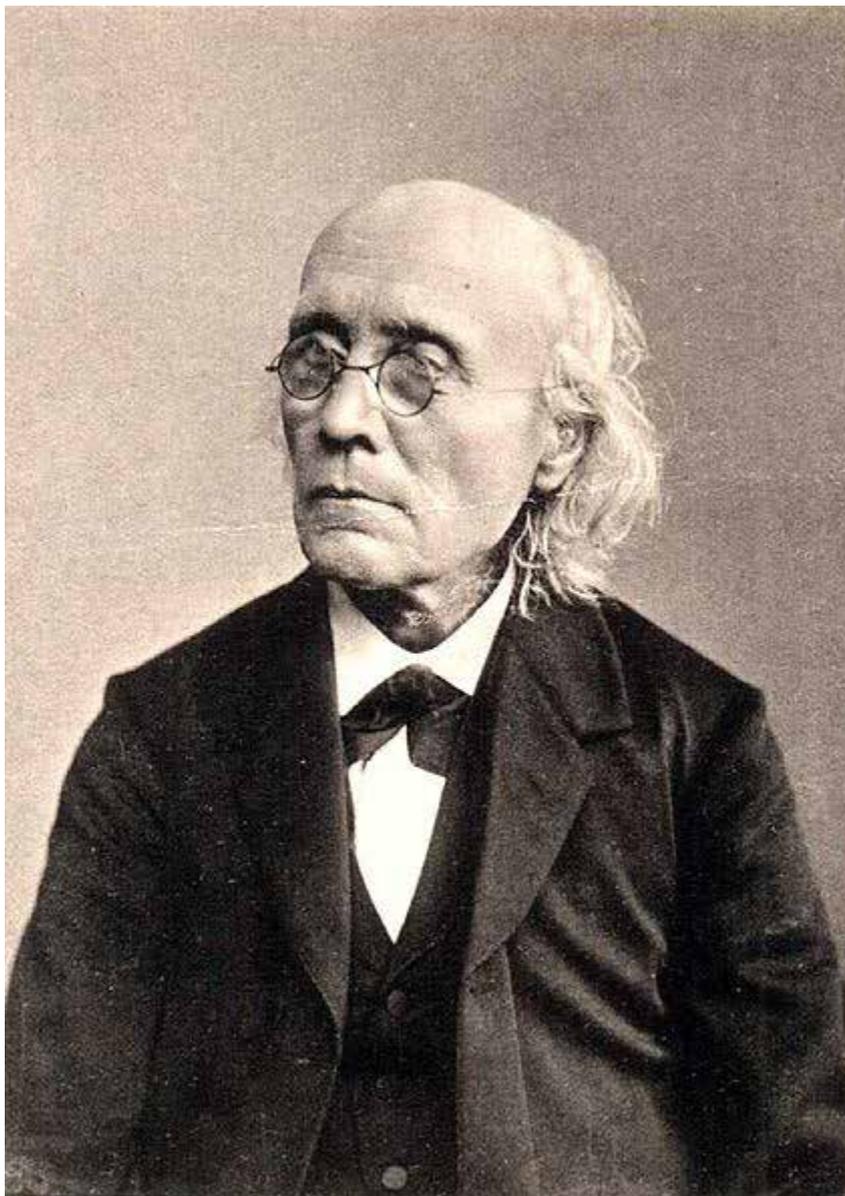
"My excitement was intense, for it had become clear to me, in a flash of illumination, that for me the only possible goal was psychiatry. Here alone the two currents of my interest could flow together and in a united stream dig their own bed. Here was the empirical field common to biological and spiritual facts, which I had everywhere sought and nowhere found. Here at last was the place where the collision of nature and spirit became a reality."

My own career in psychology had a similar progression as my undergraduate interests in philosophy, theology, natural sciences, and biological sciences coalesced into the study of experimental psychology. It is only recently, since I have been studying and teaching the

history of psychology, that I started truly understanding how the very roots of psychology included the scientific study of the soul.

The concept of a human soul has a long history, yet modern science largely rejects this concept leaving it to the more traditional domains of theology and philosophy. The history of modern science, tracing from the Renaissance, to the Enlightenment, to Darwin's theory of Evolution by Natural Selection, etc., can be seen as a progressive movement away from the influence of theology and philosophy to a more mechanistic and material description of the universe; that is, a movement away from studying the soul. However, Gustav Fechner's 19th century founding of Psychophysics, which served as the beginning of modern psychology, was an attempt to formally study the human soul; that is, create a mathematical description of the relationship between the world described by physics and the human soul represented by consciousness.

Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801 – 1887) came from a religious family. His father and grandfather were pastors and his mother came from a family of pastors. At the age of sixteen, he entered the University of Leipzig School of Medicine; this was the same year that Ernst Weber joined as a Dozent (a mid-level academic rank). During his medical education, his interest in religious faith decreased



while his interest in the natural sciences increased. Even so, he soon became disillusioned with his medical studies though he did complete a degree allowing him to teach. His disillusionment with medicine led him to seek out lectures on sensory physiology by Weber and mathematics by Karl Mollweide. Both of these men worked in perception, an area of increasing interest for Fechner.

In 1820, while still in medical school, he was introduced to 'Natural Philosophy' through reading Lorenz Oken's *Lehrbuch zur Naturphilosophie* (1809). Natural Philosophy was the prescientific, philosophical study of the physical universe; it is considered the precursor of modern natural science. In 19th century Germany, Naturphilosophie was an attempt to unify nature as seen in the romantic worldview of e.g., Johann von Goethe and Georg Hegel versus the

more mechanical worldview of e.g., John Locke and Isaac Newton. Fechner was excited by Oken's speculations about the unity of nature in contrast to medicine's more mechanistic view. Fechner wrote "A new light seemed to me to illuminate the whole world and the sciences of the world; I was dazzled by it." For the next four years, Fechner devoted himself to Naturphilosophie. However, he was critical of its methods and in fact wrote, under the pseudonym Dr. Mises, a satire on them (*Stapelia mixta*, 1824). He soon became frustrated by Naturphilosophie.

Fechner earned his medical degree in 1822 and the next year he started lecturing in physiology at his Alma Mater, the Leipzig Medical School. To help support himself, he also began translating *Précis élémentaire de physique expérimentale* (The element of experimental physics) by French physicist Jena Baptiste

Biot. He noted that Biot, by following careful methods of experimentation and observation, produced precise results of the type missing in both Natural Philosophy and medicine. By 1824, Fechner changed his field and began doing research in and lecturing on physics. Still needing additional income, Fechner continued translating science writings and by 1830 he had translated more than twelve volumes of physics and chemistry. By 1834, with over 40 publications in physics, he was appointed professor of physics at Leipzig and soon created the first Institute for Physics in Germany. A few years later, his interest in psychology began manifesting and, in 1838 and 1840, he published papers investigating the connection between the physical phenomenon of light and its subjective perception. At this same time, he wrote, again under the nom-de-plume of Dr. Mises, *The Little Book on Life After Death* maintaining that individual consciousness (i.e., soul) survived after death. This indicates Fechner's lifelong dual interest in philosophical metaphysics and experimental science.

Fechner's professorship and heavy translating load resulted in a great deal of stress and, in the autumn of 1839, Fechner was emotionally exhausted and suffering from headaches, insomnia, lethargy, and symptoms of neurosis; modern authors suggest he was suffering from serious neurotic depression with hypochondriacal preoccupation. In addition to these physical and mental issues, Fechner was nearly blind. In doing his experimental work studying sensory after-images, he spent extended amounts of time looking directly at the sun. This resulted in a painful and debilitating eye disorder, most likely solar retinopathy. This disorder is damage to the nerves in the back of the eye (the retina) from prolonged exposure to solar radiation; these retinal nerves transmit information to primary visual cortex of the brain (and elsewhere) and allows us to see.

Light was very painful for Fechner to the point where he had to live in a completely darkened room and to wear a blindfold; he was unable to read or write. In December 1839, he resigned his professorship and went into a lengthy period of seclusion. His mental health continued to decline, most likely due to 'black patch psychosis.' This is a condition seen in some patients who have both eyes patched closed and, in severe cases, can result in auditory and visual hallucinations as well as delusions. At the

time, little was known of these disorders and no medical treatment helped him; desperate, his doctors attempted a remedy from traditional Chinese medicine. This treatment resulted in no improvement and in fact created GI problems that quickly emaciated him.

Fechner wrote that only two things prevented him from sinking into complete oblivion: the care of his wife and his religious faith (remember he came from a line of pastors). Slowly, a process of recovery began and by Christmas of 1843, Fechner believed "...God himself..." called him to do extraordinary things. Three years later he returned to a professorship at Leipzig. During his period of seclusion, his interests increasingly focused on metaphysics and, returning to Leipzig, he requested returning as a professor of philosophy. He had no formal lecturing responsibilities but voluntarily gave lectures, frequently on the soul. His 1848 manuscript, *Nanna, oder Über das Seelenleben der Pflanzen* (Nanna, or About the Soul Life of Plants), contains his first explicit, philosophical treatment of the problem of the relationship of soul to body.

In his 1851 book, *Zend-Avesta oder über die Dinge des Himmels und des Jenseits* (Zend-Avesta, or Concerning Matters of Heaven and the World to Come), Fechner set forth a more detailed theory of human soul-body relations. He postulated that human, indeed all things, had a soul and that the human soul has an effect on the body.¹

Fechner thought that this philosophical framework required a solid scientific foundation. He reported that on the morning of 22 October 1850, the general outline of the solution came to him and Fechner laid out the basic framework for psychophysics. It has been suggested that this general outline was highly influenced by earlier work of Weber but we have Fechner's statement that it didn't and, even though the two men were colleagues at the same university, Weber did not do much to emphasize this aspect of his work. Still, as Fechner developed his framework, he acknowledged Weber's work and clearly differentiated his (Fechner's) work from Weber's. Between 1851 and 1860, Fechner worked out the rationale for measuring human sensory experience in terms of thresholds and just noticeable differences. That is, how much does a sensation have to change before we are consciously

aware of it existing or being 'noticeably different'.

Most relevant here is his concept of the threshold. Fechner reasoned that we are constantly receiving stimulation from the world but we are not conscious of most of this information. The mind/soul somehow becomes consciously aware of some of it, that which is above threshold, while most of it remains unconscious, that is, remains below threshold. The key question is what are the conditions that allow unconscious things to raise to the conscious state and for conscious things to sink to the unconscious state. Fechner developed a formal procedure for measuring this process. Similarly, he formalized the concept of a differential threshold; that is, how much does a sensation have to change before we are consciously aware of the new stimuli being 'noticeably different' from the original stimuli. With this work, Fechner developed a mathematic of the mind/soul.

His 1860 book, *Elemente der Psychophysik* (Elements of Psychophysics), further developed this mathematical thesis stating that *Elemente* is "... a text of the exact science of the functional relations or relations of dependency between the body and the soul" With this, Fechner sought to use the techniques of science and mathematics to study the human soul. Fechner showed that non-physical events such as those of mind or soul, not only could be measured, but measured in terms of their relationship to physical events². In achieving this milestone, Fechner established psychophysics as one of the core methods of the newly emerging scientific psychology. As Boring (1950) noted, before Fechner, there was only the early 'philosophical psychology' such as that of Gottfried Leibniz and John Locke and the more modern 'physiological psychology' such as that of Johannes Müller and Ernst Weber. Fechner's experimental method began an entirely new wave in psychology, which became the basis for experimental psychology. His techniques and methods inspired Wilhelm Wundt, who created the first laboratory for the scientific study of conscious experience, opening the door to the scientific study of mind.

As Fechner was putting the finishing touches on the *Elemente*, a young physician and neurophysiologist, Wilhelm Wundt, became a Dozent in physiology at Heidelberg. He began the study of sense

perception that led to his 1862 *Beiträge zur Theorie der Sinneswahrnehmung* (Contributions to the Theory of Sensory Perception). The *Beiträge* is notable for its introduction on methods that marked the emergence of Wundt's plan for an experimental psychology. Rejecting a metaphysical foundation for psychology, Wundt argued that the study of consciousness was best done through newly emerging sciences including Fechner's psychophysics. He stated that only this scientific approach would allow understanding of the "complex products of the unconscious mind." Right before moving to Leipzig to accept a chair in philosophy in 1875, Wundt collected his physiology lectures into *Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie* (Principles of Physiological Psychology), the first comprehensive handbook of modern experimental psychology. In the Winter of 1879, he created the first laboratory devoted to original psychological research; its opening is usually thought of as the beginning of modern psychology.³

When Wundt arrived at Leipzig, Fechner was a rather old man at 74 years old and had not been very actively involved in the life of the university for decades. Yet he was still an active and sought-after scholar. He received visits from such noted scholars as philosopher Franz Brentano, physicist Ernst Mach, psychologist Carl Stumpf, and American psychologist and Clark University President G. Stanley Hall. Sigmund Freud attended Fechner's lectures in Leipzig and gave him the title "The great G. T. Fechner." It is clear that Wundt was very close to Fechner. He delivered Fechner's eulogy and inherited his papers. After Fechner's death, Wundt and his associates edited and published Fechner's largest posthumous publication, *Theory of Measuring Collectives* (1897), as well as an edited edition of *Elements of Psychophysics* (1889). Marking the centennial of Fechner's birth, Wundt remembered him not only as the father of psychophysics, but also as a model, to his final days, of scientific and scholarly dedication.

However, even though Wundt adopted Fechner's psychophysical methods, he never adopted his metaphysics. In defining experimental psychology, Wundt established a modern psychology that existed between philosophy and physiology. In place of the metaphysical definition of psychology as a science of the soul, Wundt defined experimental

psychology as a psychology of consciousness that precisely analyzes the processes of consciousness, to assess the complex psychological connections, and to find the laws governing such relationships. He specifically excluded the individual soul from his new psychology. Wundt also rejected any subconscious mental processes as a topic of scientific psychology. In *Grundzuge*, he specifically stated that the actively organizing processes that results in consciousness will no longer be explained by means of an immortal soul. In perhaps the only extant letter from Fechner to Wundt, Fechner stated:

“I don’t see why we should argue about this anymore; I would rather not argue with you on this subject at all, since we are both convinced that we cannot change one another’s opinion on the issues at hand. You will continue to recognize spiritism as something that cannot be investigated, that is not factual, and I will continue to say that it is factual and will try to investigate it.”

Fechner was not as popular among the younger generation of scientists who were wary of his metaphysical position in *Nanna* and *Zend-Avesta*. Wundt and others were part of a younger, more mechanistic generation of scientists who were trained after the Naturphilosophisch influence. For example, the physicists Hermann von Helmholtz (20 years Fechner’s junior) and Ernst Mach (37 years Fechner’s junior) both adopted Fechner’s methods as they explored sensory physiology and perception but ignored his metaphysics. Wundt (31 years Fechner’s junior), in papers published in 1862 and 1863, drew attention to Fechner’s psychophysical methods while

ignoring his metaphysics. However, to Fechner, psychophysics was not simply a useful methodology for approaching some problems in sensory physiology and experimental psychology; it was the way to discover the true connection between matter and soul.

Even though psychology began as the formal scientific investigation of the soul, such work was soon abandoned in favor of studying the mind. Further, contemporary psychology frequently ignores the mind in favor of behavior with Behaviorism stating that mind is not a part of psychology. Still, modern areas such as cognitive science, cognitive and systems neuroscience, and artificial intelligence are reviving the scientific interest in mind, and perhaps we will soon see Fechner’s insight revived by a reintroduction of soul into modern scientific theory.

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Endnotes

1 We should note that Fechner’s view of soul was not the Judaic-Christian soul but rather that of panpsychism. For a modern discussion of panpsychism, see Philip Goff’s *Galileo’s Error* (2019)

2 This relationship is formally described by the Weber-Fechner law that is still dominant in current experimental psychology.

3 Wundt created a teaching laboratory in 1876 but did not start doing experiments beyond class teaching until 1879. Similar to the case of William James’ teaching lab at Harvard (1875), teaching labs are not considered in this context.



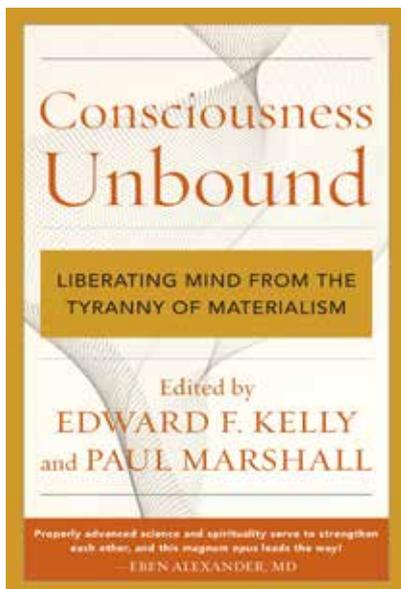
Pyrenees in May - David Lorimer



The Emerging Vision and Why It Matters

Edward F. Kelly

*This article is the epilogue of **Consciousness Unbound – Liberating Mind from the Tyranny of Materialism**. It is both measured and visionary in its argument and proposals. We will be holding a Galileo Summit on July 16-17 to celebrate the publication of this landmark volume which will be reviewed in the next issue.*



*The world is not to be narrowed till it will go into the understanding . . . but the understanding to be expanded and opened till it can take in the image of the world as it is in fact. —Francis Bacon, *The New Organon and Related Writings**

We may safely predict that it will be the timidity of our hypotheses, and not their extravagance, which will provoke the derision of posterity. —H. H. Price, “Haunting and the ‘Psychic Ether’ Hypothesis”

The development of modern science has brought with it a cornucopia of extraordinary intellectual and practical achievements, but a host of serious and worsening problems as well. Many of the problems seem connected, directly or indirectly, with a deep split that has opened up mainly in the past century or so between science and spirituality. This rupture was driven primarily by the modern ascendance of *secular humanism*, a quasi-religious worldview anchored in late nineteenth-century physics that claims to speak for science as a whole and sees nothing in traditional faiths but vestiges of our intellectual childhood. This “materialist” or “physicalist” worldview holds that reality consists at bottom of tiny bits of matter moving in accordance with mathematical laws under the influence of fields of force, and that everything else, including our human minds and consciousness, must emerge somehow from that basic “stuff.”

Our everyday understanding of ourselves as effective conscious agents equipped with free will is delusive because we are in fact nothing but extremely complicated biological machines that operate strictly in accordance with

mechanical laws. Consciousness and its contents are manufactured exclusively by neurophysiological processes in the brain, and beliefs about postmortem survival—common to the world’s religious traditions—are therefore also delusive because biological death is necessarily the end; without a functioning brain, there can be no mind and consciousness, period. On a more cosmic scale, we see no sign of final causes or any sort of transcendent order. The overall scheme of nature appears utterly devoid of meaning or purpose.

Views of this bleak sort have permeated the opinion elites of all “advanced” societies and fueled the pervasive “disenchantment” of the modern world with all of its evident and pressing ills. They have also accumulated enormous cultural momentum and become essentially self-perpetuating by deliberately and systematically gaining near-total control of key structures of modern society such as our educational institutions and the media. Over the past century, our secondary schools, colleges, and universities have in effect become advocates for the prevailing physicalist worldview, which by now not only dominates mainstream scientific disciplines such as biology, neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and the social sciences but also has destructively impacted other academic specialties, including the humanities in general and—perhaps most surprisingly—religious studies in particular. It has also fostered the recent spate of scientific attacks on traditional faiths, especially the Abrahamic faiths, which in turn has engendered pushback in the various forms of fundamentalist fanaticism we observe with depressing regularity in the daily news.

Physicalism fundamentally inadequate

Physicalism, however, is not merely incomplete but also unsound at its very basis. The classical conception of a material universe that was introduced to physics by figures such as Newton and Laplace and developed to near perfection by the end of the nineteenth century—according to which events are unambiguously caused by prior physical events and evolve in universally shared time within a fixed and homogeneous three-dimensional spatial container—was profoundly reshaped early in the twentieth by the rise of quantum and relativity theories. Indeed, even “matter” itself as classically conceived has been shown not to exist. These seismic shifts in the foundations of physics have been easy for most of us to ignore because they are associated with happenings on scales so much smaller or larger or faster moving than our own, but they have also eroded the foundations of the prevailing physicalist worldview as described above. That worldview, I emphasise, is not itself science but metaphysics, a *philosophical* position that is in fact no longer consistent with our deepest physical science.

In addition, physicalist brain–mind theory is now foundering at a fundamental level. We have no understanding whatsoever of how consciousness could be produced by physical events in brains, and recent theoretical work in philosophy of mind has convinced many that we can never achieve one. Meanwhile, large amounts of credible empirical evidence have accumulated for a variety of human mental and psychophysical capacities that strongly resist or utterly defy explanation in physicalist terms. Most impressive to me among these “rogue” phenomena are paranormal, psychic, or “psi” processes of the various familiar kinds; extreme forms of psychophysical influence, such as highly localised and specific placebo effects, stigmata, and hypnotically induced blisters of pre-specified shape; the occurrence of multiple and overlapping centers of consciousness associated with single physical organisms, particularly in cases in which a normally hidden or subliminal personality is conspicuously more gifted and knowledgeable (or suffers different allergies or requires different eyeglass prescriptions) than the everyday personality itself; powerful near-death experiences occurring under extreme physiological conditions, such as deep general anesthesia and/or cardiac arrest, in which no experience whatsoever should be possible according to mainstream neuroscience; genius-level creativity on the scale of persons such as the extraordinary

Indian mathematician Ramanujan; and profound, personally transformative mystical experiences, whether spontaneous, the result of intense meditative practices, induced by psychedelics, or precipitated during a close brush with death. There is even direct evidence of multiple kinds for postmortem survival of human mind and personality, coupled with increasing recognition that the only credible explanations for this evidence involve either postmortem survival itself or unusually complex psi processes involving only living persons—a dilemma both horns of which are fatal to the physicalist worldview.

Where do we go from here?

Physicalism is too impoverished to carry this heavy empirical burden, but what should take its place? Serious attempts to imagine how we and the world must *really* be constituted, in order that rogue phenomena of the indicated sorts can happen, lead inexorably into metaphysical territory partially shared with the world’s religious traditions—specifically, in my opinion, towards some form of evolutionary panentheism, which I take as a theologically oriented member of the broader class of idealist metaphysical positions. Worldviews of this type rest on just three core principles: first, that the manifest world arises from and is constituted by a tremendous world-transcending ultimate reality of some conscious sort; second, that we humans are intimately linked with that ultimate reality in the depths of our individual psyches and can experience it directly in a variety of ways; and, third, that this universal consciousness or universal self that is the source of the manifest world is in some sense slowly waking to itself—aided in part by our conscious human choices—as evolution of more complex biological forms enables fuller expression of its inherent capacities.

What I see emerging, in short, is a middle way between the warring fundamentalisms—religious *and* scientific—that have dominated contemporary public discourse: specifically, an expanded science-based understanding of nature that can accommodate empirical realities of spiritual sorts while also rejecting rationally untenable “overbeliefs” of the sorts routinely targeted by superficial critics of institutional religions. This emerging vision seems to me both scientifically defensible and spiritually satisfying, combining the best aspects of our scientific and religious heritage in an intellectually responsible effort to reconcile these two greatest forces in human history. In particular, it can provide sustenance to persons who view themselves as “spiritual but not religious” and to those who remain anchored in a traditional

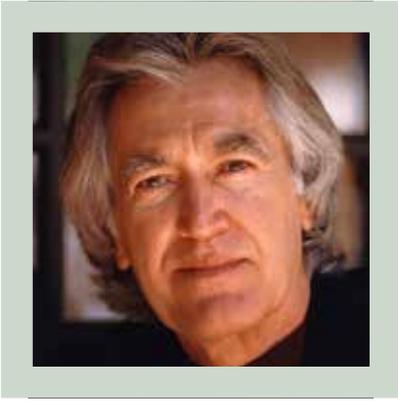
faith but are troubled by conflicts between elements of religious doctrine and findings of modern science. At the same time, and like traditional faiths, it makes room for the possibility of postmortem survival and can therefore provide comfort to persons who are facing the reality of death, whether for themselves or for loved ones such as aging parents. It can also help the large numbers of persons who have encountered powerful mystical-type experiences to make sense of their experiences and utilise them productively in service of positive self-transformation.

The emerging vision sketched here in barest outline provides an antidote to the prevailing postmodern disenchantment of the world and demeaning of human possibilities. It not only more accurately and fully reflects our human condition but also engenders hope and encourages ego-surpassing forms of human flourishing. It offers reasons for us to believe that freedom is real, that our conscious choices matter, and that we have barely scratched the surface of our latent human potentials. It likewise addresses the urgent need for a greater sense of worldwide community and interdependence—a sustainable ethos—by showing that under the surface we and the world are much more deeply and widely interconnected than previously realised.

Our individual and collective human fates in these dangerous and difficult times—indeed, the fate of our precious planet and all of its passengers—may ultimately hinge on wider recognition and more effective utilisation of the expanded states of being that are potentially available to us but largely ignored or even actively suppressed by our struggling postmodern civilisation with its warring tendencies toward self-aggrandising individualism and fundamentalist tribalism.

Availability of an improved worldview does not guarantee its acceptance, of course, and even widespread acceptance would not guarantee that its potential benefits will be fully realised or its potential abuses adequately controlled. But a conception of the natural world much richer than the prevailing physicalism—one that is greatly superior in human terms and at the same time *more* consistent with leading-edge science—is now definitely within reach.

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Generosity and Kindness in our Pandemic Era

Larry Dossey, MD

This article provides a timely reminder of the values of the perennial human qualities of generosity and kindness.

generous:

showing a readiness to give more of something, as money or time, than is strictly necessary or expected; showing kindness towards others; derived from the Latin *generosus* (noble, magnanimous)¹

During the bubonic plague years in England in the 1600s, a saying was common among London's physicians: "Leave early. Return late." In other words, *flee* the dreaded disease.

Today, in contrast, reports of healthcare professionals fleeing hospitalised patients who are sick with Covid-19 infection are practically unheard of. There are many reasons for this. We have a clearer understanding of infections and how they are spread; we have better personal protective equipment; we have better therapies; and we have stricter codes of professional conduct.

However, physicians, nurses, and technicians who currently care for coronavirus patients in our escalating pandemic often say they are exhausted by the relentless demands they face. Every workday they risk their lives — and sometimes lose them — through exposure to this potentially lethal disease. National Nurses United (NNU), the nation's largest nurses' union, reported that 1,700 healthcare workers had died from coronavirus infection and complications as of

late September 2020. The union considered this a conservative, underreported estimate.²

Can our caregivers withstand the coronavirus onslaught? Let's take a closer look.

Giving and receiving

"It is more blessed to give than to receive" is a maxim of several of the world's spiritual traditions. This implies that, although helping another person obviously benefits the recipient, the individual who is the source of the benevolent act might also profit.

Caregivers in the health professions are held in high esteem in our culture because of the selfless generosity they extend to the sick, not for any payback they may personally experience. Nurses are the outstanding example. The nursing profession, for nearly two decades, has been voted the most admired profession in American society.³

The helper's high

If it is indeed more blessed to give than to receive, how does the giver experience the blessings? Researchers Allan Luks and Peggy Payne addressed this question. In their 2001 book *The Healing Power of Doing Good*, they explored what they call the "helper's high." They collected reports like that of Ralph Chislett, a sixteen-year-old whose volunteerism involved delivering supplies to a post-ER recovery unit at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. Chislett said, "Volunteering helps you become a better person. You get a good feeling when you're helping people because you're making a difference in their lives."

Steve Culbertson, president of Youth Service America, a volunteer resource center in Washington, D.C., said, "It gets under your skin. The real big secret to service to others is the majority of the benefits accrue to you. It just becomes who you are. It's not something you pick or choose; it's just part of your nature and makeup."³

Luks and Payne studied over 3,000 Americans involved in volunteer services and found that the euphoric, satisfying feeling lasted several weeks. Interestingly, the sensation returned when individuals simply remembered the action.⁴

More than a feeling

The "warm glow," a term that is often used to describe the "helper's high," has been correlated with increased activity in the amygdala region of the brain. Researchers have discovered that these effects are more than a feeling. They are associated with positive changes in the body's immune function and a lower level of stress hormones.

Other changes are also registered in the brain. As I reported in an essay on the helper's high in *Explore* in 2018, neuroscientist Jorge Moll, at the U. S. National Institutes of Health, found that when individuals donate money the mesolimbic system in the brain is activated. This system reinforces stimuli such as sex, food, drugs, and money by releasing feel-good neurotransmitters such as oxytocin and vasopressin. As a consequence, when people express generosity to others, such as by volunteering or by donating money, they feel good and are more likely to repeat these behaviours.

Other researchers at the nation's National Institutes of Health have confirmed these correlations. They found that the area in the brain that is activated in response to food or sex is also activated when study participants merely *thought* about giving money to charity. Similarly, researchers at Emory University found that the mere thought of helping others activates the same part of the brain as thinking about receiving rewards or actually experiencing pleasure.⁵

In his laboratory at the University of Wisconsin, Richard Davidson has shown that focused meditation is one of the most direct ways to activate and strengthen those areas in the brain that are associated with positive feelings. Davidson studied the effect of compassion-based meditation on the brains of student volunteers who had done the practice for only one week, as well as Buddhist monks who had done thousands of hours of such meditation. In compassion-based meditation, the meditator becomes completely focused on experiencing loving-kindness and compassion for all beings. In both veteran meditators and novices, Davidson found an increase in brain activity associated with positive emotions such as happiness.⁶

Health and longevity

Although selfishness seems antithetical to genuine generosity, giving to others nonetheless has positive payback to the giver, in terms of an increase in the health and longevity of the giving individual.

In a recent 2020 study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Tobias Vogt and his fellow researchers at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands found a linear relationship between the age that individuals attained and the amount of wealth they transferred during their life. When an individual gives resources to his/her child or parents, he/she is increasing his/her own lifespan, as well as the lifespan of the recipient of their gift.

The takeaway concept, say the researchers, is that it is a good idea to help others throughout the course of one's life.⁷

It's not just giving that matters. The social milieu in which the giving takes place is also important. Vogt and his fellow researchers took into account additional factors that are known to be important in contributing to an individual's longevity, such as the gross domestic product of a country, income inequality, the degree of social cohesion, and the ease of financial transfers. Particularly important, they state, is the strength of

a society's social bonds. They noted a 2010 meta-analysis of more than 300,000 participants from 148 separate studies and found that there was a 50 percent greater survival in countries where social relationships were strong.⁸

For years the World Happiness Report has been issued by the United Nations' Sustainable Solutions Network. The report includes generosity and life expectancy as determinants of happiness, which confirm Vogt's findings. In 2020, for the third straight year, Finland earned the honour of being the happiest country on earth.⁹

Generosity reversed

Those of us who are involved in healthcare realise that, sooner or later, we may require the compassionate generosity of other individuals. As philosopher Alain de Botton describes this turnabout, "Such is our proclivity for error and our vulnerability to reversals of fortune, we are all on the verge of needing someone to come to our imaginative aid. And therefore, if for no other reason, we have a duty to remain constant providers of generous interpretations of the lives of others. We must be kind in the sense not only of being touched by the remote material suffering of strangers ... hopeful that we too may be accorded a tolerable degree of sympathy in our forthcoming hour of [need]...."¹⁰

Generosity and kindness, love and survival

Generosity is an expression of kindness. Few things are more important.

Novelist Aldous Huxley observed, "People often ask me what is the most effective technique for transforming their life. It is a little embarrassing that after years and years of research and experimentation, I have to say that the best answer is – just be a little kinder."¹²

Novelist Henry James held a similar view, saying, "Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind [T]he second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind."¹³

Generosity is often equated with love, and love is related to personal survival. As the poet W. H. Auden expressed this fact, "We must love one another or die."¹⁴

The words of novelist Alice Walker resonate with Auden's view and can

serve as a watchword for healthcare workers who struggle to assist those who are suffering in our pandemic-stricken world: "Anything we love can be saved."¹⁵

Larger lessons

A growing consensus among analysts of the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic involves the fact that environmental imbalance can function as a stimulus for the genetic mutations of microbes, transforming a benign microorganism into a lethal pathogen.

This is not the place for an in-depth discussion of this issue, but it does expand the scope of Alice Walker's above observation. The "anything" she admonishes us to love in order that it "be saved" must be expanded to incorporate more than human life. The reason is that human life is dependent on the balance and integrity of the physical world in which it exists. We cannot afford an anaemic, limited attitude towards our concept of "environment," which is the physical cradle that we depend on for, well, *everything*.

The Covid-19 pandemic may therefore be a wakeup call for our species. Generosity, kindness, love, and caring are indeed human attributes, but if they are extended only towards other human beings, we will have missed a larger message of our current predicament: that we are a *part* of the milieu that sustains us — and *only* a part, a dispensable part, and a part that has responsibilities to global integrity we can no longer ignore.

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The Cosmology of Love

by Edmund Wigram

For the people of all humanity
I have one message
one truth.

In our hearts, we all know this.
Written in secret corners,
in forgotten symbols,
reawakened by all
great prophets.

Taught but rarely lived;
that love is the way,
the only way.

The time is coming
when we must
live this truth
and learn to
be love for
all the
living creation

Why?

Because our world is dying,
that's why.

From vibrant abundant beauty,
In a mere two centuries
We have destroyed it
with ignorance
greed, anger
and fear.

The very antithesis of love.

Now it is time to reawaken
truth and honesty, and
respect for all life,
everywhere.

For people to speak out
force the leaders
in every land
to listen,
learn
and remember

all the good that they promised.

It is time to deliver
Now!

Again you ask;
Why?

Why now?

We have time for change.

Time is short.
Eternity calls us.

The earth needs help.
But so too does heaven.

It has purpose.
Not just to be there,
a haven for good spirits,
a reward for perfect lives.

Life has invested in humans,
ploughed millennia of energy
patiently growing
us.

We are
new beings
developing
consciousness,
awareness of love,
and all that love is.
We ask deep questions
and learn.

There is a future purpose
each life has an ending
each life is spirit too.
Where does spirit
go at life's
ending?

It may wander awhile,
wondering why?
then finding
heavens
way
by
letting go
of the world.

Remembering the good:
the joy of love,
the bliss of peace
the fun and laughter,
harmony and happiness
respect, and truth, and honesty
everything that makes the heart sing

The song of love
Is the path to heaven.
The path of heaven
Is the soul's path

All the multitude of souls
have eternity to learn
everything,
and become
the perfect love
of their Creator.

And so
to be enfolded
into the great heart
who created them to be
all that they can be.

Somehow enriching
that being who is already
everything.

It is enough for us to know
that our part in this
is simply
to learn
to be
Love.



Any Other Ideas: why are some approaches to the prevention of Covid-19 not being investigated?

Sarah Stewart-Brown

This article is developed from a submission rejected by the British Medical Journal and calls for research into a whole range of neglected potential preventive measures, also stressing the importance of resilience and social cohesion arguably undermined by lockdown policies.

While we are now able to look forward to an easing of pandemic control restrictions over the summer months, news of new variants and partially effective vaccines is raising the possibility that the pandemic is not over yet and restrictions may yet need to be reinstated. There is also the very real possibility that, even if Covid-19 disappears as these viruses are inclined to do, other viruses with pandemic potential will soon emerge. So this seems like a good time to consider whether any stones are being left unturned in thinking about prevention. On the face of it the research community reacted with admirable speed and effectiveness to the Covid-19 pandemic and we now know a great deal more than we did a year ago. Alongside all the studies on vaccines, pharmaceutical agents, tests for the virus and for immunity to it, risk in different population groups and different approaches to prevention, we have seen studies of the costs of lockdown and associated methods

of preventing spread.¹ The latter show that the social and economic costs of the control measures are very large and probably exceed costs per QALY currently sanctioned in the UK NHS, by several orders of magnitude. So investigating other approaches to prevention has to be a good idea.

The approaches that many governments adopted to contain the pandemic have been based on research showing reduction of spread of the virus by measurable amounts, but studies of the impact of these control measures on mortality tell a rather different story. They call into question whether there has been any benefit on mortality at all,² and suggest that countries with the most severe restrictions fared worse than those with fewer restrictions.³

Other research avenues

In the light of these findings, studies that investigate all other potentially valuable ways of limiting infection are urgently needed. In this respect it is very curious that no studies have been undertaken which aim to investigate why most people do not get sick after exposure. On the Diamond Princess⁴ at the outbreak of the pandemic, 3,700 people with no PPE and, according to some reports, chaotic management of the outbreak were exposed to infected individuals in a relatively small space. The population was high risk comprising elderly passengers and minority ethnic crew and stewards, yet 80% of this population tested negative for the virus at the end of

the quarantine period and half of those who tested positive were asymptomatic at the time. In a study of hydroxyquinoline⁵ in people who had experienced high or moderate risk exposures (more than 15 mins at less than 2 metres of a known case) 89% of the treatment group and 86% of the controls did not get infected with the virus. Surely investment in research which aims to understand what it is that protects the great majority from getting sick after exposure should be a priority for governments. Such studies would offer insights into ways of enhancing population immunity and protecting the population from illness at a lower cost to the economy and society than the control measures which were put in place.

The starting point for such studies should be the significant body of research dating back over 50 years that is currently being ignored by the medical profession. A long series of trials⁶ inoculating individuals with a range of viruses, including coronaviruses, and investigating who developed symptoms and became ill and who did not, consistently showed that those who were stressed or anxious were more likely to get sick and get sick for longer. These trials also showed that social connectedness protected against infection. Both these findings have been corroborated in other studies since then.⁷⁻⁹

Stress and resilience

The solutions of lockdown and quarantine have created very great stress and anxiety

for a significant proportion of the population and an unprecedented level of social isolation for those most at risk. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that there is little appetite for considering the possibility that these preventive measures may have contributed to the pandemic. On the other hand, with the potential now for further pandemics related to new variants or other viruses, it must be important to investigate this possibility. The greater level of risk from Covid-19 amongst populations at higher risk for stress - those with low incomes and minority ethnic groups - is entirely in keeping with the possibility that stress plays a role in resilience to this virus. Any negative impact of control measures on resistance to infection could explain why apparently helpful control measures do not seem to have prevented death from Covid-19.

Emerging interest in human wellbeing, augmented recently by the pandemic, has produced research into factors that prevent stress and promote wellbeing.¹⁰ High amongst those that are recognised to enhance wellbeing are lifestyles which are currently promoted for other reasons like physical activity, healthy diets and exposure to green spaces, together with activities that reduce stress and enhance social connectedness. Other candidates with enough evidence to be considered seriously include mindfulness, Tai Chi, Yoga, singing, massage and other body work.¹¹⁻¹⁴

The importance of this in the context of the pandemic is that there is reasonable quality evidence and plausible biological mechanisms to show that many of these activities not only protect mental health, but also enhance immunity. The immune system is very complex¹⁵ and these studies usually measure only one aspect of immunity. Showing that an activity enhances levels of IGA, for example, does not provide cast iron evidence that it could be useful in preventing a pandemic, but it has to be worth investigating in the current climate. Face to face, hands-on and group-based activities like these, as well as positive social contact between family members were shut down during lockdown. People who knew from experience that these activities were important for their wellbeing found ways to continue some of them on line, but these were a poor substitute for the real thing.

Why are there no urgent calls to find out how much stress and social isolation impact the population's capacity to resist viral infections? Dr Donald Henderson (1928-2016) who led the WHO campaign to rid the world of smallpox was clear that

it did. In 2006 he wrote in response to the measures proposed to control the spread of H¹N¹ influenza viruses: 'Experience has shown that communities faced with epidemics or other adverse events respond best, with the least anxiety, when the normal social functioning of the community is least disrupted. Strong political and public health leadership to provide reassurance and to ensure that needed medical care services are provided are critical elements. If either are seen to be less than optimal a manageable epidemic could move towards catastrophe.'¹⁶

Why are there also no calls for urgent research to investigate the extent to which very low cost, popular, wellbeing enhancing activities like mindfulness, Yoga, Tai Chi and singing boost immunity and protect against viral infection? If promoting these activities could offer a measure of protection against further waves of Covid-19 and future pandemics we need to know.

If further research corroborates the findings of existing studies, policy making should be guided by Donald Henderson's approach. The pandemic control policies to which most citizens of the world have recently been exposed did the opposite, depending on the creation of very high levels of fear for their implementation. It is hard not to wonder if the low potential for making money from self-help control measures together with the high level of discomfort about mind-body links and integrative health care felt by many in the medical profession, are playing a part in preventing serious investment in the research that we need.

We have had three viral pandemics in the last decade, each one getting more serious. The chances we will have more are very high. We should surely be giving appropriate levels of attention to investigating ways of protecting the population by enhancing immunity to infection. And we need to know, with some urgency, the extent to which measures to control the spread of the virus employed in this pandemic made matters worse by lowering population immunity.

Sarah Stewart-Brown - Emeritus Professor of Public Health, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick.

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Viruses, Population and Chaos

Hazel Guest

Planet Earth, together with the influences upon it produced by the Sun and Moon, can be considered as a closed system since any other influences are minor by comparison. In any closed system the interacting elements tend to fluctuate around an equilibrium state, and if some agency disrupts the system sufficiently then there follows a period of chaos until a new state of equilibrium has been established. The elements of the system Planet Earth have interacted and established relationships --- the system's equilibrium state --- reflected in phrases such as 'weather patterns', 'the seasons', 'the balance of nature', 'the food chain', and 'migration routes', to name just a few.

However, worrying disturbances are now being observed, such as climate change, CO₂ pollution, plastic waste, deforestation, loss of habitat, loss of species, and more. These changes have been attributed to human behaviour. We are upsetting the system and putting at risk its established equilibrium state. If this continues --- and it looks as if it will --- then we are setting the stage for a state of chaos.

The changes mentioned above are all early symptoms of the state to come. As with any illness, treatment of the symptoms alone without treating the basic cause, may offer temporary relief but is not a cure and more symptoms will follow. Reducing CO₂ emissions, saving the whales, and other noble causes, much as they are to be admired, are merely addressing symptoms and not the fundamental cause of the disease.

Is there one fundamental cause which, if addressed, would eventually lead to a reduction in the symptoms and a return to the familiar equilibrium state? Is it a combination of human greed and ignorance? Well, clearly they play a role, but I do not think they are the major cause. The overriding fundamental cause is that the number of human beings trying to occupy the planet

is too great. We are rapidly depleting Earth's resources on which we rely for food and energy, paving the way not only for disastrous international conflicts in the near future, but also for radical changes in the state of the planet in the long term.

We forget that we are just one of the many animal species in this system we call Planet Earth, in which the balance of nature has been maintained by the predator-prey relationship. If a species becomes abnormally numerous then the predator species also expand, and in so doing require more prey, and thus balance is restored.

However, we humans no longer have reptilian or mammalian predators. We are expanding like an unchecked plague. The only predators we have left are viruses. Because of our increasing numbers and the fact that we live in more and more closely packed communities, viruses are on the increase and are mutating and spreading more easily. We are fighting back with vaccines but cannot vanquish all viruses completely and forever. The predator-prey relationship ensures that as our global numbers continue to increase then so will viral pandemics.

Chaos theory tells us that if global overpopulation continues then Earth's established patterns will be disrupted beyond recognition until eventually a new age of norms has been established. When this happens, it is questionable whether *homo sapiens* will have survived. Whether the new equilibrium state will include the human species or something into which it has evolved, of course is an unknown. However, we can be sure that in the more immediate future we can expect wars over dwindling resources, famine, drought and floods, all of which will take their toll on human life.

This is an unpleasant truth so why is it not a matter of widespread public debate? Is it possible that any attempt to state it publicly may be regarded as too unpalatable and contrary to political correctness because it would offend peoples' ideas about their place in the world? It is indeed a message that will be unwelcome to many. I cannot imagine any newspaper or television channel running an article or interview along these lines. But can we afford to continue being politically correct? The message has to be aired globally, and right now, and not left to a nonagenarian (like myself) having neither job nor reputation to lose. Discussing this behind closed doors is as futile as simply tackling the symptoms alone.

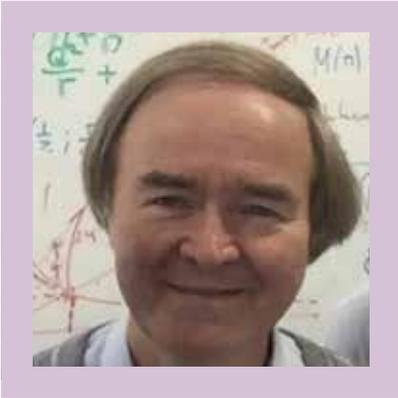
Of course, the big questions are: to what level does the global human population need to be reduced, and how is this to be achieved? Clearly there needs to be a worldwide reduction in the birth rate. Unfortunately, I see no chance of this happening, given current attitudes and prejudices. But this is all the more reason for bringing the issue out into the open --- if it is not already too late. Attitudes must change.

'Go forth and multiply'¹ was all very well three thousand years ago, but today it is the recipe for Armageddon. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are already mounted and ready to go.

Hazel Guest is a retired mathematics lecturer and transpersonal psychotherapist. She has had papers published in both disciplines and also on low frequency noise, as well as having a second edition of 'The Walrus's Handbook - understanding ourselves' (Archive Publishing). From the late 1970's she was one of the pioneers of transpersonal psychology in the UK.

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Genesis 9.7.



A tribute to John Barrow (1952- 2020)

Bernard Carr

Last September saw the sad passing of my friend John Barrow at the early age of 67. We knew each other for 45 years and - since we were both cosmologists - we shared an interest in many physics problems and wrote several papers together. We also shared an interest in the links between cosmology and religion, his work in this area leading to his Templeton prize, and I will discuss this further at the end of this tribute. Beyond that, I admired him as a genuine renaissance man, whose deep knowledge of science, art and religion made him a great authority on the scientist/poet/mystic connection, discussed elsewhere in this issue.

John was a renowned cosmologist and mathematician, with an encyclopedic knowledge of a wide range of fields and a superb gift for writing. His outreach lectures and many popular science books made him a leading exponent in the public understanding of science. In the words of Martin Rees: "He was a polymath – engaging with philosophy and history, as well as science – and internationally influential through books and lectures." The great breadth of his scholarship – also extending to art, music and religion – was recognised when he was invited to deliver the prestigious Centenary Gifford Lectures at the University of Glasgow in 1989.

He was not an SMN member but he gave a memorable talk at the Mystics & Scientists meeting in 1992 and – with his broad interest in the relationship between science and religion – he would have been ideally suited to become one. He was a committed Christian (a member of the United Reformed Church) and a regular churchgoer, though he didn't talk much about his religious beliefs. In 2006 he was awarded

the prestigious Templeton Prize for "his writings about the relationship between life and the universe, and the nature of human understanding, which have created new perspectives on questions of ultimate concern to science and religion". In the last year of his life, he was elected to the Pontifical Academic of Sciences. He did not live long enough to attend the inauguration ceremony but – knowing his health was failing – he recorded a video of his inaugural talk which was played posthumously at the Academy's meeting in October.

In his professional life, John started as a junior research lecturer at Christ Church, Oxford, and then held a postdoctoral fellowship at Berkeley before joining the Astronomy Centre of Sussex University in 1981 and then the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics at Cambridge in 1999. His career spanned a crucial period in cosmology, in which the subject was transformed from a minority scientific interest – on the borders of philosophy – to a mainstream precision science. He was a major contributor to these developments, writing over 500 research papers in astrophysics and cosmology, as well as an expositor of them in his popular books.

I will not attempt to describe the technical aspects of his work here, except to highlight the ground-breaking 1986 book he wrote with Frank Tipler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*. This demonstrated that the existence of intelligent life has profound implications for the nature of the universe and provided an extensive compilation of numerous biofriendly "coincidences" in physics. This became the canonical text on the

topic and helped to inspire my own interest in the subject. It also provoked controversy, with many scientists viewing the topic as being too philosophical or even theological. Only now, 30 years later, has the "A word" become relatively respectable.

In numerous books, he presented developments in astronomy, physics and mathematics with great clarity, in a way which the public could understand. His last book, *One Plus One*, was written during lockdown, when he knew he did not have long to live, and was published in Italy shortly after his death.

His outreach talents were further exhibited through his directorship of the Millennium Mathematics Project, which seeks to spread mathematical skills outside the boundaries of academia. It works with thousands of school students and teachers each year and has reached millions more online with innovative resources and activities. John's imaginative leadership led to its being awarded the 2006 Queen's Anniversary Prize for educational achievement. As further evidence of his outreach skills, he was the only person in 400 years to be appointed *twice* to the Gresham Professorship – instigated in the 17th century to give public lectures – first as Professor of Astronomy and then as Professor of Geometry.

Small wonder that John won the Royal Society's Michael Faraday Prize for excellence in communicating science. But he won many other awards, including the Kelvin Medal in 2009, the Zeeman Medal of the London Mathematical Society in 2012, the Paul Dirac prize of the Institute of Physics in 2015 and the Gold Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society in 2016.

John had other talents. His Italian play, *Infinites*, consisting of five vignettes about the nature of infinity, premiered in Milan in 2002 and won the Premi Ubu Italian theatre award. John loved Italy and it was a great consolation that he and his wife Elizabeth made one last trip there just a few weeks before he died.

John's prowess also extended to the physical domain since in his youth he was a keen athlete. As a student at Durham he represented the university at cross-country running and there is a photo of him crossing the tape ahead of a young Steve Ovett. He was also drawn to football and even had a trial for Chelsea juniors, so he would have been delighted that his obituary in the *Guardian* was on the opposite page to that of Diego Maradona.

On being elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 2003, John noted with wry humour that his first communication from the Society was a form on which to enter the details of his future obituary. Sadly, that form was used much sooner than anyone could have anticipated.

JOHN'S LEGACY IN LINKING COSMOLOGY AND RELIGION



John's research and popular writings led to his winning one of the world's most renowned honours: the Templeton Prize. As a postscript to his obituary, I would like to comment on this because it illustrates why John's life and professional field of cosmology is so significant for the SMN.

The prize was created in 1972 by the philanthropist Sir John Templeton for those who have shown "extraordinary originality in research to advance understanding of God or spiritual realities". He specified that its monetary value should always exceed that of the Nobel prize because

he wanted this field to be equally supported. Originally the prize was awarded to traditional religious figures, such as Mother Theresa, Frère Rogers (founder of Taize community), Cicely Saunders and Billy Graham. But later it was also awarded to scientists keen to reconcile their research with religion. This was a clear indication of John Templeton's view that science should not be viewed as the enemy of religion and that the two could be mutually supportive.

John was one of the first scientists to be so honoured and his interest in the "place of humanity in the universe", coupled with his strong Christian faith, made him an ideal choice for the prize. However, it is striking that four other cosmologists have also received the prize: Paul Davies, George Ellis, Martin Rees and Marcelo Gleiser. The other physicists to receive it – Freeman Dyson, John Polkinghorne, Charles Townes and Bernard d'Espagnat – worked in microphysics rather than macrophysics. Perhaps the reason for the emphasis on cosmology can be found in a quote from John himself:

"Astronomy has transformed the simple-minded, life-averse, meaningless universe of the sceptical philosophers. It breathes new life into so many religious questions of ultimate concern and never-ending fascination. Many of the deepest and most engaging questions that we grapple with still about the nature of the universe have their origins in our purely religious quest for meaning. The concept of a lawful universe with order that can be understood and relied upon emerged largely out of religious beliefs about the nature of God."

This view was also promoted in the last century by Arthur Eddington and James Jeans and by many writers in modern times. Although many cosmologists are atheists, one might argue that science itself is a kind of religion, with cosmology inspiring a similar sense of transcendence, awe and mystery. Indeed, even physicists who do not believe in God tend to invoke him. Einstein famously declared that "God does not play dice". Stephen Hawking ended his famous book by claiming that we might one day "read the mind of God". Leon Lederman called the Higgs boson the "God particle".

John's work - drawing on complex ideas from many disciplines and conveying them lucidly in his many

popular books and lectures - prompted people to examine fundamental questions about the universe and humanity's place within it. He argued that neither science nor religion offers ultimate truths and challenged scientists and theologians to cross their disciplinary boundaries. In contrast to the often fraught relationship between science and religion in the USA, where fundamentalists strive to undermine the teaching of science in schools, he stressed that science and religion have long coexisted peaceably in England, which is why Charles Darwin and Stephen Hawking are buried in Westminster Abbey. This clearly provided a motivation for much of his own work:

"One reason for my many writings is my desire to make science accessible to lay people, many of whom have religious beliefs and support scientific research. Science and religion do not contradict as long as each is kept in its own sphere. The Bible is not attempting to explain the science of the origin of the earth, any more than we would use a physics textbook to try to tell people how they should act. There are important intersections between the sort of questions people in theology ask about the universe and people in science ask about the universe."

One of the cornerstones of John's thinking was that science only provides an interim picture of the universe, because the scientist's picture of reality is always just an approximation. This was the theme of his 1989 Gifford lecture – "Inner Space and Outer Space: The Quest for Ultimate Explanation" - in which he explored the formulation of a 'Theory of Everything' which encompasses both religious and scientific forms of knowledge. He pointed out that this has an important implication:

"Our scientific picture of the universe has revealed time and again how blinkered and conservative our outlook has often been, how self-serving our interim picture of the universe, how mundane our expectations, and how parochial are our attempts to find or deny the links between scientific and religious approaches to the nature of the universe."

One of John's lasting legacies is his crucial role in advocating those links.



Resetting our Future

The power to create a better tomorrow

Barry Tomalin

A Scientific and Medical Network Seminar organised with Changemakers Books.

On October 31st the Scientific and Medical Network hosted a presentation and discussion based on a new book series, *Resetting our Future*, published by Changemakers Books. In his introduction, publisher Tim Ward described this moment in time, in the midst of a horrific pandemic as “a rare opportunity to reset our path and avert even bigger disasters ahead: the climate crisis, inequality, unemployment, racial injustice, ecological and economic collapse, and the next pandemic.” He said this series of short, powerful books provides a platform for pragmatic thought leaders to share their visions for big, paradigm-shifting changes, and to motivate humankind to take the first difficult steps towards a better future.

The six authors who spoke at the webinar are:

Paul O'Brien: *Power Switch: How We can Reverse Extreme Inequality*

Claire Nelson: *SMART Futures for a Flourishing World*

Rebecca Corbin: *Impact ED: How Community College Entrepreneurship Creates Equity and Prosperity*

Tom Bowman: *What if Solving the Climate Crisis Is Simple?*

Stephanie Miller: *Zero Waste Living – the 80/20 Way: A Busy Person's Guide to a Lighter Footprint*

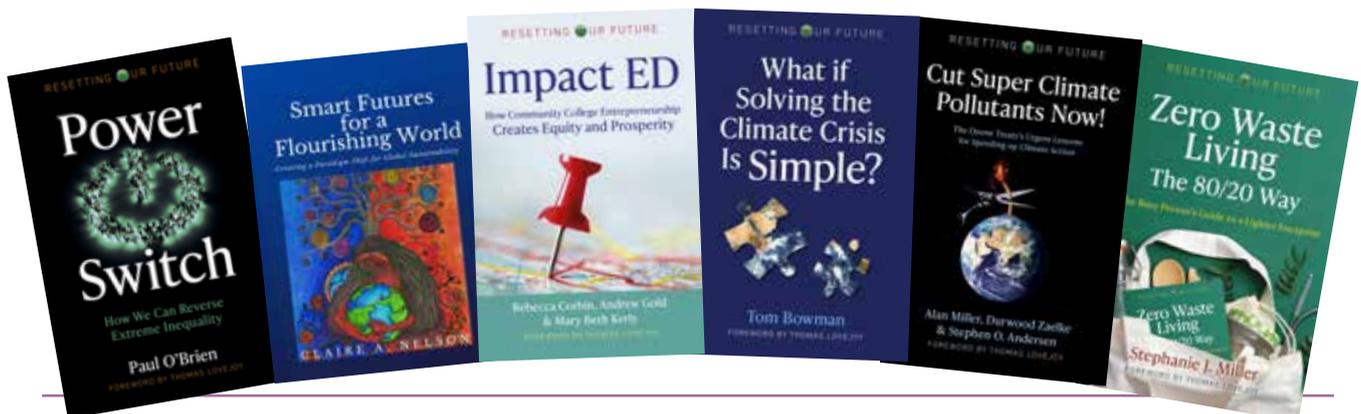
Alan Miller: *Cut Super Climate Pollutants, Now!*

All the books are available now with the exception of Alan Miller's and Claire Nelson's (publication dates to be announced), and can be found at:

www.resettingourfuture.com

In *Power Switch* Paul O'Brien, VP of OXFAM US, addressed the subject of extreme inequality. Taking the example of Nairobi in Kenya he contrasted the affluence of the commercial area and the riches of government with the poverty and depredation of Africa's most famous slum, Kibera, right next door. He explained how the 85 richest individuals in the world had the same accumulated wealth of 3.6 billion poor and how lowering tax rates were redistributing wealth at the expense of the poor in emerging economies. The onset and continuing spread of Covid-19 had spread the virus with special virulence among poor communities, who had neither space nor protective equipment or medical treatment facilities to combat it effectively with 3.4 billion people living on less than \$5.50 a day.

The answer to extreme inequality? Move from emphasis on higher growth rates to better sharing.



Trillions of dollars are available if we are smarter about debt restructuring, O'Brien said. The need is, as he explains in *Power Shift* not to restore economies but to transform them and above all to fight vaccine inequality when the vaccine becomes available. Distinguishing between grassroots (ordinary people) and grasstops (the rich and powerful) O'Brien said that the essential was not to change how much people know but how much they care. To have a critical effect on the powerful the need is not for an orchestra of protest but mini-campaigns, or jam sessions, as he described them, emphasising the importance of wealth redistribution so everyone is better off.

Claire Nelson, author of *Smart Futures*, took up O'Brien's point about jam sessions in a lively and punchy presentation. Citing the Jamaican proverb, "We run things. Things don't run we!", she saw 2030 as a turning point in our attitudes to our planet and our lives. "Can we," she asked, "have a better outcome than the 10 years after the Spanish Flu epidemic?" Yes, we can, is her opinion. "Smart futures is a way of making change effortless." As she said, "Why can't we be as smart as our Smartphone?" She introduced five key questions based on the acronym SMART:

- S What spiritual system should we adopt?
- M What are our moral metrics
- A What is our Anticipatory Agency? How will we anticipate what will happen?
- R How do we rebuild Resilience?
- T How do we ensure the use of a Transformational Technology?

She explained her vision for setting up 30 global "lab of labs" to ask these questions with the aim of resolving by 2040 such crucial issues as: water shortage, food insecurity, education, and to introduce new kinds of stories about our possible planetary future. Nelson concluded her presentation with a challenge.

"Should the ones who created the problem be the ones to create the solution?"

Rebecca Corbin, CEO of NACCE (National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship) and author of *Impact ED*, presented the role of Community Colleges in encouraging entrepreneurship among students from disadvantaged communities. Her aim was to support community action to allow local families to build businesses and "empower Americans to create jobs as well as get jobs." In her book, *Impact ED* (ED = Education) she identified the five attitudes and behaviours to create that change with the acronym, IMPACT:

- I Inequality – Combat it by ensuring payroll protection
- M Mindset – action to stop, for example, systemic racism, and encourage action.
- P Purpose
- A Acceleration
- C Community
- T- Transformation

She explained how, as a result of NACCE activity, 50 businesses had been created and that another 2000 would be created in the next two years. This is just the beginning, and their intention is to grow the initiative to "50 states and 50 nations." In conclusion she asked, do start-ups have mentors and how can we rebuild a debt-ridden global economy?

Tom Bowen, author of *What if Solving the Climate Crisis Is Simple?* cited this statistic: Although 46% of those surveyed believe we can solve the climate crisis only 6% think we will. What is needed, argued Tom Bowen, is a rethink, setting aside our preconceptions and, as he put it, "hanging the picture upside down" so we can see the problem differently. He recommended the work of the writer Lawrence Gonzalez on survival on how to set aside our positions and assumptions in order to solve a 'Wicked problem'.

His simple solution? Stop burning fossil fuels and commit to a deadline to achieve it.

Stephanie Miller, author of *Zero Waste Living: the 80/20 Way* advocated cutting waste, particularly plastics. She said that by 2050 there would be more plastic than fish in the oceans and citing *Drawdown* by Paul Hawken identified 80 actions to reverse climate change including the management of refrigerants, wind turbines, a plant rich diet, reducing food waste and recycling, composting, and the abolition of single use plastics. Miller boils this long list down to a "magic three" areas we can each focus on at a household level that will make the biggest difference. There are:

1. Food waste,
2. Purging plastics
3. Recycling right.

Miller has a shelf in her fridge marked, 'Eat me first' to reduce food waste. Her book is filled with many similar easy, practical ways to have a lighter footprint.

Alan Miller, co-author of *Cut Super Climate Pollutants Now*, called for rapid reductions in short-lived but powerful climate pollutants. Methane and HFCs are two prominent examples, the latter widely used as refrigerants in fridges and air conditioning. Reducing CO2 emissions, which last a long time in the atmosphere, is needed but will not cool the earth for decades. Reducing the super climate pollutants is urgently needed to avoid the potential for catastrophic and irreversible "tipping points" such as melting of Arctic ice and more frequent and powerful hurricanes.

The seminar concluded with hour-long deep-dive discussions with the authors in breakout rooms. The recording of the Resetting our Future event is available on the SMN website (www.scimednet.org). The books are at: www.resettingourfuture.com



Our growing webinars library
is a member benefit

Past events:

MYSTICS & SCIENTISTS EXTRA 2021
ONE MIND, ONE PLANET, ONE HEALTH

THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK
GALILEO COMMISSION
AND
INSTITUTE OF NOETIC SCIENCES
PRESENT

**AFTER:
A DOCTOR EXPLORES WHAT
NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES
REVEAL ABOUT LIFE AND BEYOND**

- A DONATION BASED EVENT -

Prof Bruce Greyson

FRIDAY, 23 APRIL • 7:00-8:30 PM (BST)
WWW.SCIENTIFICANDMEDICAL.NET

MYSTICS & SCIENTISTS EXTRA 2021
ONE MIND, ONE PLANET, ONE HEALTH

THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK
PRESENTS

**THE JOURNEY OF SOUL INITIATION:
AN INTRODUCTION
FOR SCIENTISTS AND MYSTICS**

WHAT IS THE JOURNEY OF SOUL INITIATION AND WHY IS IT
ESSENTIAL TO PERSONAL REVELATION, VISIONARY LEADERSHIP,
AND CULTURAL RENAISSANCE?

Dr Bill Plotkin

WEDNESDAY, 14 APRIL • 7:30-9:30 PM (BST)
WWW.SCIENTIFICANDMEDICAL.NET

THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK
ACADEMY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF POSTMATERIALIST SCIENCES
AND
INSTITUTE OF NOETIC SCIENCES
PRESENT

A TWO-DAY CONFERENCE

**GALILEO COMMISSION SUMMIT II:
EXPANDING SCIENCE – VISIONS OF A
POSTMATERIALIST PARADIGM**

WHAT IF CONSCIOUSNESS IS FUNDAMENTAL AND EVEN PRIMARY?

FRIDAY 9 AND SATURDAY 10 APRIL • 4:00-6:30 PM (BST)
WWW.SCIENTIFICANDMEDICAL.NET

MYSTICS & SCIENTISTS EXTRA 2021
ONE MIND, ONE PLANET, ONE HEALTH

THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK
PRESENTS

A QUEST FOR WISDOM

HOW DO WE CRAFT
A PHILOSOPHY FOR LIFE?

David Lorimer

WEDNESDAY, 7 APRIL • 7:30-9:30 PM (BST)
WWW.SCIENTIFICANDMEDICAL.NET

MYSTICS & SCIENTISTS EXTRA 2021
ONE MIND, ONE PLANET, ONE HEALTH

THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK
PRESENTS

**ON THE CUSP OF GREAT CHANGE:
HOW SCIENCE 2.0 CAN SUPPORT
A NEW ENLIGHTENMENT**

WHAT IF ENERGY WERE SEEN
AS THE BASIS OF ALL REALITY?

Dr Sally Goerner

WEDNESDAY, 31 MARCH • 7:30-9:30 PM (BST)
WWW.SCIENTIFICANDMEDICAL.NET

MYSTICS & SCIENTISTS EXTRA 2021
ONE MIND, ONE PLANET, ONE HEALTH

THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK
AND
CHANGEMAKERS BOOKS
PRESENT

**HOW CAN WE PREPARE
FOR THE NEXT
GREAT DISRUPTION?**

DID HUMANKIND LEARN THE RIGHT LESSONS FROM
THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?

Bart Edis **Anne Kabagambe**

SATURDAY, 27 MARCH • 4:00-6:00 PM (GMT)
WWW.SCIENTIFICANDMEDICAL.NET

MYSTICS & SCIENTISTS EXTRA 2021
ONE MIND, ONE PLANET, ONE HEALTH

THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK
PRESENTS

**SATISH KUMAR –
THE GREAT REGENERATION:
PROTEST, PROTECT, BUILD –
AND LOVE!**

HOW CAN WE BUILD A STRONG AND
HOLISTIC ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT?

Satish Kumar

WEDNESDAY, 24 MARCH • 7:30-9:30 PM (GMT)
WWW.SCIENTIFICANDMEDICAL.NET

MYSTICS & SCIENTISTS EXTRA 2021
ONE MIND, ONE PLANET, ONE HEALTH

THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK
THE HAGUE CENTER
AND
WHOLEWORLD-VIEW
PRESENT

**EVOLUTIONARY VISIONS
OF THE FUTURE**

HOW CAN WE CO-CREATE A FLOURISHING FUTURE?

- A DONATION BASED EVENT -

Judith Caravan **Chloe Goodchild** **Janice Dolley** **Anne-Marie Voorhoeve** **Daniel Lorimer**

SATURDAY, 20 MARCH • 4:00-6:30 PM (GMT)
WWW.MYSTICSANDSCIENTISTS.ORG

MYSTICS & SCIENTISTS EXTRA 2021
ONE MIND, ONE PLANET, ONE HEALTH

THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK
PRESENTS

**THE CHAKRAS AS A
DEVELOPMENTAL MAP
OF THE PSYCHE**

CAN WE HEAL OUR WORLD THROUGH
HEALING OURSELVES?

Glen Park

WEDNESDAY, 17 MARCH • 7:30-9:30 PM (GMT)
WWW.MYSTICSANDSCIENTISTS.ORG



The Scientific &
Medical Network



Robin

Peter Reason

An overcast autumn day, deeply still, on the hills to the south of Bath, England. Nothing, nothing at all seems to move. Then a lone magpie flies past, marking a shallow arc across the dark sky. All is quiet, save the twittering of small birds, the caw of a crow, the metallic cries of jackdaws: on this early Sunday morning few humans are about. Drops of moisture hang from the trees and pick out the structure of spiders' webs hanging between the espaliered branches of an apple tree. A tiny draught of wind flutters the

webs and, almost imperceptibly, stirs leaves and grasses.

The orchard is setting toward winter. The leaves have mostly fallen, although the old Bramley carries a last scattering on the top branches, the oak tree wears a golden halo, while a last few hang on the cherry trees like damp prayer flags. I have scythed the meadow grass and picked all the fruit; the squirrels have stripped the nuts from the hazel tree. All is bare, save a handful of autumn raspberries, shrivelled blackberries

and one or two sloes on the bush outside the gate.

And yet this is not yet time for winter work. I have tidied up a bit—cut back the hollyhocks that flowered so spectacularly along the stone wall, taken down the netting from the roof of the fruit cage, given the grass a final cut. But it is too early to prune the apple trees and currant bushes—this must wait till they are properly dormant in January or February. No point in rushing. I must learn to take my time from the rhythm of the year.





Just one task has been on my to-do list for weeks: turning over the compost.

I am not very scientific about compost: I have two slatted wooden bins; one holds maturing compost, while in the other I pile cuttings, rotten apples and grass as they are available, scrupulously avoiding adding pernicious weeds like convolvulus and dandelion. Maybe twice a year I dig out the older compost and turn the accumulated pile into the newly emptied bin, mixing it up as I do so. It seems to work.

I had already emptied the bin full of finished compost, sieving the crumbly humus into the wheelbarrow before shovelling it into sacks. I hesitated about turning over the other pile—it's a task too often postponed, one I expect to be more arduous than

it actually is. Today, once started, I wanted to finish. Soon I was forking the half-composted mass from one bin to another: stick the fork in, bend knees to lift, ease it off the tines into the empty container and mix it up.

Completely absorbed in this work, I was arrested by a quiet flurry of wings. Pausing, looking around, there was nothing to see, so I carried on digging. Then again, another flurry, even closer. I leaned on the fork to rest, and there *ki*¹ was, Robin, perched no more than eighteen inches away from me, *kis* delicate little legs poised ready to launch back into the air, head on one side with one shiny black eye holding me in *kis* gaze, and of course, neat brown feathers and red breast (a European Robin, *Erithacus rubecula*, of course). It was quite clear *ki* knew what I was doing, or rather knew that whatever it was, I was turning up worms and insects that *ki* would be able to grab. It is possible that robins, like some other species, evolved in a symbiotic relationship with large animals such as wild boar, which turn up the ground and bring insects to the surface—just as do gardeners.

I carried on with my work, and Robin came and went, perching on the wooden edge of the bin or on the overhanging hazel tree. Finally, I dug out the bottom layer of well-composted humus and spread it evenly on top of the newly turned heap. As I soon as I stood back, *ki* darted down to pick up and consume an insect, then another. I was not

able to make out *kis* targets in the dark soil, but *ki* seemed to spot them immediately and moved to pick them with speed and precision

I intended to cover the heap with a plastic sheet to keep the rain off, but it seemed unfair not to let Robin have *kis* fill, so I left it open to finish another time. I took the shovel and fork and hung them up in their places in the shed. When I returned, *ki* was still on the heap, picking out the bugs.

I was very happy to have this encounter, turning it over in my mind as I walked back to the house. It seems to represent something exemplary about the relationship between me and the wider, more-than-human world. It wasn't just that I appreciated seeing Robin, even I cared about *ki*. But as I went about my own interests in making good compost, I was also contributing to the process of growth and decay, and I was actively creating an opportunity for Robin to find food. My entirely self-centred activities were replenishing the local ecosystem of the orchard, serving Robin and other beings. Even the bugs have a life in the compost before they are gobbled up! As Robin Wall Kimmerer suggests in *Braiding Sweetgrass*, fruitful land is created through the alchemy of gift exchange between beings, including humans. And in gift relationship and emotional bond is formed.

Peter Reason is currently engaged in a series of experiential and co-operative inquiries exploring living cosmos panpsychism. His most recent publication (with Sarah Gillespie) is On Sentience <http://peterreason.net/OnSentience.html>

Endnotes

¹ As botanist and Potawatomi plant woman Robin Wall Kimmerer has pointed out, to refer to sentient beings using the pronoun 'it' is not only odd, it is disrespectful, de-animating. Yet standard English offers no alternative. Following Kimmerer's prompt, rather than 'it', I have taken to using 'ki' singular and 'kin' plural; 'kis' and 'their' possessive. I also capitalise the names of beings with whom I am in particular relation. This may feel awkward to read; it is difficult to be consistent; but the awkwardness in itself alerts us to our habitual objectification of the world around us. Kimmerer, R. W. (2017). Speaking of Nature: Finding language that affirms our kinship with the natural world. Orion, March/April. Retrieved from <https://orionmagazine.org/article/speaking-of-nature/>



Network News

ATTENTION MEMBERS

PERSONAL NUMBERS AND OFFICE PROCEDURES

Please help your administration office to run smoothly and so help you efficiently:

- when your details change (address, telephone number, email address etc.) please make sure we know
- use your membership number whenever you contact us, and write it onto all correspondence, conference booking slips, subscription forms and orders for books, services etc.
- book early for conferences - it helps you get a place
- ensure cheques are made out correctly to Scientific & Medical Network; for conferences and orders: always add (legibly!) details of what it's for and membership number on back, even when accompanied by a booking form
- remember we're a network, and it often takes time for all relevant people to be contacted so when making requests give us time to respond helpfully (and always remember to tell us who you are - we sometimes get forms back with no name at all!)
- help us save money; whenever possible pay in £ sterling and remember to gift aid when you make a payment (subscription, conference fees, etc..) - it maximises funds available for more important things.

Office hours are 10.00am to 5.00pm Monday- Thursday. Please leave a message if no one is available to take your call. We will get back to you as soon as we can.

New Honorary Members



PROF BASIL HILEY, PHD

Basil is Professor Emeritus of Physics at Birkbeck, University of London, and Honorary Professor at University College London. He was a long-time collaborator with David Bohm, working on the implicate order and fundamental problems in theoretical physics, and coauthor of *The Undivided Universe*, the main reference for Bohm's interpretation of quantum theory. He was awarded the 2012 Majorana prize for his algebraic approach to quantum mechanics and in recognition of his paramount importance as a natural philosopher and his critical open-minded attitude towards the role of science in contemporary culture. He has spoken at a number of our conferences, most recently at the centenary meeting to celebrate David Bohm and Ilya Prigogine.

Note: The Director's Cut of the film about David Bohm, Infinite Potential, has now been issued – see www.infinitepotential.com



PROF KEITH WARD, DD, FBA

Keith taught philosophy at the Universities of Glasgow, St. Andrews, and King's College, London. He was Dean of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, then Professor of the Philosophy of Religion at King's, London, and Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. He is currently Professor of the Philosophy of Religion at Roehampton University. In 1993-94, he delivered the prestigious Gifford Lectures at the University of Glasgow. He was the Gresham Professor of Divinity between 2004 and 2008 at Gresham College, London. His most recent books are *Christ and the Cosmos* (CUP, 2015), *The Christian Idea of God* (CUP, 2017), and *Religion in the Modern World* (CUP, 2019). He has been a strong defender of the idea of the soul and idealist philosophy, and has engaged in a number of public debates with Richard Dawkins on the relationship between science and religion. Keith has spoken at a number of Network conferences, and gave a memorable after-dinner speech and the 25th anniversary of the Mystics and Scientists conferences.

Our New Website – <https://scientificandmedical.net>

After months of detailed design and work by Jose Montemayor, Yuval Simonov, Richard Irwin and the management committee, we were finally able to launch the new website last month after extensive checking and debugging. We hope you like the result of our new online home, and to encourage you to visit the site and register in order to take part in new interest groups and follow-ups from weekly meetings. We are planning to instigate this also with respect to the webinars. We have moved all the event booking onto this site, including the previously independent Mystics and Scientists and Beyond the Brain domains.

The Network Online

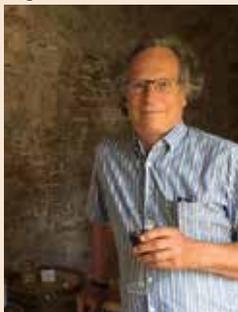


Members will be aware of our continuing online activity, sometimes with two events a week. All the recordings are uploaded into the webinar library that members can access free. We have collaborated with the Institute of Noetic Sciences on three events so far this year – Steve Taylor, Bruce Greyson and Rupert Sheldrake. Bruce has been receiving some very positive coverage for his new book *After*, reviewed below. Rupert was speaking on the 40th anniversary of the publication of his initial controversial book, *A New Science of Life*, and attracted a record attendance of nearly 1,400 people. We have also held the second Galileo Commission Summit attended by some 400 people online. We collaborate with the Pari Center on a course on *The Great Rethink* with Colin Tudge. We have an exciting and varied programme planned for the rest of the year, including the Mystics and Scientists conference postponed from April last year and now taking place at the end of July, and *Beyond the Brain* online from November 5-7. Upcoming highlights include a collaborative event with Vandana Shiva on June 12 and a course with Prof Ravi Ravindra on *Science in the Sacred* in August. Ravi will also be speaking on Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* and the *Bhagavad-Gita* in November. We continue to produce regular issues of our online newsletter, *Towards a New Renaissance*, which is now reached its ninth issue.

A Glass of Wine on Friday nights - Paul Kieniewicz

On Friday evenings SMN members meet to drink a glass of wine across a Zoom network, and speak informally around a selected topic. Those evenings are rich with personal experiences and stories. Because so many have a story to share (often our evening has 50-60 participants), our topics continue for two or more evenings. We started off the year talking about death and dying. Helena Daly related her experiences with the dying, how death appeared often in their dreams. People shared their visions of the afterlife, many based on Near Death Experiences, others on sources such as the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. The current planetary crisis was a topic for several meetings - what exactly it is and what if anything can be done about it on a personal level. We hosted Robert Verkerk, Stanley Wim and Duane Elgin to open our discussions. David Nicol discussed his vision of "subtle activism", bringing the planetary crisis down to the personal level and the need for personal transformation.

Must science and spirituality have an adversarial relationship as is often perceived? Not according to Marilyn Monk who shared her personal



experience of the overlaps between science, the arts and spirituality. She doesn't see a conflict of world views, but rather that each has a different focus. The following weeks we explored personal transformation from a psychological perspective. Jessica Corneille introduced *Spiritual Emergence* – spontaneous transformative events that many people report. Several of our members related their personal experiences. Apparently, such cases are more frequent than is generally known. What is their extent, and how deep is the change, were subjects of further discussion. Anne Baring introduced Jung's *Process of Individuation*, a context for understanding *Spiritual Emergence*. We were also pleased to host Prof. Roderick Main to introduce *Synchronicity* as developed by Jung. Many spectacular stories were shared. We strive to have an open and free discussion in a safe environment, with as little management as possible, as if this were an informal pub night. We plan to continue, even if real pubs are opening up.



Meditation on Sunday evenings – Dr Peter Fenwick

Every Sunday for the last year the Network meditation group has met for a meditation session at 6.00 p.m. We have about 70 or 80 in the group and its aim is to give participants an understanding of the many different kinds of meditation. It starts with either a video of a teacher, or a meditation aim. We have had videos of Rupert Spira, John Crook, Roger Linden, and several other non-dual people. So there has been good guidance for the group on the experience of non-duality which we have been able to take into our meditation. There is music as we come out of the meditation and then there is a short reading to illustrate some of the points we may have mentioned. Finally, there is time for questions before we come together in unity and love, ending at 7.00 pm. Do join us!



Monday Dialogues with Paul Filmore

These one and a half hour sessions will be run by Paul Filmore (Chair of the SMN) and feature an unstructured (but lightly moderated by Paul) discussion focused around a different key idea or concept each week. We are now into the fourth ten week cycle, where members are introducing a new topic for the first twenty minutes, before we open up for the dialogue. Please note that these sessions are not therapy sessions or based around the 'sage on the stage', but aim to utilise the diversity of thought, wisdom and openness that Network members have in profusion. Constructive reflections and synthesis will be captured in our networking space. These sessions are NOT recorded to allow for natural creativity and trust to emerge.

Appointment of Directors, 2021

Nicholas Pilbrow writes: During the past year no further directors were co-opted to the Board, although on February 21st 2021 Mr Yohance Osborne was co-opted as a director. Ms Holly Hackney resigned on October 1st 2020. Also during the year, Dr Peter Fenwick resigned as President after serving as Chairman and President of the Network, which acknowledges with grateful thanks his many years of service and wishes him a long and peaceful retirement. He will remain with the Network as President Emeritus. His place as President is taken by Prof Bernard Carr, a past Chairman of the Network.

Each year one third of the member appointed directors, who have served the longest, retire by rotation and all the co-opted members. They are, if they wish, eligible for re-election or co-option. The directors retiring by rotation are Mr Edi Bilimoria (2019), Mrs. Jacqueline Nielsen (2005), and Dr Joan Walton (2017). All those retiring are eligible for re-election or co-option and all have indicated their wish to continue. The remaining Directors are (2017), Mr. Tuvi Orbach (2014), Mr. Paul Kieniewicz (2015), Dr. Paul Filmore (2015) Mr. Richard Irwin (2015) Dr. Vasileios Basios (2020) and Mr. Jose Montemayor (2019).

There are now up to four possible vacancies for Directors to be elected at the Annual General Meeting and four further vacancies available by co-option by the Board.

Members who wish to be considered for these vacancies are requested to apply by the end of May, 2021 by sending their C.V. and a short note on how they see themselves contributing to the aims of the Network. This will enable the Board to consider how they would match the tasks to be performed and, where appropriate, make recommendations to the members. The members of the company will follow the recommendations of the Network AGM, unless there is good reason not to do so. Applications should be sent by email to the Manager, Andrew Polson, Andrew@scimednet.org.

Imaginal Inspirations Podcasts

Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution – Albert Einstein

Imaginal cells are responsible for the metamorphosis of the caterpillar into a butterfly (the Greek symbol for the soul). These cells are dormant in the caterpillar but at a critical point of development they create the new form and structure which becomes the butterfly.

In this podcast series, David Lorimer talks to transformational authors and scientists about experiences, people and books that have shaped their lives and professional development.

Live on

<https://redcircle.com/shows/imaginal-inspirations>

Prof Marjorie Woollacott on
the Awakening of a Scientific Mind

Prof Bruce Greyson on
Consciousness, NDEs and the Afterlife

Dr Vasileios Basios on
Consciousness and Complex Systems

Dr Kevin Ashbridge has been producing a corresponding series of 14 short video clips available on the Galileo Commission YouTube channel, including a compilation of answers to a question about advice that people would give their younger selves.



LOCAL GROUP
NEWS

LONDON GROUP

CLAUDIA NIELSEN
claudia@pnielsen.uk

To read reports from other meetings, go to the REPORTS page of the London Group page of the Network's website. If you don't live in London but wish to be advised of London events, please drop me an email and I shall add your e-address to the circulation list.

■ JANUARY

Dr. EDI BILIMORIA started us off in 2021 with a talk based on his trilogy *Unfolding Consciousness*, due later this year. Edi is an ardent student of the perennial philosophy and he has lectured on this theme both in the UK and internationally for many years. His book *The Snake and the Rope* was awarded the SMN book prize in 2008. Edi is a member of the SMN Board of Directors and will soon be taking over the physical meetings of the SMN London Group. He has worked as a consultant engineer to the oil and gas, petrochemical and transport industries and is currently a safety and environmental engineer for Royal Navy projects. He is a lover of music and an accomplished pianist.

The talk was in two parts and involved a number of graphs and diagrams. In part I Edi addressed what we mean by man and in part II the coming into being of man.

In Part I Edi showed that the universal teachings of East and West acknowledge the ultimate Unity from which multiplicity arises and understand man as embodied consciousness. From Isaac Newton - 'all things have their birth from this one thing by adaptation'.

All mystery teachings have the same aim – the unfolding of the nature of man according to certain universal rules, which include polarities such as light and darkness, good and evil. Edi quoted Egyptian wisdom, Persian mysteries and Greek tradition.

In Part II Edi addressed anthropogenesis and the derivation of the human senses. He pointed out that in our routine reality we observe that everything is first conceived by a vision. Then comes the plan for making it happen and finally the physical realisation. The same must be true for the arising of Man. It is a downflow – an externalisation of the implicate to the explicate.

From Friedrich Schiller Edi quoted: 'the Universe is a thought of the deity'. Since this ideal thought-form has overflowed into actuality, and the world born thereof has realised the plan of its creator, it is the calling of all thinking beings to rediscover in this whole the original design.

The conundrum which occupied many great minds of how subjective experience can arise from physical manifestation, Edi mentioned Schroedinger who pointed out that science can tell us about red and blue, bitter and sweet, physical pain and physical delight, but cannot tell us anything about the feelings of delight and sorrow that accompany the process.

Ancient Indian philosophy uses the concept of the five Tattvas to explain the essence of what makes a thing what it is. These five cosmic elements/agents are universal in nature and understood as conscious principles. They act both as stimulators and receptors of the senses. Undifferentiated consciousness therefore at its lowest point of descent manifests as mind both as subjective stream (spirit) and mind as objective stream – matter.

The universe is therefore a phenomenon in or of consciousness and the perception of the whole manifested universe in its infinite state of subtlety right down to the physical is the result of the involution of consciousness not as matter nor in matter but the appearance of matter. A phenomenon of pure consciousness. The crossover is to do with prana – the vital force which can be understood as a compound substance at the subjective-objective interface enabling mind and matter to affect each other.

This talk is available in *Recordings* of the London Group page of the SMN website.



■ FEBRUARY

This month we heard Dr. SIMON DUAN who entitled his talk *Parallel Universes: Can we Model them Theoretically and explore them Experimentally?* Simon came from China to the UK to study in the '80s. After receiving a PhD in Materials Science from Cambridge University, he worked for many years in research and development,

technology commercialisation and management consultancy in both the UK and China. He works for the UK Government Department for International Trade as Sector specialist for Advanced Manufacturing sector trade relationship with China. In normal times he goes to China regularly to build collaboration and help UK companies to develop their China market. Simon is also the founder of Metacomputics Labs which researches a new theoretical framework which unifies consciousness, mind and matter. This evening he expanded on the model he developed and the research which he is undertaking to develop innovative healing and healthcare, learning and personal development, new materials and processes, clean energy generation and artificial intelligence.

Simon started talking about the framework of parallel universes which is proposed by quantum theory. In conventional science mathematics is used to predict this model, but the model remains theoretical without description and therefore unverifiable. He explained how in history humans have used the lens of the current technology as metaphor for understanding the world in which they live. The clock was once used as the framework of understanding, so was electricity and now it is the turn of computers. Metacomputics proposes that a Platonic computer exists which creates the framework for reality. The idea that we live in a computerised reality has long been a consideration, Konrad Zuse first proposed that the entire universe is computed in 1969. The film *Matrix* develops the idea of such a reality. The question however emerges, where is this computer, who built it? What are its properties? Who is the programmer?

The principle is the understanding that consciousness is primary and the computation aspect is binary, as we know from our experience with computers. The switch which inputs 0 or 1s is information or states of consciousness. The implication of consciousness as primary is that we cannot describe, define or explain it.

We can only talk about it in negative terms – what it is not: Nondual, timeless, dimensionless, formless etc. Time and space arise from consciousness in the multiverse.

The model proposed by Metacomputics suggests that our physical reality is experienced in one universe, but there are a number of parallel universes manifesting different aspects of reality. Physics becomes a subset of the metacomputics model in this Platonic computer, so it cannot be the tool for understanding the nature of reality. Different universes operate in different frequencies and we humans, live in a state of superposition in different universes.

The instrument for exploring parallel universes is the third eye, a concept which has its roots in many spiritual traditions. This third eye is widely accessed by children. Simon showed us examples of how children are trained to use this third eye in psychic schools in China. Mediums are also able to access those levels. The implication of this model is that we need to look at and understand ourselves at all levels rather than just the physical.

This talk is available in *Recordings* of the London Group page of the SMN website.



■ MARCH

This month we had the pleasure of listening to Dr. IAIN MCGILCHRIST, the author of the SMN Book Prize of 2009 *The Master and his Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* (Yale 2009). Iain's subject for his presentation was **How Compatible are Science and Religion?** The popular reply

to this question in our times tends to be that religion and science are not compatible. As evidence, Iain quoted the book *Faith versus Facts* by biologist Jerry Coyne. The title of the book says it all.

Exploring the theme, Iain looked at faith and belief, concepts that are central aspects in this discussion. Unlike what is often assumed, faith is not about certainty – it is about fidelity and allegiance. The relationship with the object of faith is therefore very different from that of science which uses observation to explore its objects.

Both science and religion explore reality but neither approach can give us certainty. The only things we can be certain about are representations of reality, not reality itself. How do we know anything? How do we know who we are, what the cosmos is etc and how do we know how to relate to it? There are many ways of knowing and understanding but none can offer us certainty. For example, the atheists' case that the only truth that we should accept are those based on scientific or empirical basis does not itself have a scientific or empirical basis. Even the idea of objectively verifiable belief is not itself an objectively verifiable belief.

Belief is not about certainty but a special way of knowing. The word is related to the word love in many languages and the concept is about an encounter in which something comes into being between you and the thing encountered. It is about disposition, which changes who we are. It is about awe, humility and compassion. Although reason is important there are things that are not approachable through reason. In order to know we must have a connection with the object we want to know about.

Iain went on to use the lens he developed in his book *The Master and his Emissary*. Although the left hemisphere's kind of knowledge is important, more important, however,

is the right hemisphere's approach with its acceptance of the unfamiliar, ambiguity and the vision of the bigger picture. It is through the right hemisphere approach to its object of exploration that science elicits insights which are then explored by the left hemisphere.

Religion deals with everything that is beyond certainty, beyond language, beyond measurement, beyond truth. This is the remit of myth, metaphor or narrative so used by religion. Yet metaphors and narratives are also used by science. Metaphors bring things to the foreground. Without metaphors we cannot talk, produce, debate. When we reject metaphors for the world based on living things rivers, trees, mountains, and replace them with ones that are machine-like, the world we see takes on the nature of machines. As Einstein said 'you can only observe what your theory allows you to observe'.

Summing up, the right hemisphere is much better at accepting mystery and the unknown. It does not need to choose, it can accept either/or. It is fundamental to both religion and science. It accepts process as something coming into being and sees the importance of relationships and connections. I-thou relationships rather than I-it. It is better at accepting not-knowing. We heard that of Nobel prize winners – 35% in literature are atheist/agnostic whereas for physicists it is less than 5%. Most physicists are God-prone people.

Addressing the question – are science and religion compatible? Iain showed the answer to be unquestionably yes. As for an explanation of the current belief that they are not, we heard that science only came into being in late 19th C at a time when there was a war being waged against religion. That war was fed by ignorance and untruths which seem still to be with us. The theme is being explored more fully in Iain's next book *The Matter with Things*, due to be published this year.

This talk is available in *Recordings* of the London Group page of the SMN website.



■ APRIL

In April DAN FALK spoke to us about *The Enigma of Time*. Dan is an award-winning science journalist based in Toronto, Canada. His writing credits include Scientific American, New Scientist, Smithsonian, National Geographic, and many other publications.

He's written three popular science books, most recently *The Science of Shakespeare*. He started off by explaining that the subject of time is multifaceted. Man has observed and been influenced by the cycles of nature from time immemorial. Our ancestors created structures such as Stonehenge which are finely designed to reveal an alignment with the solstice, perhaps in an effort to keep track of the seasons. Sun dials were created to keep track of time during the day (provided the sun is shining) and later mechanical clocks were invented which were not dependent on weather and therefore more accurate.

It is difficult and probably impossible to understand what time is, but scientists and philosophers have studied what time does. Isaac Newton for instance determined that time flows uniformly. His contemporary Leibniz, however, disagreed and argued that events can only be described in relation to other events. The most important question at the time was whether time existed before God created the universe. For Newton the answer was yes, whereas Leibniz thought that this statement does not make sense. God created time together with the universe. But Newton's idea became the accepted truth. It was only with Einstein that the question of time came to be understood as relative. There is no ticktock in the universe, which can be considered the universal now.

The nature of time has exercised the minds of numerous scientists. So far, no definite answer has emerged. These questions spiral towards ideas of parallel universes which have some support based on the quantum M theory.

Dan also addressed the question of time travel. Travelling into the future is a possibility if the travel is far and fast enough. Into the past is more problematic. He mentioned the grandfather conundrum, which points out that if a person travels to the past and kills his grandfather, s/he would not exist. He also brought up more philosophical aspects of the enigma of time. Does time flow like a river? In which case, at what rate does it flow? And what happens if it stops flowing? Dan did not offer any answers, but the questions posed were interesting and gave rise to fascinating comments from the audience.

This talk is available in *Recordings* of the London Group page of the SMN website.

ONLINE ARTICLES BY ANTHONY JUDGE

■ ***Licensed to Live? Licensed to Lie? Unlicensed to Die?***

Implications of universal vaccination -- voluntary or otherwise
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/license.php>

■ ***Cognitive Encryption enabling Collapse of Civilization***

Drowned by the undertow of pseudophilia
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/encrypt.php>

■ ***Controls and Guinea Pigs in the Pandemic Experiment***

Celebrating the sacrifice of the vaccine refuseniks
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/controls.php>

■ ***Transcending Psychosocial Polarization with Tensegrity***

Biomimetic clues to collective resilience and unshackling knowledge
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/tenspsyc.php>

MEMBERS' ARTICLES AND ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Available through links or from dl@scimednet.org

SCIENCE

Jan Christian Smuts, OM, FRS

- *The Scientific World-Picture of Today (Fascinating 1931 Presidential Address to the British Association, 10 pp.)*

Bill Bengston, Margaret Nies, Ted den Ouden, Coen van Veenendaal

- *A Replication of a Clinical Social Experiment of Device-Infused Resonant Water (7 pp.)*

CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

Bruce Greyson

- *What do near-death experiences mean, and why do they fascinate us? (Guardian article on Bruce's new book, 7 pp.)*

Marjorie Woollacott et al

- *Perceptual phenomena associated with spontaneous experiences of after-death communication: Analysis of visual, tactile, auditory and olfactory sensations (10 pp., from Explore and deriving from our study of after-death communications led by Evelyn Elsaesser and Chris Roe)*

Lorna Green PhD

- *This New Principle, Consciousness (a major statement in two parts – 49 pp.)*

Rupert Sheldrake

- *Is the Sun Conscious? (21 pp. from Journal of Consciousness Studies)*

Shanna Dobson and Robert Prentner

- *Perfectoid Diamonds and n-Awareness. A Meta-Model of Subjective Experience (42 pp.)*

AK Mukhopadhyaya

- *Science of Information (18 pp. from Global Journal of Science Frontier Research)*

John Kapp

- *What is a) the Mechanism by which the Brain Filters Consciousness? and b) What Experiments can prove this Theory? (3 pp.)*

MEDICINE-HEALTH

Multiple Authors

- *The SPARS Pandemic, 2025-2028 – A Futuristic Health Scenario for Public Health Risk Communicators, 89 pp. from Johns Hopkins Center*

for Health Security) <https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/our-work/publications/the-spars-pandemic-2025-2028-a-futuristic-scenario-to-facilitate-medical-countermeasure-communication>

Multiple Authors

- *HART Covid-19 Response (57 pp. expert report on the research showing that lockdowns serve no useful purpose – www.hartgroup.org)*

Multiple Authors

- *Crimson Contagion 2019 Functional Exercise Key Findings [on a prospective pandemic] (63 pp. and see New York Times Article <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/19/us/politics/trump-coronavirus-outbreak.html>)*

Timothy Cardozo and Ronald Veazey

- *Informed consent disclosure to vaccine trial subjects of risk of COVID-19 vaccines worsening clinical disease (peer-reviewed, 10 pp. - doi:10.1111/ijcp.13795)*

J. Bart Classen, MD

- *COVID-19 RNA Based Vaccines and the Risk of Prion Disease (3 pp. from Microbiology and Infectious Diseases)*

- *Open Letter from UK Medical Freedom Alliance – www.ukmedfreedom.org Urgent warning re Covid-19 vaccine-related deaths in the elderly and Care Homes (10 pp. and there is another file with analytical graphs and a further database of scores of articles documenting adverse effects; also a 31 page letter appeal from United Health Professionals - <https://taverna.arrembaggio.eu/international-alert-message-about-covid-19-united-health-professionals/4268>)*

Zhi Gang Sha and Rulin Xiu

- *Information Mechanics: The Dynamics of "It from Bit" (from Global Journal of Science Frontier Research: A Physics and Space Science, Volume 20 Issue 14 Version 1.0 Year 2020, 9 pp.) https://globaljournals.org/GJSFR_Volume20/3-Information-Mechanics-The-Dynamics.pdf*

Lauri Nummenmaa, Enrico Glereana, Riitta Harib, and Jari K. Hietanend

- *Bodily Maps of Emotions (6 pp.)*

Bob Charman

- *Mysteries of Healing (ed Gayle Kimball) Review (8 pp.) and other Volume Mysteries of Knowledge beyond our Senses (10 pp., both from SPR journal)*

PHILOSOPHY-SPIRITUALITY

James Carleton Paget and Benedict Rattigan (eds)

- *Schweitzer Institute Journal (152 pp. – some fascinating articles)*

Larry Culliford

- *Philosophy and Psychology Engaged: The Sincere, Practical, Timely and Felicitous Proposal of a Highly Suitable Marriage (23 pp., from Philosophies)*

Lindy McMullin PhD

- *Preface to The Application of Greek Myth and Music in Personal, Professional and Transpersonal Development (8 pp.)*

Serge Beddington-Behrens, MA (Oxon), Ph.D

- *Embracing the American Shadow (23 pp.) – www.sergebb.com*

GENERAL

Prof Paul Ehrlich

- *Ghastly Future – A Survival Revolution in Response (13 pp. with response – see Omega Institute)*

Nicholas Maxwell

- *How Universities Have Betrayed Reason and Humanity—And What's to Be Done About It (11 pp. from Frontiers in Sustainability)*

Dr Brian Martin

- *Policing orthodoxy on Wikipedia: Skeptics in action? (15 pp. from JCOM)*

Dr David Cardill

- *Links to articles on Mass Extinction (2 pp.)*

John Reed

- *Letter to a Millennial*
- *New York Times Interactive Article on Ocean Currents and Climate Change <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/03/02/climate/atlantic-ocean-climate-change.html?smid=em-share> (13 pp.)*

NEWS AND NOTICES

Journal of Anomalous Experience and Cognition

The *Journal of Anomalous Experience and Cognition (JAEX)* provides a forum for the rigorous, multidisciplinary study of anomalous experience and cognition. Anomalous experience is a term that includes unusual but not necessarily pathological experiences, such as mystical experiences, out-of-body experiences, and others. They can be spontaneous or induced and have life-changing effects. Anomalous cognition refers to research evaluating whether organisms are affected by spatially or temporally distant stimuli, unmediated by the senses or reason (aka “ESP”), and whether intentions directly affect physical systems (aka “PK”), including attitudes, beliefs, and other variables related to such claims.

Niche journals cover some of these areas but there is no journal in which scholars can get a sense of the links across them or their implications. *JAEX* does not take an a-priori stance for or against anomalous cognition and welcomes quality papers regardless of the authors’ stance. Contributions from any related discipline, including the humanities, are welcome.

More information about the journal at <https://journals.lub.lu.se/jaex/about>, and about paper criteria and formatting at <https://journals.lub.lu.se/jaex/about/submissions>, where you can also register and submit your paper. Any questions or problems contact the Editor-in-Chief, Etzel Cardena, Ph. D., Thorsen Professor in Psychology, at etzel.cardena@psy.lu.se

Health and Wellbeing Trust Launches Online E-Learning

Dr Rosy Daniel has just launched her new online e-learning modules at <https://healthelearningl.online> where you can find a range of options under various headings. The Trust provides

- Home study modules for doctors, nurses and health care professionals
- CPD Credits to meet your vocational training needs
- Sustainable natural healthcare solutions for the 21st century
- A Health-e-Learning platform with the world’s best teachers
- A Health-e-Information platform with the most current news and evidence
- A Resource Directory of natural healthcare organisations
- A Learning community of like-minded people

Rosy writes: “never has the need been greater for healthcare professionals to learn about low cost, evidence based natural therapies and self-help approaches, to help empower individuals in responsible self-care and decrease the strain on the NHS. It is vital that we all work together to regenerate our health – not just to survive, but to thrive!”

Education as if People and Planet Matter

Essay Competition, celebrating the 30th Anniversary of Schumacher College

In collaboration with Resurgence & Ecologist magazine

First Prize £5,000, Second Prize £2,000, Third Prize £1,000. Closing date July 1

Schumacher College, in partnership Resurgence & Ecologist magazine, has launched a major new essay competition on the topic of ‘Education as if People and Planet Matter’. Schumacher College has been a model of holistic, future-fit education for the last 30 years; Resurgence & Ecologist recently celebrated 50 years of inspirational leadership in this space. Satish Kumar, the co-Founder of Schumacher College and Editor Emeritus of Resurgence & Ecologist magazine, is the Coordinator of the Competition. He says:

‘Education is an integral part of transformation from the present paradigm of unsustainable economic growth to a new paradigm of ecological integrity. This essay competition will surely generate ideas which can inform the way forward to renew the educational system appropriate for the new challenges of our time.’

Details: <https://www.dartington.org/about/learning/30-years-of-schumacher/essay-competition/>

Immunity Institute (www.immunityinstitute.org)

The aim of the Immunity Institute is to provide a free and trusted information source about the vital importance and role of our natural immune system in defending against serious infection.

The advent of the new and unusually virulent pathogen, Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 demands a much wider understanding of ‘natural immunity’, the result of 500 Million years of evolution, than currently pertains. It is critically dependent on systemic reserves of metabolised Vitamin D.

Initially, the Institute will focus on: ‘natural immunity’; the role of Vitamin D (which is much more than a ‘pre-hormone’); the role of vaccines in immunity; and the potential role of mRNA medicine technology. The Trustees of the Institute have no commercial interest whatsoever in any of the topics to be covered and provide their time, knowledge and expertise ‘pro-bono’.



book reviews

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SCIENCE-PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

A QUANTUM POLYMATH, A LEIBNIZ OF OUR TIMES

Vasileios Basios PhD, (physics of complex systems)

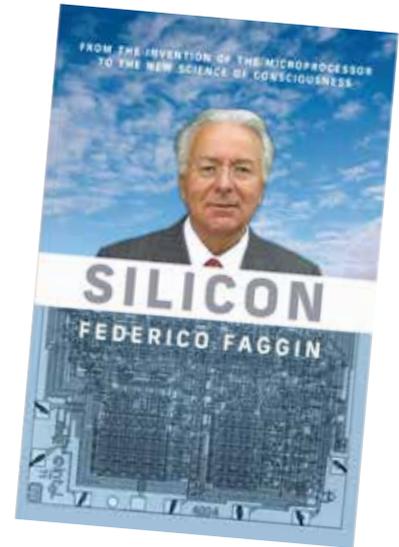
■ SILICON: FROM THE INVENTION OF THE MICROPROCESSOR TO THE NEW SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Federico Faggin –
www.siliconthebook.com

Waterside Productions, 2021,
304 pp., \$16.95, p/b – ISBN
978-1-949003-41-3

This seminal work is primarily about consciousness and the emerging science of consciousness. It is a major contribution towards the advent of this new *kind* of science that breaks fertile ground not only for new developments in research and theoretical advances but also in the way we think about science per se. This book opens the path towards an interdisciplinary, self-reflecting science of consciousness weaving together the author's self-examination with his reflections on the nature of information and meaning. It is seminal in pointing towards the necessary breakthroughs in our conceptual frameworks.

While the book can be pleasantly read as an autobiography of Federico Faggin it can also be studied, deeply, as a treatise on the foundations and study of consciousness. With engaging narrative, he talks about his many lives, four in total. As his four lives unfold we follow him as an aspiring student during post-war Italy; as a pioneering engineer achieving the 'Silicon-Valley dream' and fame during the earliest days of the computer industry; then becoming one of the major global players in high-tech entrepreneurship; and finally as an enlightened polymath after his sudden inner transformation.



Of course, Federico would never describe himself as enlightened or a polymath – it comes naturally to the reader to be thinking of him on a first name basis because his autobiography reads more like a confession to a friend rather than a report on his recollections and achievements. What reveals these personal qualities are the many anecdotes, quotes and rare references with which this book is sprinkled. What shows his spiritual enlightenment is the quality of the description of his inner transformative experience. Honest and brilliant as a lightning flash.

The reader will find also high drama in the author's lively account of the titanic classes of high-tech giant corporations, of the likes of 'Intel', 'Olivetti', 'IBM', 'Apple' etc. There is even a surprise appearance of 'Exxon' among them. The author experienced first-hand the struggles for domination of silicon-based information technologies and their vast market. In this war financial titans were involved along with valiant start-ups whose victories disturbed the peace of the billionaires. That was during Federico's 'third life', his ascent as the 'father of the first commercial microprocessor' and as the inventor of its unique process architecture which became the basis of all modern integrated circuits. All of them, like the ones running right now on your PC, tablet or smart-phone from where, most probably, you are reading these lines.

Thrilling and wonderful stories as they are, supported by brilliant apprentices where the erudition of the writer becomes evident through amazingly interesting details, these serve as a prelude to the main theme: consciousness and its study.

Knowing more than any other what a computer is and is not, Federico engages in a *tour de force* to demonstrate why intelligence and consciousness cannot be reduced to the workings of electronic circuits and machines. The reader will find one of the most accurate, interesting and clear arguments 'contra transhumanism' and why it is impossible to equate human intelligence, or living awareness, with artificial intelligence.

The author's thirty-plus years of investigations on the nature of consciousness led him to a point of sudden illumination, a 'satori', an inner transformative experience reminiscent of the ones on which the 'Perennial Philosophy' is based. He seems at home discussing this perennial wisdom, due his childhood studies of Plotinus and the classics. He is equally at home discussing top-notch models of quantum mechanics and quantum information, being a pure physicist at heart.

The reader will find the discussion of quantum physics as information theory extremely educational and enlightening. This work, the major part of his 'fourth life' chapter, is further presented in the appendices in a very concise, engaging exposition that it is easy and fun to follow. At present, he is continuing to develop, with Prof. D'Ariano and his team, the pioneering work presented here. It is simply imperative for any student of the 'hard-problem' or the 'quantum-mind' be they physicists, mathematicians or other interested of quantum information to read and follow this promising approach. Moreover, we are very fortunate that Federico features in a number of interviews and presentations available in various channels (e.g. on YouTube).

In order to achieve the introduction of an 'inside', the inner semantic reality of experiences or 'qualia', and integrate this inner-reality with the outer, symbolic or physical-reality, via information Federico introduces what he calls 'Conscious Units' (CU) within the 'overall conceptual structure the 'CIP Framework', where C stands for consciousness space, I stands for informational space, and P stands for physical space. This echoes Alfred North Whitehead's "prehensions" (instances of pre-awareness) but actually his CUs have much deeper roots. They are the heritage of the Monads of the Pythagorean-Gnostics via Nicholas of Cusa, Giordano Bruno and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in our post-quantum era. Federico is proposing a quantum-

information version of such monads, a daring, long-awaited, step to herald the new Science of Consciousness cognisant of self-reflection.

The next daring step that I think and hope the 'Galileo Commission' researchers will take in this direction, is to link Federico's CUs and CIP-fields with certain unanswered questions from mind-matter interaction data such as those amply provided by the old PEAR lab (now ICRL) and the 'Global Consciousness Project'. As far as I know only Federico Faggin and Stuart Kauffman have the intellectual prowess to cite this body of research in their peer-reviewed academic publications when discussing mathematical models of consciousness.

Here is a particularly lovely and inspiring passage from the book: "...[The] One knows all manifestations from the inside and is also what connects all from the inside. One is the creative interiority of all that exists, partaking in the experience of every entity. What matters to One is the self-knowing gained by the hierarchy of communicating CUs ..." overarching this passage is a quote attributed to Giordano Bruno, "A single force, Love, links and gives life to infinite worlds". Very appropriately the author subtly reminds us that the One is Love, after all.

This book is a treasure, a joy to read, seminal and inspiring. Because in the midst and the mist of current Science of Consciousness studies Federico puts firmly the values of Self-Reflection as its 'sine qua non' foundational stone. And as Emilios Bouratinos maintained: "Socrates used to say that a life without self-reflection is not worth having. Indeed, we can paraphrase him as follows: A science of consciousness without self-reflection is not worth having". Then, definitely the Science of Consciousness that Federico is putting forth is indeed worth having, indeed it is a blessing.

THEORY OF BIOCENTRISM

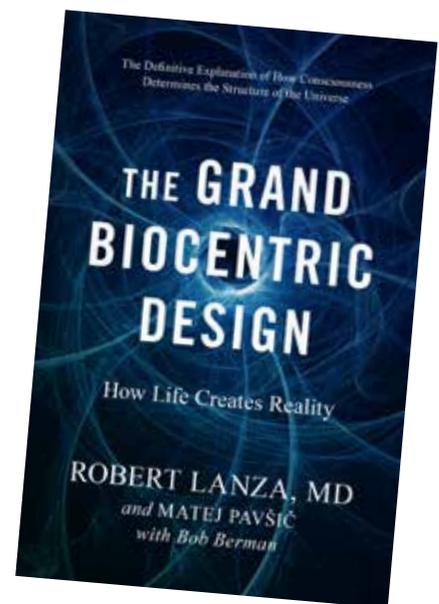
Marko Pavliha

THE GRAND BIOCENTRIC DESIGN: HOW LIFE CREATES REALITY

Robert Lanza and Matej Pavšič with Bob Berman

BenBella Books, 2020, 289 pp., \$26.95, h/b – ISBN 978-1-950665-40-2

This is another brilliant book written by American biologist and geneticist Dr. Robert Lanza, now joined by Slovenian theoretical physicist Dr. Matej Pavšič and



American astronomer Bob Berman. Robert Lanza, MD is one of the most respected scientists in the world. He is head of Astellas Global Regenerative Medicine, Chief Scientific Officer of the Astellas Institute for Regenerative Medicine, and adjunct professor at Wake Forest School of Medicine. He is credited with several hundred publications and inventions, and more than 30 scientific books, including *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe* (BenBella, 2010) and *Beyond Biocentrism: Rethinking Time, Space, Consciousness, and the Illusion of Death* (Ben Bella, 2016). Pavšič is a physicist interested in foundations of theoretical physics. During his more than 40 years of research at the Jožef Stefan Institute in Ljubljana, Slovenia (European Union), he often investigated subjects that were not currently of wide interest, but later became hot topics. He authored more than 100 scientific papers and the books *The Landscape of Theoretical Physics* (Kluwer, 2001) and *Stumbling Blocks Against Unification* (World Scientific, 2020). Berman is the longtime science editor of the *Old Farmer's Almanac* and contributing editor of *Astronomy* magazine, formerly with *Discover* from 1989 to 2006. He taught physics and astronomy at New York's Marymount Manhattan College in the 1990s and is the author of eight popular books, including *Zoom: How Everything Moves* (Little Brown, 2014).

Does matter exist separately from consciousness? *What is consciousness?* Could we choose a different reality? Do we have free will? Is there an ultimate reality? Does consciousness end with death? *Why are we here?* *Where did it all come from, what are the laws of nature, the stars, the*

universe? Humans have been asking these questions forever, but the predominantly materialist science has not succeeded in providing sufficiently convincing answers. This book is adding another provocative question with bold postmaterialist answers, namely **what if life is not just a part of the universe, what if it determines the very structure of the universe itself, what if life creates reality?** *It provides a ground-breaking explanation of how the universe works, and an exploration of the science behind the astounding fact that time, space, and reality itself, all ultimately depend upon us. As Lanza bluntly declares in the book's introduction, "Life is not a product of the universe but the other way around."*

The book comprises of 16 chapters, 3 appendixes, list of further reading, acknowledgments, short biographies of the authors and index. The gist is explained by 11 principles of biocentrism, which are worth mentioning almost verbatim:

1. What we perceive as reality is a process that involves our consciousness.
2. Our external and internal perceptions are inextricably intertwined. They are different sides of the same coin and cannot be divorced from one another.
3. The behaviour of subatomic particles – indeed all particles and objects – is inextricably linked to the presence of an observer. Without the presence of a conscious observer, they at best exist in an undetermined state of probability waves.
4. Without consciousness, "matter" dwells in an undetermined state of probability. Any universe that could have preceded consciousness only existed in a probability state.
5. The structure of the universe is explainable only through biocentrism. The universe is fine-tuned for life, which makes perfect sense as life creates the universe, not the other way around. The "universe" is simply the complete spatiotemporal logic of the self.
6. Time does not have a real existence outside of animal-sense perception. It is the process by which we perceive changes in the universe.
7. Space, like time, is not an object or a thing. Space is another form of our animal understanding and does not have an independent reality. We carry space and time around with us like turtles with shells. Thus, there is no absolute self-existing matrix in which physical events occur independently of life.

8. Biocentrism offers the only explanation of how the mind is unified with matter and the world by showing how modulation of ion dynamics in the brain at the quantum level allows all parts of the information system that we associate with consciousness to be simultaneously interconnected.

9. There are several basic relationships ("forces") that the mind uses to construct reality. They have their roots in the logic of how the various components of the information system interact with each other to create the 3-D experience we call consciousness or reality.

10. The two pillars of physics - quantum mechanics and general relativity – can only be reconciled by taking observers (us) into account.

11. Observers ultimately define the structure of physical reality – of states of matter and spacetime – even if there is a "real world out there" beyond us, whether one of fields, quantum foam, or some other entity.

The authors explain, *inter alia*, what consciousness *is* (the state of being aware, of perceiving things, of having feelings, of wakefulness, of possessing experience) and also how it *works* (modulation of ion dynamics in the brain at the quantum level). However, they admit that its ultimate origin is "largely a nonstarter", because consciousness encompasses all of reality (the two are essentially synonyms), so the question amounts to wanting to know the origin of everything which remains to be the key "unsolved mystery."

I fully agree with Deepak Chopra, MD (see his review at <https://www.deepakchopra.com>, November 8, 2020), that this book offers "a wealth of evidence in support of the notion that everything in existence is consciousness modifying itself", and its "two-pronged approach, calling upon both biology and physics, is one of its strengths and also one of its most unique points", because if these two branches of science "can't be unified in a single theory, biocentrism won't satisfy either biologists or physicists." As a lawyer by profession and a passionate nonmaterialist I can agree without hesitation that despite of its difficult substance, the book is accessible, engaging, and an excellent read, thus it is not difficult to concur with Chopra's concluding statement which needs no further comment:

"No one has gone further, or more convincingly, than Lanza and Pavšič do here. If it ever becomes accepted wisdom that 'the universe as mind' is true, *The Grand Biocentric Design* will be looked upon as a significant milestone along the way."

Marko Pavliha studied law in Ljubljana (Slovenia), Split (Croatia) and Montreal (Canada) at McGill Faculty of Law where he obtained his doctorate. He has been Full Professor of Law at the University of Ljubljana since 2004 and also taught law in Belgium, Luxemburg and Australia. He was invited to the Slovenian Government as Minister of Transport in 2004. Later he was elected as Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Slovenia (2004-2007). His active membership of the Galileo Commission in the past few years has resulted in his new book *Beyond Materialistic Beliefs: Spiritual Awakenings (GV Založba, 2021) which is for the time being available in Slovenian language only.*

IMAGINATION SEEKING DISCOVERY

David Lorimer

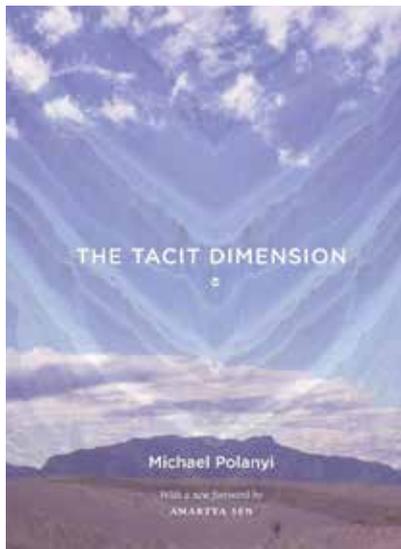
■ THE TACIT DIMENSION

Michael Polanyi, foreword by Amartya Sen FBA

University of Chicago Press, 2009 (1966), 108 pp., \$18, p/b – ISBN 978-0-226-67298-4

Professor Michael Polanyi FRS (1891-1976) was a tutor of leading Network Member Max Payne when he was studying chemistry at Manchester University before pursuing postgraduate studies at Oxford during the time of Gilbert Ryle. His admiration for the former was equalled only by his withering criticism of the latter. Polanyi moved his chair from physical chemistry to social studies in 1948, and gave a famous series of Gifford Lectures published as *Personal Knowledge*. This short book was one of his last and extends the argument of earlier work that 'we can know more than we can tell': we cannot depersonalise knowledge since the act of knowing is personal, a point often ignored or neglected in research science. Sen notes that thought can live only on grounds which we adopt in the service of a [cultural] reality to which we submit. The three lectures originally given at Yale are entitled *Tacit Knowing, Emergence and A Society of Explorers*.

Polanyi observes that the mechanistic conception 'denied altogether any intrinsic power to thought and thus denied also any grounds for claiming freedom of thought.' Understanding and interpretation necessarily shape and integrate through a tacit power. He gives as an interesting example of some work on what was then called 'subception', which is effectively equivalent to the later (subliminal)



anticipatory response in experiments by Radin and Bem. As George Lakoff also argues, 'our body is the ultimate instrument of all our external knowledge.' We never experience our own body as an object, 'but experience always in terms of the world to which we are attending from our body.' Experientially, we incorporate things in our body – 'or extend our body to include it - so that we come to dwell in it.' Hence, we attend *from* our body (*proximal*) and perceptual capacity to what we are perceiving (*distal*) as a phenomenal structure, which in turn creates the functional structure of tacit knowing. How we interpret this is the *semantic* aspect of tacit knowing. It is tacit knowing that 'establishes a meaningful relationship between two terms' that gives rise to understanding of the comprehensive entity, which Polanyi called the *ontological* aspect of tacit knowing.

The key concept here is indwelling, 'or empathy, is the proper means of knowing man and the humanities.' Crucially, indwelling or interiorisation (*credo ut intelligam* in theological terms) also applies to theories: 'to rely on a theory for understanding nature is to interiorise it. For we are attending from the theory to things seen in its light...' (p. 17) In this way, the vast majority of neuroscientists, philosophers and psychologists attend *from* the theory that the brain produces consciousness, which makes it impossible to accommodate phenomena that seem to contradict this assumption, especially since they are seeking an overall consilience of knowledge within scientific materialism. However, the very notion of objectivity is arrived at through interpersonal means.

As Goethe also intimated, 'if tacit thought forms an indispensable part of all knowledge, then the idea of eliminating all personal elements of

knowledge would, in effect, aim at the destruction of all knowledge' – so strictly detached, objective knowledge is impossible: 'the process of formalising all knowledge to the exclusion of any tacit knowing is self-defeating.' Theories have to function within an act of tacit knowing, 'which consists in our attending *from* it to the previously established experience on which it bears.' This process is very similar to what William James called 'apperception', which is how we accommodate new findings into our existing intellectual structures. Applied to science, research begins with a good and original problem, an intimation of something hidden, 'the coherence of hitherto not comprehended particulars' that may yet be discovered and of which we can have no explicit knowledge – only a hunch: 'we are guided by sensing the presence of a hidden reality towards which our clues are pointing.' (p. 24) This act of commitment cannot be formalised and it points to the failure of logical positivism in philosophy of science, as also argued by R.G. Collingwood in his *Essay on Metaphysics*.

Polanyi's chapter on emergence must have been pioneering at the time. His overall picture is one of a 'strata of realities' controlled by distinctive principles, as in systems theory. He gives the example of a speech where there are five levels – voice, words, sentences, style and literary composition governed respectively by phonetics, lexicography, grammar, stylistics and literary criticism, forming a hierarchy of comprehensive entities where the principles of each level operate under the control of the next higher level. He then applies this to sentience and the notion that life can be explained by laws governing inanimate matter: 'the laws of physics and chemistry include *no conception of sentience* and any system *wholly determined by these laws must be insentient.*' (my emphasis, p. 37)

Biologists try to explain the phenomenon of life in terms of 'machinery based on the laws of physics and chemistry which 'include no knowledge of the operational principles of machines' (!) Since boundary conditions are left open, this leaves scope for emergence. And living functions require a 'combination of a mechanism with organismic regulation.' Applied to organisms, 'each higher principle controls the boundary left indeterminate by the next lower principle.' (p. 49) He then moves on to evolution and 'its misrepresentation as a process of continued selective improvement' that loses sight of the more fundamental question of how any single individual of a higher species ever came into existence.

'A Society of Explorers' refers to the scientific community instantiating the modern mind that emerged from a fusion of scientific scepticism with a passion for moral progress/perfectionism – and for challenging authority as in the *Nullius in Verba* – don't take anyone's word for it – the motto of the Royal Society) This clears the way for political freedom and humanitarian reforms, although we are currently seeing widespread appeal to scientific authority and suppression of dissidents, as there is a political and social authority/power structure within the sciences as well as in society as a whole. Polanyi points out that acceptance of scientific statements by laymen is based authority. And when it comes to journal submissions, 'only offerings deemed sufficiently plausible are accepted' – though what is considered plausible is tacit and related to prevailing presuppositions.

Max Planck is a good example of the tacit process involved in a radically novel discovery, and his idea was so strange that it took 11 years to gain final acceptance by leading physicists – this was an example of creative dissent where he pursued something as yet undisclosed or formulated, leading to a deeper understanding of reality. He intuited a new approach, which illustrates Polanyi's contention that 'since a problem can be known only tacitly, our knowledge of it can be recognised as valid only by accepting the validity of tacit knowing... herein lies the importance of establishing the validity of tacit knowing.' This point has been restated by Iain McGilchrist in his astute discussion of the role of the right hemisphere in the creative process. Polanyi characterises the scientific ecosystem as one of mutual control: 'each scientist is both subject to criticism by all others and encouraged by their appreciation of him... this is how scientific opinion is formed and leads to a 'mediated consensus' and co-ordination whereby science is steadily reshaped yet its coherence maintained within what Kuhn would call 'normal science.' These essays are a timely reminder that knowledge is intrinsically personal and understanding intuitive, a position consistent with positing consciousness as fundamental.

A LONG AND WINDY ROAD

Gunnel Minnett

THE IDEA OF THE BRAIN, A HISTORY

Matthew Cobb

Profile Books, 2020, 469 pp., £30, h/b, illustrated - ISBN 9 781781 255896

Throughout human history human beings have tried to understand the role of the brain and/or how it enables us experience the world the way we do. Even today we have to conclude that these attempts have been merely 'speculations': despite having accumulated a lot of knowledge, we still can't say that we've got a comprehensive explanation as to how the brain works.

In this book Matthew Cobb (Professor of Zoology at University of Manchester and producer of science programmes for the BBC in cooperation with Sir David Attenborough) presents a carefully constructed chronology of neuroscience to explain why we still have such a long way to go.

As Cobb explains, this search for a complete understanding has always been linked with culture, technology and the freedom to carry out research on the human body. Early on the most popular theories focused on the heart being the 'brain' of the body. The actual brain in the skull was seen as an instrument controlled by the heart, with the blood playing an important role. (We still have expressions that reflect this period such as "making the blood boil" to illustrate strong emotional reactions.) The heart theory was gradually replaced by a better understanding of the role of the brain (in the skull).

Another major milestone in this quest was when religion started to permit dissection of the human body. That, together with advances in technology, made brain studies more accurate. The various stages of this journey can be illustrated by technological metaphors: for example, the brain was compared to the telegraph, when it represented the pinnacle of technological advance. Later the technological metaphor changed to the telephone switch board, and then the computer, implying that the brain was a 'bio-computer'.

As Cobb points out, the consequences of brain research can be found in many areas. For instance, during a period when brain chemistry was the thing to study, there was a trend in psychiatry towards medication for psychological problems. Even though the prescription of psychoactive drugs is still widespread, this practice seems to have reached its peak (fortunately, some may argue). One explanation is simply that more recent brain research has failed to find an evidence base for this type of treatment. This may eventually lead to major changes in the treatment of psychological problems. However, pills are a very cost-effective way of treating patients whereas alternative therapies are both much more expensive and time consuming.

It's instructive to look back at the history of brain research, with the benefits of hindsight: how often have we assumed that science has got it completely right, only to be presented with a new theory emerging thanks to technological advancement. This frequently involved re-interpreting earlier findings in a new light. (Something, which has characterised the ongoing Covid pandemic).

This theme of re-interpretation runs throughout the book, which is divided into; 'Past', 'Present' and 'Future' sections. The 'Past' section focuses mainly on the physical role of the brain and how its various functions were discovered and interpreted. In the 'Present' section the theories start to include more of the psychological aspects of brain functions, and at the end of this section, emotions start to come in to the picture, together with attempts to understand consciousness.

Another common theme of brain research has been the attempt to try to understand the large and complex human brain by studying the smaller and simpler brains of animals. However, even the simplest and most limited brains, such as though in larvae and sea crustaceans, have been found to be too complex to be properly mapped and understood.

The 'Future' section, which ends the book, reaches an interesting and perhaps somewhat unexpected conclusion: it states, with some certainty, that the main lesson we've learned about the brain is that we still really don't know enough! The more we try to understand the different brain functions the more we arrive at the conclusion that 'this is not the answer', reflecting the ancient Sanskrit expression found in one of the world's oldest scriptures, *the Upanishads*; 'neti, neti' (meaning not this, not that). Repeating this expression is designed to help a person to understand the nature of the *Atman* (Self or soul) by negating everything that is not *Atman*. As Cobb points out, so far this seems to be point which brain research has reached: the more that the brain is investigated, the more we can conclude that our current understanding still amounts to; 'not this, not that'.

A further theme of the book is the divide between the various academic disciplines. Cobb presents the book from a neuroscientific perspective which to some extent excludes other disciplines such as (evolutionary) psychology and philosophy (which he is quite keen to dismiss). But, with so many loose ends and unanswered questions, a better approach might have been to include all aspects of brain studies. Taking this wider approach, we can claim that; a) there

is no such thing as a brain without a body and b) that emotions play a bigger role in how the brain works than many like to accept.

As a final comment, let me add that the book offers both a very comprehensive history and overview of the brain and of the role of brain research in the wider society. The conclusion to draw is, as Cobb points out, that this is an area that will continue to fascinate and offer more insights into something that has obsessed human beings throughout history, as evidenced, not only in our research efforts, but also in our world-views, religions and cultures.

MEDICINE-HEALTH

HYGIEA AND AESCULAPIUS

David Lorimer

■ REALISING HEALTH

Philip Conford

Cambridge Scholars Press, 2020,
585 pp., £49.99, p/b – ISBN
978-1-5275-5431-3

This magisterial study by a leading historian of the organic movement covers the history of the Pioneer Health Centre in Peckham and its various offshoots in different parts of the world. Underlying the narrative is a tension between health and medicine represented by the Greek figures of Hygieia as the goddess of healthy living and Aesculapius as the God of healing and surgery; appropriately, they are respectively a woman and a man broadly representing intuitive and rational approaches, which the Network has always tried to balance.



We were involved in a few discussions around follow-ups of Peckham in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and a number of our members feature in this book, notably Dr Peter Mansfield, whose work is not only covered in the text, but who also contributes an afterword. The author ruefully notes in his introduction that the book might better have been entitled *Failing to Realise Health*.

The first chapter sets the scene by examining the many and various definitions of health and their shortcomings – any definition needs to be situated in the larger context of environment, community, nutrition and exercise. Illness, sickness and disease are treated as the falling away from health, again with multiple perspectives seen broadly from rational and empiricist viewpoints, where the latter considers sickness and inflammation more along traditional Chinese medicine lines of a reactive curative process where one should not seek merely to suppress the symptoms. The Peckham Experiment as the physical centre ran from 1926 to 1950, with a hiatus during the War. The overall approach was one of holistic social hygiene where the basic unit was the family, and the author provides some interesting reflections on how the Centre reflected a contemporary eugenicist flavour emphasising the importance of environment rather than heredity.

After the war came a ‘chemical triumphalism’ where technology was touted as the answer to post-war problems. This manifested itself in chemistry and food production and chemistry in medicine, a process facilitated by establishment networks and connections in a rising tide of scientific self-assertion that is currently in full view as medical technocracy. It is evident both from the history of the Peckham Centre and the many other offshoots discussed that hopes are raised and dashed through a combination of shortage of funding, personality issues and establishment resistance represented by the pharmaceutical domination of the whole field of medicine reflecting their own highly competitive business model. A chapter is devoted to the work of Peter Mansfield, who was and is acutely aware of the contrasting views on primary care between ‘the technical, instrumentalist, interventionist approach’ that essentially has to do with sickness, not health, and the ‘personal, expressive, non-interventionist’ holistic approach (pp. 225-6). The most successful experiment was by Halley Harwin Stott in South Africa, and my friend Margaret Hannah’s work in Scotland is also described, along with many

other interesting grassroots initiatives, bringing the narrative right up-to-date – we featured some of these in our last conference collaboration with the British Holistic Medical Association.

One chapter is devoted to the gathering critique of the pharmaceutical industry, including the work of SMN Member Brian Inglis, Vernon Coleman (still active in his 80s in the current crisis) Rene Dubos, RD Laing and Ivan Illich. The final chapter analyses obstacles to holistic health in terms of practical problems, vested interests and the philosophical assumptions of holistic and reductionist approaches. This last area is culturally the most critical, where medicine is invested with prestige and positive health correspondingly with only marginal status. Key industries also include food production as well as chemicals and pharmaceuticals, many of which are linked and become ever more concentrated, also in terms of lobby power. Industry funds Quackbusters to attack natural medicine and dismantle university courses on complementary medicine. It also funds campaigns for the ‘public understanding of science’ and against so-called health fraud to bolster mainstream narratives and correspondingly undermine any dissenting views. AI algorithms now render this censorship process more or less instantaneous.

Finally, it was good to see the incorporation of Iain McGilchrist’s work on the two hemispheres applied to the contrast between Hygeia and Aesculapius representing the right and left hemispheres respectively. We need a profound realisation as a culture of the imbalanced situation in which we now find ourselves, trapped in convergent and narrowly-focused left hemisphere systems that aggressively challenge any opposition – again the current Covid crisis provides a textbook example as we are manipulated through fear into authoritarian compliance. In his afterword, Peter identifies top-down economic globalisation as the chief enemy of health, which must prosper locally and in community settings that encourage initiative and self-reliance. Here the book meshes with the work of Vandana Shiva reviewed below where the holistic approach advocated by early pioneers Sir Albert Howard and Sir Robert McCarrison to agriculture and nutrition respectively is in fact vital to our future flourishing and survival. This book will be a valuable point of reference for many years to come.

A CALL TO ACTION

Jerome Bullard

■ HEALING COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

Thomas Hübl

Sounds True, 2020, 279 pp., \$25.99, h/b – ISBN 978-1-683647-379

This seminal book, subtitled ‘a process for integrating our intergenerational and cultural wounds,’ contains a powerful call to heal ourselves and the global shadow.

“We’ve been born into a traumatised world which is ‘normal’ for us. Thinking we are separate shows we are traumatised.” Hübl became aware of trauma through his Austrian grandfather’s experience as a German conscript in the Second World War. As a child Hübl “felt .. the stygian gloom of the past, which was ever present in the room.”

I attended Hübl’s 2019 Collective Trauma Summit after a friend recommended his work. I lost my father to suicide aged 16, and had a breakdown in 2000 through overwork as an IT/management consultant. The 58,000 attendees heard 32 speakers over nine days. (108,000 attended the 2020 Conference). Several of the speakers; William Ury, Ken Wilber, Scilla Elworthy, Gabor Maté, Stephen Porges, and Bessel van der Kolk contributed to this book. The nine chapters are aimed at the general reader. This book and Hübl’s conference showed me how our ancestors live on in us.

How is the shadow created? In the first chapter, Hübl describes how the Zen Buddhist Principle of Ensō creates the body after conception.

“Each loop (of the sacred self-replicating code) creates a new part of the infant. As energy flows along the individuation loop. ... vibratory light becomes solid,” manifesting as the physical body. However, if an experience prevents the loop from completing, the blockage at that precise point in the matrix inhibits future growth. The trapped energy becomes part of the unconscious shadow.

Richard Schwartz spoke at the 2019 conference. I healed part of my shadow using Schwartz’s Internal Family Systems method. I asked my ego to take a back seat so my traumatised parts felt safe enough to speak. More than once, I befriended a part that revealed an event I had no conscious memory of at all. I felt a ‘lift’ as I healed it and the frozen energy flowed free.

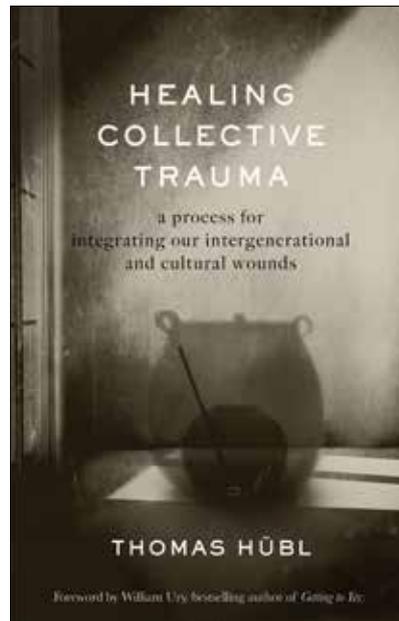
But what is trauma? In chapter two Hübl quotes *Bessel van der Kolk*: “any event or on-going experience with a significant impact on the survival, or animal part of the brain.”

However, the word ‘trauma’ carries a weight that can scare people and prevent introspection. The Three Principles [3Ps] of divine Mind, Consciousness, and Thought offer a useful perspective on distress; “stress is a by-product of thinking, as any situation is not inherently stressful,” *George Pransky*. “Trauma is the result of a lack of understanding of thought. A negative thought is not harmful and has no inherent lasting effect. Our belief in the reality of a thought determines how we relate to it, and the effect it has on us. Believing trauma is real and serious gives it energy it does not initially possess. Understanding this protects people from the shadow and dysfunction of negative thought,” *Aaron Turner*.

Sydney Banks rediscovered the 3Ps after a spontaneous awakening in 1973. “If the only thing that people learned was not to be afraid of their experience, that alone would change the world,” *Sydney Banks*. The Principles are taught in schools, businesses, and prisons in over 16 countries. A negative thought initially protected us but becomes unhelpful when it recurs again and again. Recurring negative thoughts distort our perception of reality and are simply messages to adjust our investment in our thinking.

“Trauma is not the story of what happened a long time ago, it is the residue that’s living in you right now,” *Bessel van der Kolk*. “Collective trauma is the elephant in the room. We don’t see it because trauma is unconscious. Because of a long history, I may not be aware of how much I’m not aware of that dimension ...,” *Thomas Hübl*. The hidden dimension shows why we can’t ‘get over’ or ‘forget’ trauma: the shadow exists in the unconscious spiritual realm. A spiritual cause needs a spiritual solution: a divine Thought (conscious or unconscious) shows the thought was misguided, and frees the blocked energy. “The witch doctor succeeds for the same reason all the rest of us [doctors] succeed.... We are at our best when we give the doctor who resides within each patient the chance to go to work,” *Albert Schweitzer*.

In chapter five Hübl states: “Trauma is an intelligent response..., that reduces the mental strain of traumatic events.” How might this occur? “Children survive by closing down the right hemisphere functioning (of emotions and embodiment) to rely on their left hemisphere to make sense of experience in a way that helps them control the memory and feelings,” *Julia*



Vaughan Smith. The left hemisphere “has forgotten its dependence on the right hemisphere and makes claims for truth that are not supported by a more balanced, inclusive understanding,” *Iain McGilchrist*. The 3Ps reconnect the right hemisphere to divine Thought.

In chapter eight Hübl urges you to “stay present with whatever you feel... The tendency to despair or run away is a symptom of unresolved trauma.” Stephen Porges’ Polyvagal Theory shows we cannot think rationally when traumatised, so fail to see that; a “trauma culture is designed to prevent us awakening; media “amplifies absencing”; medicine is under “for-profit corporate control”; in commerce “conflict is a commodity, death a service, disease ... enhance(s) market share”; and “trauma creates (environmental) apathy”. However, when we wake up, “suddenly we sense and see the toxins, poisons, nuclear and other wastes that flow out across the entire food chain, reaching into communities, homes and our bodies: pesticides, microplastics, or heavy metals.”

Chapter nine outlines his Vision of an Integrated World and issues a moving invitation to align with spirit and heal the collective shadow. This compelling book contains a proven healing method, a global plan to roll it out, and invites us to act. Yet, the world needs ‘new thinking’. I believe a combination of Hübl’s work, a 3P understanding, reconnecting to the Divine Feminine, accelerating personal enlightenment, and the Maharishi Effect will tip the world into spontaneous global enlightenment.

“We are the ones we’ve been waiting for.”

Jerome Bullard has been asleep for most of his life. He started waking up after many extraordinary experiences on his three-year solo round-the-world motorcycle trip that he couldn’t explain at the time. He can now. Trip details: jeromebullard.com

IS BREATHING THE NEW FRONTIER IN MEDICINE?

Gunnel Minnett

■ BREATH, THE NEW SCIENCE OF A LOST ART

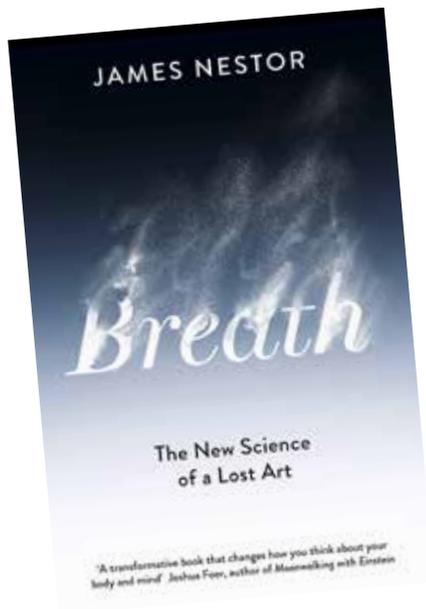
James Nestor

[Penguin Life](https://www.penguin.com), 2020, 304 pp., £12.39, h/b, ISBN - 978-0241289-07-5

Breathing is essential for all human life. We count a lifetime from a person’s first to their last breath. Still we don’t seem to know much about how to breathe in the best way. We have some basic ideas that breathing ‘correctly’ is good for our wellbeing. There are also a growing number of theories and breathing schools to teach us how to breathe better, many of which seem to contradict each other. But a common assumption for many of them is that most of us aren’t breathing sufficiently and need to breathe more.

Paradoxically our knowledge of how the breath influences the body’s wellbeing is ancient. It goes back thousands of years. The oldest structured descriptions of breathing techniques are found in Yoga (Pranayama) and Chinese Chi Gong techniques. But somehow much of this knowledge has been lost until recently. When Alexandra David-Néel and other adventurers went to India to learn more about Eastern philosophies, their accounts inspired others to follow. These pioneers brought back a new understanding of the ancient knowledge as to how to improve physical and psychological wellbeing through changes in the breathing pattern.

In this book James Nestor takes the ideas about optimal breathing a step further. In the first part of the book he describes how he participated in an experiment to establish the differences between nose and mouth breathing. This involved blocking his nose for two weeks so that he only could breathe through the mouth. The result was instant, higher blood pressure and general deterioration of his overall health and wellbeing. As soon as the nose block was removed his body returned to its normal level of wellbeing. Nestor’s conclusion is that



nose breathing is by far the better way to breathe, and the most natural way to take in oxygen.

Another interesting fact is that several of the techniques mentioned focus on breathing less than normal. Some even argue that breathing carbon dioxide has a long-term positive effect, in particular to lower anxiety, even if it may cause temporary discomfort. This is not a view shared by modern medicine.

Nestor goes through a number of techniques aimed at improving wellbeing through breathing, such as Breathing Coordination, Resonant Breathing, the Buteyko method, Holotropic Breathing, Wim Hof's version of Tummo Breathing and various forms of Yoga breathing. An interesting aspect of what these techniques have in common is that they all represent slightly different ways of breathing at the same time as they all focus entirely on changes in our normal breathing pattern. And, despite the fact that they are different techniques, they seem to all arrive at the same end result - to improve our overall wellbeing and to enable the body to perform better.

Nestor also looks at research into the changes which have occurred in the human skull over the centuries, due to our changes in our eating habits. In particular changes to the jaws have impacted our ability to breathe optimally. He describes it as a circular problem where less perfect breathing patterns lead to changes in teeth and bone structure around the nose and mouth, which in turn caused less perfect breathing. The really interesting part of this, he claims, is that by changing the breathing pattern the changes in the face can actually be corrected. This is totally against the common understanding of the body's

ability to heal itself. This indicates that there is a lot to be discovered before we fully understand the power of the breath.

Given that we need a solution to the current COVID situation, a better understanding of the full potential of the breath may come to play a very significant role. The more we can learn from these different breathing techniques the better. With this in mind, for me personally, I would have liked the book to present more factual background for each technique. The book has a focus on telling the personal story of how Nestor tried these different techniques together with his good friend Anders Olsson. This makes it an entertaining and light-weight read. And it does have references to the various techniques that are mentioned. But it still gives a sense of wanting more hard data and more attempts to present some form of theory as to why and how simple changes in the breathing pattern can have such a strong impact on our wellbeing.

Having said this, being a light and entertaining read, I can recommend the book and suggest that anyone interested in breathing should follow up the references. A word of caution though; breathing techniques may seem very simple and easy to try. In fact, the last chapter offers instructions as to how to try some of them at home. But, as the book describes, they can be very powerful and cause changes both in body and mind, that are best experienced in the company of someone who can assist and guide the breather to a positive end result.

PHILOSOPHY- SPIRITUALITY

KNOWLEDGE OF BEING

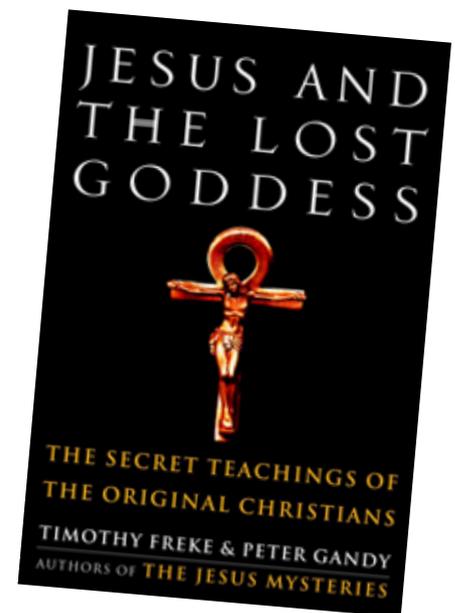
David Lorimer

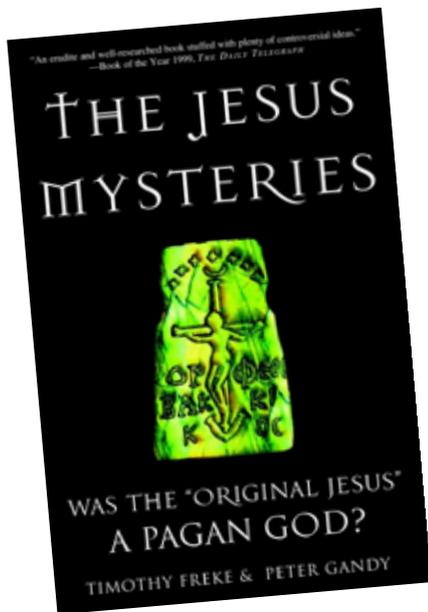
- **THE JESUS MYSTERIES**
Tim Freke (SMN) and Peter Gandy
Thorsons, 1999, 423 pp., \$17, p/b-
ISBN 978-0-72-253677-3
- **JESUS AND THE LOST GODDESS**
Tim Freke and Peter Gandy
(www.timothyfreke.com)
Three Rivers Press, 2001,
327 pp., \$16, p/b - ISBN
978-1-4000-4594-5

Over 40 years ago, I remember coming upon a copy of a book by J.M. Robertson entitled *Pagan Christs* published around 1910 and which created a huge stir among the clergy of the day. Their basic argument was that despite acknowledged similarities

with dying and resurrected vegetation gods of the Middle East, the Gospels represented an actual historical series of events rather than an archetypal myth. Around the same time, I had been reading the abridged version of Sir J.G. Frazer's *Golden Bough* as well as an informative book by Grant Allen called *The Evolution of the Idea of God* and Gilbert Murray's *Five Stages of Greek Religion*. Along with more than 150 years of biblical scholarship, these writings made it impossible for me to interpret the Bible as the literal Word of God. In these two erudite studies containing over 180 pages of footnotes plus extensive references, the authors make a strong case for the gospels being knowingly infused with ideas from the Greek mystery traditions, but go so far as to cast doubt on the very historical existence of Jesus. Whether or not one accepts this radical hypothesis, there is no doubt that initiatic patterns are clearly discernible, especially in relation to death and resurrection motifs – these have their roots in the Egyptian rites of Osiris, just as the figure of Isis is incorporated into Mary.

The first book asks the question whether the original Jesus was a pagan god, and the authors propose that he is portrayed as a composite figure of a pagan godman and the Jewish Messiah. Resemblances to paganism were written off by Christian apologists as diabolical mimicry, even if these sources predated Christianity by several centuries. Pagan critics like Celsus, extensively quoted here, pour scorn on such notions, wondering how people can take them seriously. Biblical scholarship has highlighted inconsistencies and interpolations within scriptures, often carried out with theological intent and usually to reinforce the claims of what subsequently emerged as orthodoxy;





many illustrations are given here. The later letters of Paul are now generally agreed to be forgeries designed to combat the influence of Gnosticism. Correspondingly, Church history was rewritten by Eusebius and many texts such as the 15 volumes of Porphyry were burnt along with their heretical authors, not to mention the entire library of Alexandria.

The key tension identified in both volumes is between Gnostics and Literalists representing the inner and outer mysteries respectively. Writing in about 150 A.D., Clement of Alexandria equated *pistis* or faith with the outer, and *gnosis* as direct knowledge of the self with the inner or deeper level of initiation. The destruction of Gnosticism and paganism was completed during the fourth century with the triumph of Literalism, which the authors argue is inherently intolerant due to its insistence on its unique historical rather than mythical basis. The autocratic Emperor Constantine helped establish a dogmatic and authoritarian structure demanding obedience and the corresponding suppression of individualist heretics and dissident viewpoints – all for their own good, of course. Philosophical mysticism was lost in the process, cutting our culture off from its mystical roots, and only re-emerging to prominence with the Renaissance.

They bring many sources to bear in arguing for the fundamentally allegorical nature of the gospels, and it is interesting to read a quotation from Origen about hidden meanings included in the stories about Jesus ‘indicating certain Mysteries through a semblance of history and not through actual events.’ He adds that these recorded actual events did not happen literally. Resurrection – *anastasis* in Greek – also means awakening to one’s

true nature – Pythagoras’ ‘knowledge of being’ where the *eidolon* becomes the *Daemon*. The authors explain the different levels of initiation and identity, beginning with the body and proceeding through three baptisms: acceptance of a literal sense through water, the mythical, allegorical sense through air and the mystical through fire, corresponding as Paul put it to realising one’s identity as Christ or the shared Universal Self.

Along with other scholars like Elaine Pagels and April DeConick, they argue for a Gnostic interpretation of Paul before he was subsequently co-opted by the Literalists. They then examine the Hellenistic influences on Judaism, especially in Alexandria and in the writings of Philo. It is on this basis that they advance the thesis of Jesus as a composite character and analyse the structure of the gospels in this light. Although they make a good case, I was not completely persuaded by their arguments for the nonexistence of a historical Jesus even though it is undeniable that much was appropriated from pagan religions – and from the myths of Osiris-Dionysus – including the major feasts of Christmas and Easter.

The conclusion of the first volume segues into the second by noting that the adoption of the Jewish Father God Jehovah was accompanied by a subjugation of the Divine Feminine. *Jesus and the Lost Goddess* explains the secret Gnostic teachings of the original Christians in a masterly fashion, restating some of the central themes. The authors remark that the great revelation of Gnosticism ‘is that our essential identity is Consciousness.’ They quote Clement of Alexandria as writing: ‘the greatest of all lessons is to know your Self, for when a man knows himself he knows God’ – this is *gnosis*, or, as Plotinus explains it, ‘if we hold through our own centre to the centre of all centres,’ we will discover that our consciousness is the one Consciousness of God. He adds that ‘all beings may be thought of as centres uniting at one central centre,’ (p. 65) a formulation remarkably similar to that of Thomas Troward. This journey towards the centre is the realisation not only that all is One, but we are essentially the same One: not just a part of the whole, but the Whole itself. Spiritually, this is resurrection to our true identity, the culmination of a journey from unconscious unity to conscious Oneness. This is also described as the ascent from the cave (ignorance), an image that plays an important role in the story of Lazarus (p. 117) and the emergence from the tomb.

The lost Goddess is the story of Sophia and her passage through the

initiation process, culminating in the mystical marriage, which is at one level *gnosis* (union of the knower and the known), but at another a coming together of masculine and feminine in the bridal chamber. Although the authors do not take this view, I also see the coming together of Yeshua and Mary Magdalene in this way, as in the Gospel of Philip and the Gospel of the Beloved Companion. Mother Mary is characterised as the higher Sophia and Mary Magdalene as fallen, although I attribute much of this picture to Gregory the Great’s sermon of 592 – only as recently as 2016 did Mary Magdalene receive the title Apostle to the Apostles. The Gnostic Gospels portray Mary Magdalene as having attained *gnosis* and in both the Gospel of Mary and the Gospel of Beloved Companion, she is the awakened leader who knows, while Peter – apparently representing the ego – cannot go beyond the literal (GBC only

appeared in 2010) and denigrates women. Cosmologically, God and Goddess emerge as polarities from ‘the Mystery of the dazzling darkness of Consciousness.’ Importantly, the Holy Spirit is Sophia, rather than the wholly masculine Trinity of the Orthodox churches. These dualities are transcended where ‘Gnosis is Consciousness, which requires the apparent duality of subject and object, aware of the essential Oneness. It is the realisation of unity through duality.’ (p. 148) Interestingly, the Ankh (p. 158) represents this in symbolic form.

In bringing the story into contemporary terms, the authors observe that certainty divides us, while doubt unites us. Literalism, the letter and the law divide, while *gnosis* and the spirit unite. Significantly, the words Gnostic and scientist both mean knower, and while religion based on belief creates antagonism between science and religion, the same does not apply to spirituality and *gnosis*, both of which, like science, question authority. Scientific materialism represents a current form of literalism – that only matter is ultimate. Those who experience *gnosis* know this to be a superficial view corresponding to the outer mysteries – I regard the NDE as a form of *gnosis* or initiation. I see it as part of the purpose of the Galileo Commission to recover the validity of *gnosis* as a valid and indeed deeper way of knowing whereby we experience that All is One. The appendix provides a brilliant summary of the structures of initiations and identity, inviting readers to step into a personal realisation of *gnosis* where ‘we find ourselves no longer separate from others, or indeed from anything, but at one in the Mystery with all that is. We dissolve into mystical

communion. We are in love with all beings.' (p. 204)

These books are far richer in detail and spiritual insight than can be conveyed in this review, and I strongly encourage readers interested in this field to read and ponder these penetrating studies. I find it profoundly encouraging to live in a time when *gnosis* and the soul are being recovered in our culture, and that this may result in a spiritually infused science of consciousness as well as a planetary ethic of interconnectedness.

SOWING THE SEEDS OF A NEW WORLDVIEW

Oliver Robinson

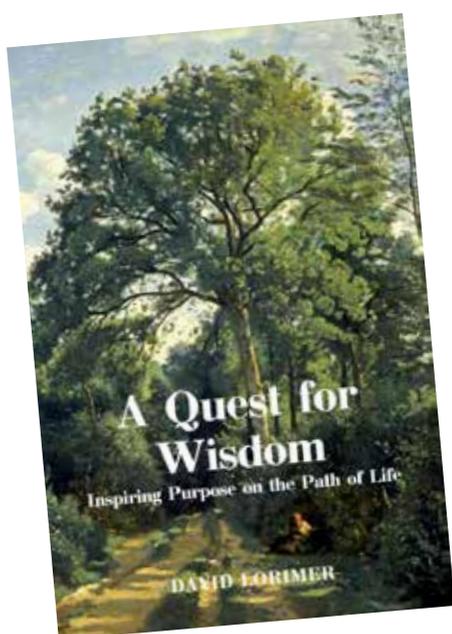
■ A QUEST FOR WISDOM: INSPIRING PURPOSE ON THE PATH IN LIFE

David Lorimer – www.davidlorimer.co.uk

Aeon Books, 2021, 319 pp., £24.99, p/b (20% off until May 31 on www.aeonbooks.co.uk) – ISBN 978-1-913504-76-2

David Lorimer's decades of exploration into the fundamental questions of existence are distilled in this important collection of essays, written between the 1980s and the present day. Each essay is introduced in the context of when it was written and what inspired it, which infuses the book with a sense of David's personal journey, also explained in more detail at the beginning of the book in his Formative Background.

There are three sections to the book. The first is entitled *Philosophy, Spirituality and Meaning*.



Here, David presents essays on Victor Frankl, Emanuel Swedenborg, Peter Deunov and Taoism, as well as discourses on beauty and the mysterious. Of the many ideas presented across the essays in this section, two stood out as emblematic of David's message. Firstly, there is the message of integrating the intellect with the will, values, and intuitive modes of knowing. By ensuring a balance and congruence of these human faculties, a life of purpose and coherence is possible. In contrast, disconnected intellect will find itself threatened by all that which it cannot comprehend through logical thought, and this will detract from the *felt* sources of meaning and purpose that are so essential to life.

Secondly, there is a message of transcending dualities such as such separation and union, implicate and explicate, unknown and known, transcendence and immanence. Opposites are friends to wisdom and love, but they can appear threatening to the fear-laced thought that defines so much of normal waking consciousness for many. When fear is the core of experience rather than love, a pervasive intellectual tendency is to bunker down on one side of these pairs of opposites and deny the validity of the other end, even though the two exist in relationship. In this way, the self becomes anchored to a partial truth, and is set against the "others" who purport the contrasting perspective. This is the recipe for conflict and partisanship. Wisdom is the lifelong journey away from this either-or view of knowledge towards one where opposites are complementary.

The second section of the book is entitled *Consciousness, Death and Transformation*. It contains six essays that consider the nature of death, near-death experiences, the soul and the survival of consciousness. David's erudite weaving of Eastern and Western wisdom provides for a subtle and many-sided consideration of the topic, taking in the Tibetan Book of the Dead, Swedenborg and recent NDE science. As with Section 1, David looks past the oppositional dualities that frequently plague discourse on these complex topics, for example the first person vs. third person perspective, and the authority of tradition vs experience. He encourages a both-and approach to these dialectics. Science tends towards third person evidence, but much in terms of evidence about death comes via first person experiences that can at best be conveyed second-hand through words. Religion tends towards the authority of tradition while spirituality frequently places experience as the bellwether of what

is true. There is room, David argues, for all these to harmoniously co-exist.

The third section of the book is entitled *Taking Responsibility – Ethics and Society*. Here David brings his holistic lens to a range of issues relating to social and political concerns. The ethical perspective that underpins this section flows directly from the multi-faceted conception of human nature that is fleshed out through Parts 1 and 2 of the book, in which the mysterious/transcendental/spiritual is a constant context for the physical. Ethical behaviour, David writes, is the natural outcome of being a fully rounded human being, whose mind, will and heart are integrated. An interconnected being gravitates to caring for other living forms as an expression of their relational nature. In contrast, fear leads to a disconnected and dehumanised state of being, which is inimical to ethical behaviour.

An essay in this section entitled *Fear of Freedom* speaks to our current situation. The message from most authorities around the world during the Covid-19 pandemic has been that freedom must be taken away to ensure safety. Only draconian compulsory mandates that create as much social disconnection as possible, enforced by criminal law, can get human beings through a pandemic, we are told. To ensure compliance with these mandates, government messaging has been designed to maximise fear and minimise the expression of dissenting views. And yet the evidence is clear now – countries and states that respected the ethics of freedom and personal responsibility, such as Finland, Sweden and Japan, and states such as Florida and Nebraska have done just as well in managing Covid-19 as countries that have applied lockdowns, without inflicting anywhere near as much damage on the collective psyche of their population. David's message is congruent with this. His view, with which I wholly concur, is that freedom of inner and outer life remains our best ally, even in difficult times.

When I travelled to Iran many years ago, I visited a Zoroastrian fire temple in a city called Yazd. The priests there had kept the same fire burning day and night for 1500 years. This beautiful symbol of continuity is, I think, an apt metaphor for the task of keeping the light of wisdom burning and bright through the generations. David has devoted his life to tending the fire of wisdom for our times. He has done much to kindle it in word and deed. I am grateful for his dedication to this task and for this book.

IMAGINAL SYSTEMATICS

David Lorimer

■ EYE OF THE HEART

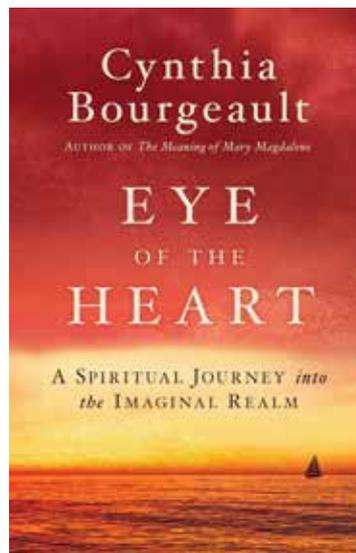
Cynthia Bourgeault

Shambhala, 2020, 218 pp., \$16.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-61180-652-6

Cynthia Bourgeault is a mystic (my dictation system insisted on mistake!), Episcopal priest, theologian and retreat leader who is one of the leading contemporary advocates of centring prayer and the rediscovery of the Wisdom and Mary Magdalene as wisdom teachers on the basis of the Gnostic Gospels. I reviewed her book on Mary Magdalene in December 2019. This new book is quite remarkable both as a personal spiritual odyssey and a profound journey into the neglected imaginal realm that can be perceived through the eye of the heart. The revival of Christian contemplation is essential to the spiritual renaissance of our time where unity and union is found only in the depths. This is mediated equally in intimate encounters and persistent spiritual practice.

It is particularly important to insist on the reality of subtle realms at a time when scientific materialism cuts us off from these dimensions by denying their very existence, which is equivalent to pulling up our spiritual roots, causing us to wither inwardly on the vine. Cynthia explains that energy rather than substance is the coin of this realm, as also affirmed by Valentin Tomberg, Teilhard de Chardin, Gurdjieff, Simone Weil and many others. We can then discern that there is a chain between the terms matter, energy, psyche, fire and spirit. A central implication is that the fruits of the spirit or virtues are energetically cultivated as counterentropic ‘psychic force’ through attention, will, prayer and love. This represents concentration rather than the dissipation of modern technological distractions. Once deeply embedded, these spiritual qualities are dynamically emanated and radiated by holy people in what Teilhard called radial energy. It is also important to note that this work is an individual responsibility that is equally vital for collective advancement – in his lifetime, Gurdjieff was already concerned by a drop in the overall level of being that can only be maintained through this inner work of what he called conscious labour and intentional suffering (cf *ora et labora* in the Benedictine tradition). This is also the function of contemplation and intercessory prayer from churches, mosques, temples and monasteries.

Cynthia explains that we live in a mixed realm – *mixtus orbis* – where the invisible or imaginal interpenetrate



the physical in a process of energy exchange, as TS Eliot eloquently articulates in his *Four Quartets*. She gives us a map of these levels of consciousness or spheres of causality that can also be tabulated in musical form. World 1 is the absolute, becoming World 3 as the primordial ternary is manifest in perceptivity and divisibility. World 6 is causal or logicoic, the substance of which is Love; then World 12 is Christic embodied love or *bodhisattva* consciousness where *eros* is transfigured into *agape*. World 24 represents presence or the Kingdom of Heaven, while World 48 is the familiar physical world. World 96 is dense and conditioned where personality obscures essence, densifying further into World 192, the hell realms.

The role of the conscious human being is to translate and transmit energies mainly from World 24 into World 48, though we have the capacity to reach into the finer realms as well. There is an extraordinarily illuminating diagram on page 49 that contrasts the governing principles of Worlds 24 and 48 that is worth reproducing in full:

<i>World 48</i>	<i>World 24</i>
linear time	radial/spatial time
sequential causality	synchronous causality
either-or dualism	non-duality
corporeal density	fluid and permeable boundaries
nucleated selfhood	holographic selfhood
attraction/aversion	conscience
entropic	counter-entropic
tangential energy	radial, generative energy
flesh & blood and body	subtle inner body
virtue as descriptor	virtue as operative energy

Teilhard grasped this point in the 1920s when he spoke about *le milieu divin* where faith changes ‘the subtle physical composition of materiality’ in an alchemical process through radial energetic impact – this is the work of the surrendered will, conscious attention, presence and transformation. Inwardly and at a subtle level we are citizens of World 24 but we live in the coarser realm of the physical, whose role is to generate the necessary tension, density, resistance and entropy. Readers can see how World 24 embodies the spiritual aspirations of inhabitants of World 48, which Jung translates into synchronicity – the impinging or interpenetration of 24 on 48.

Cynthia sums this up by saying that ‘the way we can really show up for cosmic service boils down to learning to live in World 48 under the laws of World 24’ (p. 65) where we can take our cue from synchronicities as manifestations of imaginal causality that reveal a hidden pattern. She goes on to explain this with a spatial concentric metaphor also applied to sacred texts such as the Gospel of John. What she calls the art of shapeshifting can be learned through symbolism, correspondence, convergent timing and centring contemplation, all of which involve a subtle operating system that expands our perceptual bandwidth by opening the eye of the heart, which in turn makes us more receptive; interestingly, the word obedience derives etymologically from *ob-audire* – to listen from the depths.

Returning to the *mixtus orbis*, we find ourselves as humans ‘at the intersection of the timeless and time’ (Eliot), of divine and human, of infinite and finite, all of which provides the raw material for conscious transfiguration as Love draws us back to the epicentre through a fully awakened and surrendered human heart where ‘imaginal transformation requires a transcendence of the narrative or phenomenal self as the seat of my selfhood... and a stabilisation of the witnessing self’ – in other words, living in 48 from 24, which is perhaps what Jesus meant when he said we should be in the world but not of it. Through this practice, we join the conscious circle of humanity, as her teacher and companion Brother Rafe put it – he plays a central role in the personal narrative, even though he passed over in 1995, but it is as if her journey and his continue in the same footsteps (p. 168), with close resonances with the teachings of Thomas Keating and Joseph Boyle representing the higher intellectual centre and the pure heart respectively. There is also the ongoing work of purification, what she calls

cosmic dialysis so as to allow a greater purity of transmission.

All this inner work serves to create the substance of a subtle light body which has a finer order of substantiality building what she calls a temporary permanent individuality that invites a deeper level of dying, so beautifully expressed in a passage quoted from Huston Smith about successive layers of dissolution that also invite absorption in the beatific vision and final freedom from personality. So there is both a building up and a peeling away in the knowledge that we die into love. My review of this seminal spiritual text for our time would be incomplete without mentioning Cynthia's turbulent adventure with wild sailor Johnny the Greek as a demonstration of how she deftly weaves lessons from her life experience into this courageous and pioneering narrative. The book is nothing less than a manual for this alchemical energetic work of conscious transformation on which the very future of the planet depends.

PSYCHOLOGY- CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

THE NEW FRONTIER

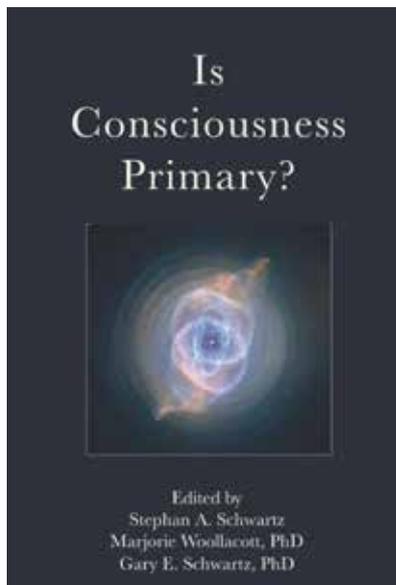
David Lorimer

■ IS CONSCIOUSNESS PRIMARY?

Edited by Stephan A. Schwartz,
Marjorie Woollacott PhD and
Gary E. Schwartz PhD

AAPS, 2020, 543 pp., \$14.95, p/b
– ISBN 978-1-7354491-0-4

The American writer Charles F. Haanel (1866-1949) published his book *The New Psychology* in 1924, just as



JB Watson's behaviourism was on the rise, and this became the new psychology, or even non-psychology of the day, since it denied the very existence of consciousness. Haanel was part of the influential New Thought movement, which I have studied in some detail, and he is best-known for his remarkable work – originally a correspondence course – called *The Master Key System* published in 1916 and that had a huge influence on Napoleon Hill. Other notable thinkers in this mode were the transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson (see his essay on the Oversoul), Ralph Waldo Trine (*In Tune with the Infinite*, which sold 2 million copies), William James, Judge Thomas Troward (*The Edinburgh Lectures on Mental Science* etc.) Wallace Wattles (who influenced Rhonda Byrne), the extraordinary Walter Russell and Earl Nightingale.

A central contention of New Thought is that 'there is one Principle or Consciousness pervading the entire universe. As this Consciousness is omnipresent it must be present within every individual; each individual must be a manifestation of that Omniscent, Omnipotent and Omnipresent Consciousness. Your consciousness is (therefore) identical with the Universal Consciousness, all mind is one mind. Each individual is the individualisation of the Universal, the Cosmic Mind.' (Charles Haanel) Other writers express this view in almost identical terms, in other words they would all answer the question posed by the title of this book with a resounding yes. It is an interesting thought experiment to imagine that New Thought had been adopted by mainstream psychology instead of behaviourism, with its insistence on the adequacy of a third-person perspective to the exclusion of first-person experience. Interestingly, Harvard already turned down the offer of money for a chair of psychical research as early as 1911, the year after William James's death – one can't help thinking that his influence might have led to a different outcome.

It has taken us over 100 years to catch up with where William James and some of his contemporaries left off – already in his Ingersoll lecture on immortality published in 1898, he was arguing for the plausibility of what is now called filter theory of the relationship between consciousness and the brain, as argued by many contributors to this volume, a view also espoused by F.C.S. Schiller at Oxford and by Henri Bergson in Paris. This book is the first in a series of volumes by the Academy for the Advancement of Post-materialist Sciences (www.aapsglobal.net) under the general heading Advances in Post-materialist Sciences. As such, it is a seminal volume that is required reading for open-minded scientists and academics seeking a rigorous

expansion of our understanding of consciousness and who are dissatisfied with the limitations and restrictions imposed by the pervasive materialistic mindset in academia. Importantly, the authors draw on both their personal and professional experience, and in this way address issues linking science, philosophy and spirituality.

The 12 chapters are divided into three sections: maths, physics and consciousness; neuroscience and consciousness; and psychology, psychiatry and consciousness. The authors are all well-known researchers in these fields, and it is possible in a relatively short review to highlight only a few themes and contributions, although they are uniformly of a high standard. One central theme is how scientists change their minds about the nature of consciousness, when they were all trained within the world view of scientific and medical materialism. The broad answer is personal experience combined with pioneering experiments and logically analysis.

Gary Schwartz considers this issue in relation to belief in survival of consciousness after physical death, emphasising the importance of convergent information and outlining five essential additive criteria of assessment: reason and scientific theory, scientific evidence, a community of credible and trustworthy believers, direct personal experiences, and finally responsible consideration of scepticism about criteria 1 to 4. This calls for what he characterises as Eagle science rather than Ostrich science towards integrated big picture thinking. Gary also proposes three types of post-materialist theories: a) those that are a subclass of physicalist theories, b) dualist and panpsychic theories where two tracks exist alongside each other, and c) those where post-materialist theories are seen as primary - which is the main focus of this volume. He builds up his case with great logical rigour, describing a number of experiences totally inexplicable on the basis of Type I theories, all of which puts his conclusions beyond reasonable doubt.

Few readers will be familiar with the work of Edward Close, whose chapter is concerned with the mathematical unification of space, time, mass, energy and consciousness. On the basis of his theoretical work and personal experiences, he has no hesitation in stating that consciousness is primary, 'because I have proved it to my satisfaction using hard evidence, including experimental data and rigorous mathematical logic.' He makes the obvious point that 'our only direct knowledge of reality is through the experience of consciousness', which means that 'consciousness must be included in any truly scientific analysis

of reality' as many of the great physicists like Max Planck and Schroedinger had already realised nearly 100 years ago. For Close, Pure Consciousness is pervasive, undifferentiated and unlimited, which sounds a lot like the Universal Mind of Charles Haanel.

It turns out that consciousness is the missing element in a theory of everything as envisaged by the standard model. Close develops his case with exemplary rigour, proposing the primary function of consciousness as drawing the distinction of self from other as the basis of all cognition, then organising this into meaningful patterns. He proposes a triadic rather than binary calculus, which he elaborates in considerable technical detail, introducing the new term 'gimmel' to denote a third nonphysical form of reality beyond relativity and quantum physics that is required for atomic and subatomic stability, allowing them to 'quantify the impact of consciousness on physical reality in the equations of science' (p. 106) and removing the need to postulate dark matter and dark energy. Much of the detail is beyond the general reader, but will be readily understandable by mathematical physicists – this also applies to the following contribution by Menas Kafatos on bridging the perceived gap between science and metaphysics, although his three principles of complementarity, recursion and creative interactivity are readily understandable as part of a participatory universe in which we 'live the Living Presence' and realise that we are essentially this.

Dean Radin, Marjorie Woollacott, Stephan Schwartz, Diane Hennacy Powell, Larry Dossey and Mario Beauregard all weave significant elements of their personal journeys into their chapters, and these frequently open them to enlarged modes of perception that call into question the limits of their professional education (the same happened to Swedenborg in 1743). They systematically outline lines of empirical evidence that challenge scientific materialism, all of which is extensively researched and documented. This leads them to postulate the primacy of consciousness, whereby mind is not produced by the brain. Marjorie explains her own energy-matter continuum model, contrasting it with the materialist/Newtonian model and recounting a remarkably evidential NDE from Dr Bettina Peyton, who, prior to this experience during the birth of her third child, was a paid-up materialist.

I found Diane Powell's chapter of particular interest – her initial curiosity was piqued by an unsolicited psychic reading, and in her book *The ESP Enigma* she argues that consciousness acts like a force field, adding that

the neuroscientific model is not only incomplete, but seriously out of date. It is sobering to realise that early SMN Member Arthur Koestler published his book *The Roots of Coincidence* nearly 50 years ago. Diane attributes some of the resistance to ESP to a predominantly chemical rather than electromagnetic view of consciousness: 'once the chemical model was adopted, evidence for telepathy no longer fitted science's paradigm.' She has made a special study of acquired savant syndrome, and will be presenting some of this research at our Beyond the Brain conference later this year. Interestingly, Thomas Jay Hudson discusses this syndrome in relation to the Universal Mind in his influential 1890 book *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*. One of her original contributions relates to the role of glial cells and astrocytes broadly within a quantum neuroscience model involving microtubules and magnetic dipoles that reflect and transmit biological light in our cells; she also discusses the potential role of the angular gyrus in psychic sensitivity.

Larry Dossey summarises his work on the three eras of medicine, coining the term telecebo as a nonlocal exteriorisation of a health professional's thoughts and intentions for the welfare of the patient. Philosophically, his framework of the One Mind is a recontextualised statement of the Universal Mind, with its implications that our sense of separateness is an illusion, also in ethical terms: we live in a deeply interconnected world where bonded people can telesomatically feel each other's bodily sensations as the distance – I call this empathetic resonance. Gary follows up with another chapter on what he calls supersynchronicity with his own formulation of Universal Intelligent Consciousness. He identifies the dogma of randomness as partly responsible for resistance to the phenomenon of synchronicity, for which he not only provides his own experiences and classification, but also a staircase of possible explanations with widening implications. He explains how he came to change his own mind and deconstructs the conventional notion of randomness as part of his argument. He then applies his own criteria from the first chapter in terms of analysis.

The final contribution comes from the esteemed Charley Tart, who has been working in this field for more than 50 years. He gives some useful definitions of what he calls essential science, essential spirituality, scientism and total materialism, citing both scientific evidence and personal experience in formulating his own working hypothesis while remaining both humble and open in his conclusions. Sadly, due to lack of interest and time, the number

of academics and scientists who will read even the best books arguing for a post-materialist perspective is very limited. For this reason, we have recently set up a communications group within the Galileo Commission to see how we can best structure and convey a coherent series of messages and talking points as part of our outreach to expand the evidence base of a science of consciousness. We need a more sophisticated articulation of the overall conclusions that can be referred back to the literature and help counter the political and social power of institutionalised materialism and the pseudo-sceptical movement, which we hope will in turn embolden people to stand up and be counted in favour of a post-materialist worldview.

EM FIELD THEORIES ON THE NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

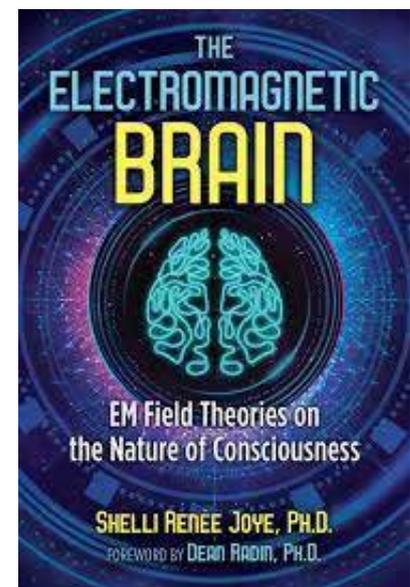
John Kapp, johnkapp@btinternet.com

■ THE ELECTROMAGNETIC BRAIN

Shelli Joye

Inner Traditions 2018/20, \$18.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411091-1

This book is an excellent literature review of work spanning a century from about 20 multidisciplinary and independently funded scientists, all of whom believe that Consciousness (big 'C', meaning the life force) is *primary*. They all address the question: *what is the mechanism by which we are subjectively consciously (small 'c') aware?*, concluding that it is *electromagnetic fields (EMFs)* by which your smart phone and the Internet works.



However, Shelli's book contradicts materialism, because *subjective conscious awareness* is proposed to be a *non-material non local* influence, which can't actually exist in reality as matter is supposed to be the *only* reality.

This conclusion has huge implications for the governance of science and medicine, as the unconscious belief in materialism keeps in power the vested interests (Big Pharma etc) which control all their public funding internationally, by means of which research results get published in peer reviewed journals. Hitherto, they have placed a century-old prohibition on any funding to review the evidence base for psychical effects (psi) and complementary and alternative therapy (CAM) and justify that ban in *until* someone discovers the mechanism by which consciousness is created in the brain. This is the so-called 'hard' problem for science (Chalmers 1996)

Now, *prima facie*, Shelli seems to have shown that the problem isn't hard at all, as the mechanism is just EMFs. She backs up her claim in 296 pages of pithy text, providing robust evidence, including 515 cited references.

Why didn't these scientists tell us before? Shelli shows that they all tried to, and were surprised when their results were ignored. This was because their EMF solution didn't suit the agenda of the vested interests, so they belittled their results, and prevented them from being published. Shelli painstakingly delves deep into the source material and puts it all together into this one coherent book, which rightly comes with glowing reviews from a dozen other post-materialist scientists.

Shelli's book is therefore the ammunition needed by the Academy for the Advancement of Post Materialist Science (www.aapsglobal.com) and the Manifesto for a post materialist science, (www.opensciences.org) who have long campaigned for public funding of scientific studies into psi and CAM. We should therefore support them, and lobby our political representatives to call for urgent public funding for a giant review of consciousness studies, including the findings of this book.

The vested interests use their immense wealth to pay people to promote the mainstream materialist view that belittles conscious awareness as a *side effect of neural activity*, mystifying it by calling it an *epiphenomenon* of the brain. In his foreword to this book, Dean Radin, chief scientist of the Institute of Noetic Sciences, (IONS) promotes Shelli's book as an important challenge to this absurd view.

The formalised wording of the question that Shelli addresses is: *what is the mechanism by which we humans are consciously aware of our thoughts and feelings, and experience qualia?* The common denominator answer of the 20 scientists whose work she reviews is: *'modulating multidimensional electromagnetic fields (EMFs - action at a distance) in space time in the neocortex'*. They are listed below, with the name and date of their main relevant theory:

- a) Neurophysiologist Susan Pockett's electromagnetic field theory (2000), who wrote: *'The basic fundamental principle being proposed here is that consciousness is identical with certain spatiotemporal patterns in the electromagnetic field'*.
- b) Professor of anatomy Harold Saxton Burr's (1889-1973) electric fields of life, (1932) who wrote: *'The field characteristic of a living system is a basic property of life. It can be argued that the Universe is an electrical field, and that everything that exists in it is a subsidiary or component part of the total field.'*
- c) Geneticist John Joe McFadden's electromagnetic field theory, (2002)
- d) Biologist Rupert Sheldrake's (1942-) morphic resonance and the morphogenetic field, (1981, 2012)
- e) Philosopher Ervin Laszlo's (1932-) theory of the Akasha and the A dimension, (2007 etc)
- f) Professor of material science William Tiller's (c1934-) k*space, (1997)
- g) Sir Roger Penrose, (1931-) Hameroff (1947-) anaestheologist, who sees the body and the brain as billions of computers, and that awareness originates at the quantum level within microtubules, (waveguides of 15 nano m diameter) arising in 'orchestrated objective reduction' as elements of *'protoconsciousness'*. (1987, 89)
- h) Philosopher Alfred North Whitehead's (1861-1947) 'electromagnetic occasions', (1929)
- i) Hiroomi Umezawa, (1924-1995) Mari Jibu and Kunio Yasue's quantum brain dynamics, (QBD 1995) which is a *'radically new vision of the fundamental source of thought and memory of the ionized totality of the flowing human bloodstream as a single conscious 'entity', in which life itself can be seen to be the equivalent of the 'unity of water' in the human body, or as a 'single molecule' resonant within the human blood system.'*
- j) Neuroscientist Karl Pribram's (1919-2015) holonomic, and holoflux theories. (2013) *'the form of the*

ultra-deep structure of thinking is a holographic-like distributed process.'

- k) Quantum physicist David Bohm's (1917-92) hidden variables (1951) and holoflux in the implicate order, RNA/DNA (1978)
- l) Engineer Shelli Joye's (1947-) sub-quantum holoflux theory of consciousness. (2016)
- m) Brian Josephson's (1940-) 'junctions of superconducting electrons'. (1973)

Answering why you haven't heard about their theories before, she tactfully writes: *'It is unfortunate that none of these theories of consciousness have been investigated further, or even acknowledged by current established communities of neurophysiologists, quantum theorists and philosophers - but there are exceptions, and it is hoped that the collection of ideas in this book will be a springboard for thought of others'*. (p. 10)

This could be called this the understatement of the century, as these vested interests have manipulated governments and milked the taxpayer of £trillions, all in the name of science, which is really scientism. Their latest examples are the test, track and trace systems, and the Covid-19 vaccines. I therefore welcome this book as a breath of fresh air, which I hope will be a springboard for us post-materialists to shift the paradigm to holism, liberating science from materialism and medicine from the corresponding medical model.

How does conscious awareness work according to Shelli?

Like your computer system and smart phone. Your body is the hardware, your mind is the software, you are the operator, and your energy and life force come from the sun and universe. Your cells contain your DNA, coiled into perfect antennae to broadcast your unique identity and messages all over your body. Your genes contain your blueprint as holograms, and the EMFs (which were mapped by Burr in 93 published papers) guide new particles into the right places to regenerate your tissues when your cells die.

The neural pathways in your brain and body are your wiring which enable the continual processing (mostly unconscious) of thoughts, feelings, sensations and images, which come up on the various screens of your mind, corresponding with your five senses, and your sixth sense of intuition, of pattern recognition, like bar codes.

Smart phones talk to each other and the Internet at the speed of light by downloading particles from waves,

and uploading waves from particles. This same wave / particle interchange happens continually in your bodymind, and is explained by Shelli by the two corresponding *domains* of the EMFs. These are a) the *space time domain* material position (in the left hemisphere), which Pribram calls entropy (p. 113) These are linked by Gabor's Fourier transformations to:

b) the *frequency spectral domain* flux momentum, (in the right hemisphere) which Pribram calls *holoflux*, derived from the flow of information from the interference patterns of the protons, as holograms in the cells.

How does primary Consciousness life force create life and species?

There are only a few tantalising glimpses of the mechanism of morphogenesis, such as Bell's Theorem (1964) that all particles in the universe are able to exchange information instantaneously with all the others, which implies that this could be the mechanism by which the life force comes to us from the Akashic field through Bohm's implicate order. I would like to ask about the intriguing sub quantum work under item i) above. Could it explain why an intervention as tiny as writing 'love' or 'hate' on a label on a cup of water, freezing and photographing the crystals gives such different patterns, as publicised 20 years ago by Maseru Emoto. This implies that my father may have been right to conclude in *Mind, Life and Body* (1951) www.reginaldkapp.org that *'the most probable form taken by a primary diathesis is coordinated timing.... the diathete life controls the moment of time when a specific atom in a large organic molecule acquires the minimum activating energy...or inhibition ...of a vital process.'*

NEAR-DEATH AND BEYOND

David Lorimer

AFTER

Bruce Greyson (SMN)

Bantam Press, 2021, 258 pp., £16.99, h/b – ISBN 978-1-7876-3462-6

This is the most important book to be published in the field of near-death studies, certainly since *Consciousness Beyond Life* by Pim van Lommel. Bruce is professor emeritus of psychiatry and neurobehavioural sciences at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. He was a co-founder and president of the International Association for Near Death Studies, as well as editor of the *Journal of Near-Death Studies* for many years. His research extends over nearly 50 years.

To say that this book is authoritative would be an understatement, all the more so on account of its measured and balanced approach.

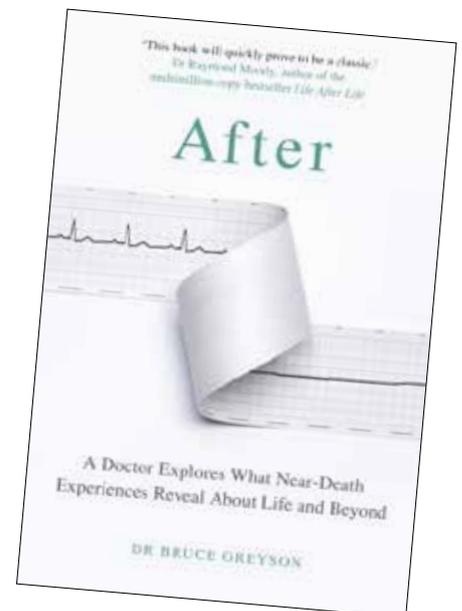
Like many of us, Bruce read Raymond Moody's *Life after Life* when it appeared in 1975 and coined the term near death experience. However, his first encounter predated this and contained verifiable information from one of his patients, which was impossible to explain through normal perception. He begins from a sceptical and open-minded materialist position inherited from his chemist father and reinforced by his medical education, but which he found challenged by near death research: the more he learned about them, 'the more they seem to cry out for an explanation beyond a limited understanding of our everyday ideas about the mind and the brain.' This new way of thinking 'challenges our concept of who we are, how we fit into the universe, and how we might want to conduct our lives.' In other words, NDEs have metaphysical, epistemological and ethical implications. The view that humans have no nonphysical aspect is an article of belief undergirding scientific materialism. Bruce speaks as a scientist sharing what he thinks the data suggest, while noting that 'pretending something didn't happen just because we can't explain it is the exact opposite of science.' (p. 13)

A series of detailed chapters examines the phenomenology and impact of the NDE, with many vivid accounts in narrative style. This includes experiences of timelessness, the divine, the life review, OBEs, positive and negative experiences, after-effects, as well as competing explanations. These considerations lead in turn to the key question of the relationship between brain and consciousness, and whether it can continue after death. Researchers familiar with the field will know that Bruce created the classic Greyson Scale of elements of the NDE in the late 1980s, and his own story includes a watershed encounter in which the chair of his department tries to pressure him into desisting this research. Luckily for us, Bruce persisted.

He asks the question about the reality of NDEs, with some of his colleagues maintaining that they can't be real because they contradict current beliefs about how the brain works. Bruce takes the view that neuroscientists can only maintain their scientific integrity by engaging with NDEs, and proposes that the old brain-mind model is useful only under certain conditions, as William James observed in the late 1890s. Many advanced researchers are now coming to the conclusion that the brain is in fact some form of transducer rather than the generator of consciousness

(p. 118). It is also undeniable that experiencers themselves insist on the hyperreality of the NDE, and their memories are remarkably consistent over time. Moreover, the after-effects are consistent and robust, even if these can also lead to domestic disruption. Bruce gives detailed arguments for not equating mind with brain, building on the work of Bergson and Penfield as well as Huxley. This leads to considering the possibility of the continuity of consciousness beyond death. Here Bruce tactically limits himself to NDEs rather than venturing into survival research and the University of Virginia studies of children who remember previous lives. This means that his arguments are less of a stretch for sceptical colleagues, who still have a lot of explaining to do when it comes to accounting for veridical OBEs.

I myself have written extensively about the ethical implications of the NDE, based on unitive experiences of Love and Light (pp. 156-7) as well as the life review, which suggests the existence of a Universal Mind of which we are all microcosms, as proposed by Emerson's Oversoul and discussed in detail in Larry Dossey's *One Mind*. This means that, at a deep level, we are one another, and provides the philosophical underpinning of the Golden Rule, as Bruce also concludes. All this is reflected in the effect of NDEs on attitudes, beliefs and values in 90% of the cases that he has studied. As one experiencer put it, 'the biggest change in my life is my unconditional love and compassion for all mankind' (p. 176), which also gives a sense of meaning and purpose, and initiates 'a quest to connect with something greater than themselves.' At this time of division and corresponding calls for unity, this message of empathy and caring for each other could not be more



important. It gives us a new meaningful and ethical view of reality that brings together science and spirituality in complementarity. Bruce also reminds readers that NDEs 'are ultimately not about death, but about transformation, about renewal, and about infusing our lives with purpose right now.' (p. 216) And, as he learned in an encounter with the Dalai Lama, while science may seek mastery and control, Buddhists seek understanding of this deeper reality 'in order to live more harmoniously with it.'

This is also the message of the NDE, that 'life is more about meaning and compassion than about wealth and control' and that it can 'change the way we see and treat one another.' I could not agree more, as this was also the central argument of my 1990 book republished in 2017 as *Resonant Mind* that the oneness of mind entails an ethic of interconnectedness. If you only read one book on this topic, this classic exposition should be on top of your reading list.

GUERRILLA SCEPTICISM

David Lorimer

■ PSI WARS: TED, WIKIPEDIA AND THE BATTLE FOR THE INTERNET

Craig Weiler, foreword by Callum Cooper

Self-published, 2020 (2013), 252 pp., p/b. no price given, ISBN – 978-1-4943-89000, craig@weiler.com

I imagine that most readers will be familiar with the story of TED taking down the TEDx talks by Rupert Sheldrake and Graham Hancock on the advice of their anonymous scientific board driven by Jerry Coyne and other militant sceptics who have been attacking and denouncing Rupert for many years. This book investigates the whole story and its background, as well as the continuing controversy over Wikipedia content controlled by guerrilla sceptics. It is eye-opening read, but not so surprising for those who are familiar with the culture war that has been going on for many decades in connection with parapsychology and its scientific status. The author hopes that the controversy will be a significant milestone on the road to a fundamental cultural change, and one can only hope that he is right. Craig is a parapsychology blogger who is well read in the literature. As he points out, the underlying issues are philosophical rather than purely scientific, as they involve basic views of reality and what is correspondingly regarded as possible and impossible in an a priori sense. In

this updated edition, he asserts that the science part of the science controversy is basically over (though militant sceptics will persist in disagreeing with this) and 'the change in perception is the battle that really matters... the massive shift in scientific theoretical thinking is coming and no one can stop it.' This is what we seek to leverage with the Galileo Commission.

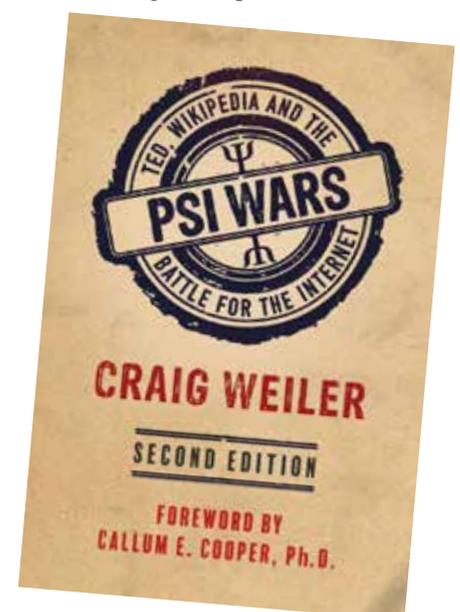
The book reprints the correspondence surrounding the controversy along with responses from the protagonists, including a memo sent to TEDx organisers on the nature of bad science and as pseudoscience, the definition of which is a key issue, since the term is frequently used as a rhetorical device. Rupert is frequently branded as a pseudo-scientist, or worse still a 'woomeister', the ultimate in derogatory but vacuous abuse. TED desperately wishes to retain the respect of the mainstream scientific community and is terrified of being identified with pseudoscience, which in a general sense can be equated with failure to convince mainstream science. This in itself may be more due to the its limitations than the lack of quality in the evidence for the contested material. It may be a sign that the criticism is cultural rather than scientific. Criticism can also be highly emotive, as Weiler points out: 'disparage the opponent with snide or otherwise unkind remarks, make sweeping generalisations about the speaker's work, back those up with irrelevant sources, and avoid all the hard questions that require actual knowledge of the subject in order to reply to them.' Such sceptics exhibit a pathological disbelief, and are likely to be hard-nosed, tough-minded sensing thinking types. Rupert has offered to debate with any members of the scientific board – also with Daniel Dennett - but this was never taken up. This charge of pseudoscience is almost always the reflection of a narrow materialistic belief system. Science should be about backing up one's assertions with evidence.

As well as giving the background of parapsychology and related disciplines, there are detailed sections on the James Randi challenge, which turns out to be a publicity stunt in which the organisers move goalposts as they see fit and then blame the applicant for failing to comply. The activities of CSICOP are also described. The author then moves on to a description of the editing process at Wikipedia, and its unhealthy relationship with Google rankings. This is a significant question, since the term parapsychology has 300,000 views a year, and Rupert's biography page 180,000. It turns out that 87% of Wikipedia editors are male, with an average age of 26.8! Weiler gives examples of experts who have not been able to edit specialist

content, especially Prof Timothy Messer-Kruse, an expert on the Haymaker riot and trial of 1886. His primary source, the transcripts from Congress, was disallowed and his edit reverted back to the original. He was told that he should provide reliable sources for assertions and was overruled by the 'undue weight' policy stating that minority views do not get the same weight as majority views. Thus an expert who is obviously right against a consensus that is wrong cannot make the necessary corrections. To rely on consensus opinions in matters of expertise is clearly disastrous.

In the case of parapsychology and Rupert Sheldrake's page, ideological sceptics have captured the editing process by positioning themselves in a powerful position for arbitration and rules. They can then resist any rule changes and edits that might undermine their views. For Rupert, this means that the pseudoscience label cannot be removed, and ideologues can 'prove' their assertions in a self-referencing manner by citing opinion pieces by CSI or even *The Sceptic's Dictionary*. Thus opinions are presented as facts without any substantiating evidence. The Guerrilla Sceptics have about 90 editors operating via secret Facebook pages and congratulate each other on the impact of their edits, always drawn from a small number of sceptical sources. Weiler recounts his own attempts to edit Rupert's page and how he was systematically blocked as the group tried to have him banned. This leads to the rather dismal conclusion that the only way to win on Wikipedia is not to play.

Weiler devotes a separate section to the Hollywood TEDx event organised by Member Suzanne Taylor. A similar email exchange takes place and once



again Jerry Coyne plays an instigating role by denouncing the meeting as ‘sciencey sounding woo.’ As many readers will also know, parapsychology is beleaguered in terms of funding and the possibility of publishing research in ‘respectable’ journals. Member and Nobel Laureate Brian Josephson has also been at the receiving end of derogatory comments, although he told me that he has had some success on the Wikipedia editing front. The speakers at this TEDx event included Larry Dossey, Russell Targ and Marilyn Schlitz, all well-known in their fields and who have many peer-reviewed articles to their credit.

Larry is a frequent lecturer at medical schools and wonders where he came up short so far as TED is concerned! Weiler characterises the relationship of the sceptics to science as what the Tea Party is to the Republicans. In the longer run, the Internet opens up platforms for argument and this episode may encourage other scientific groups come together to combat the editorial abuse so obvious on Wikipedia – the SPR now has its own reliable Psi Encyclopedia at www.spr.ac.uk. TED should not simply be spreading conventional ideas and should encourage informed debate in these frontier fields rather than caving in to militant sceptical pressure. In addition, Wikipedia should undertake a proper investigation and put its house in order. Last year, a letter was sent to Wikipedia sponsors exposing the bias and prejudice on its complementary medicine pages, an encouraging move though I would not hold your breath as the general overall policy seems to be one of upholding mainstream views in every area.

Last July, Craig gave a webinar on Psi Wars, chaired by Rupert Sheldrake – I can supply the transcript and a recording is available on our website.

ECOLOGY-POLITICS

A PLANETARY BIFURCATION

David Lorimer

■ THE CALL TO UNITE

Edited by Tim Shriver and Tom Rosshirt

The Open Field, 2021, 254 pp., \$25, h/b – ISBN 978-0-593-29823-7

■ OUR MOMENT OF CHOICE

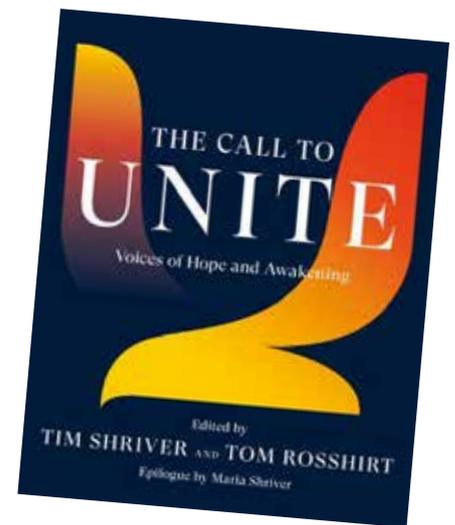
Edited by Robert Atkinson, Kurt Johnson and Deborah Moldow

Atria Books, 2020, 346 pp., \$27, h/b – ISBN 978-1-58270-762-4

As readers will be aware, the strapline of our webinar programme is One Mind, One Planet, One Health, a theme strongly reflected in both of these inspirational and prophetic books, respectively entitled ‘voices of hope and awakening’ and ‘evolutionary visions and hope for the future.’ This common theme of hope was also articulated by Jonathan Porritt in his webinar last year and in the title of his book *Hope in Hell*. Hope has to be enacted, ideals manifested in the world. The experience of the last year characterised in one contribution as being in the same storm rather than the same boat has served to reinforce the necessity of expanding our sense of belonging into what Alex Evans calls a Larger Us, which involves healing collective trauma and injustice as well as overcoming separation, divisions and polarisations.

In his foreword, Tim Shriver writes that we get belonging by giving it, becoming more whole in the process. In conceiving the event and book *The Call to Unite*, he asked how we can move from a culture that divides us to a culture that unites us, the choice at every crisis point: ‘Divide or unite. Blaming the other or *become* the other.’ He continues: ‘We’re tired of hostility. We’re starving for unity. We’re telling a new story of who we are. We are all connected as one people. We find joy in each other’s joy. We find purpose in each other’s happiness. We find belonging without excluding. We seek forgiveness through forgiving. We find our identity without othering. We feel called to unite.’ This is a universal call that is now resonating through the planet in many forms, one of which is a trend towards empathy and kindness.

The Call to Unite consists of many short chapters and poignant photos in six parts: love in the madness – stories of the pandemic; pain always leaves a gift – insightful personal change; magic enters the room – stories and practices of transformation; no boundaries are real – seeing unity in humanity; our only chance to triumph – love in action; and finally, renew the face of the Earth – a call to love. Contributors speak from the heart and from their direct experience, which conveys many essential messages about life and living. In a conversation between physicist Alan Lightman and Oprah Winfrey, Lightman describes his mystical experience when he felt connected to all time, all life, and lost track of his ego. The lesson was to slow down, to live a less frenzied life and to reconnect with stillness. There are many examples of good people sacrificing for the common good, and Rick Warren observes that ‘people respond with their best when the best is asked of



them’ - he himself starts and ends his day with refuelling his soul. Marianne Williamson focuses on the loveless way in which we have organised society over many decades, resulting in widespread mental distress. She writes that we were created to love each other, but only fierce love is up to the mark since ‘a loveless world order will not give up its power easily.’ (p. 39) Eckhart Tolle sees the possibility of awakening out of chaos, emphasising the centrality of our state of consciousness that needs to be rooted in being.

Dr Stefali Tsabary and Maria Shriver talk about the soul of the parent, describing how ‘we have been fast-tracking children on this endless conveyor belt towards a false utopia of happiness and success, and it’s failed. Children are not feeling successful. They’re not feeling happy. They’re feeling angst ridden. They are stressed out with record levels of anxiety, suicidality, and disconnection.’ This linear track towards success is a toxic path of the ego driven by the projection of unmet needs of parents onto children and lacking any authentic contact with the depth dimension. In his last piece before his death, Sir Ken Robinson identifies a long-term crisis in our way of life and a lack of fulfilment. He draws fascinating parallels between industrial agriculture and our education system, both of which are based on yield and output, on the plant rather than cultivating the soil. He feels that humans flourish under certain conditions, and wither in others, and that school ethos or culture is the soil to tend with compassion, collaboration and empathy.

Scarlett Lewis writes that we can choose how we respond to life, ‘and we can always respond with love: ‘Nurturing, healing love actually translates into a powerful and profound formula that can lead us

to choose love in any situation.’ (p. 208) This is also likely to involve courage, gratitude and forgiveness in the spirit of service. The Dalai Lama encourages us to reach out to each other with compassion and that ‘only by coming together in a coordinated global response will we meet the unprecedented magnitude of the challenges we face.’ (p. 222) In the epilogue, Maria Shriver highlights unifying truths, that ‘we are all seeking the same things. We’re all seeking dignity. We’re all seeking joy. We all want to be seen, to be valued, to be understood, to be loved.’ (p. 234) Space permits only a small sampling of the many treasures to be found in this book, which is an invaluable inspirational resource for our time - I urge you to read it.

Our Moment of Choice brings together 43 evolutionary leaders to reflect on a series of interconnected crises that threaten our very survival at a time when there are also signs of a global level shift in consciousness, whereby we can co-create ‘a flourishing, life-affirming future.’ The content was arranged in seven circles: bridge building, restoring ecological balance, conscious enterprise and social change, healing ourselves and the planet, integrating science and spirituality, new frontiers beyond space and time, and finally the big picture. The message of this book is also that we need to come together ‘in a synergistic convergence of the worldwide network of interconnected humanity ushering in the next level of human consciousness.’ Readers ‘are an integral part of the collective field of love and healing that will generate a heart-centred future based on procreation, compassion, appreciation and cooperation.’ (p. xv) Interestingly, this corresponds to a rebalancing of left and right hemisphere thinking as propounded by the seminal cultural work of Iain McGilchrist. He said in a lecture that the left hemisphere does not do empathy, while the Bulgarian sage Peter Deunov foresaw a shift of culture from mind to heart over 80 years ago.

Again, there are too many riches here to be able to give more than a few indications of the guidance, where each chapter is summarised by a spotlight and a call to action. Gregg Braden shows how we can change our story and hence our world from one of separation and fear to oneness and interconnectedness. John Perkins is one of the few contributors explicitly aware of global manipulation of opinion through a system based on war or the threat of war that ironically entails the destruction of the very resources upon which war depends. For him, this is ‘a death economy, consuming

itself into extinction.’ (p. 76) He identifies the characteristics of this death economy, comparing it with a life economy perhaps best illustrated by the contrast between industrial and regenerative agriculture; the former involves suppressing biodiversity by killing life – pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides – where are the suffix ‘cide’ tellingly means to kill, as in suicide.

Larry and Barbie Dossey remind us of the metaphysical centrality of One Mind corresponding to One Life where a sense of connectedness leads to love, and love to caring: ‘our existence is based on unity, connectedness and co-operation, not on separation, competition and rugged individuality as we have been taught. The act of *caring* arises naturally from these intrinsic relationships.’ (p. 122) Justin Faerman writes about evolving our culture from breakdown to breakthrough, recommending that we mirror ‘the pattern of the decentralised, self-organising systems that are at the heart of how nature operates and have been refined and tested over billions of years to produce life affirming outcomes at the planetary scale.’ (p. 252) This is the opposite of mechanistic centralised control. He proposes sorting for deep self-healing and symbiosis at all levels, shifting from logic to intuitively driven thought and action, and fostering the development and expression of purpose at scale, noting that 75% of people have no sense of purpose. Robert Atkinson proposes a series of unifying principles to live while Ervin Laszlo identifies evolutionary trends oriented towards feeling, healing and consciousness. Barbara Marx Hubbard sees a crisis of birth that is giving rise to an invisible inner structure and a process of synergistic convergence. Elisabet Sahtouris provides the afterword in a letter to her great-granddaughter. She sees ‘the transmutation of energy from anger and hate to love, from war to peace, from fierce competition to caring collaboration is a matter of maturation, of our growing up as human species.’ (p. 289)

Taken together, these books provide powerful blueprints for evolutionary transformation towards a heart-based culture of belonging, empathy, love and kindness. It is crucial that increasing numbers of people take this possibility seriously enough to engage in the necessary inner and outer work together to bring about its ultimate realisation. A renewed flourishing of life depends on it.

THE REGENERATION IMPERATIVE

David Lorimer

■ ONENESS VS THE 1%

Vandana Shiva with Kirtikey Shiva

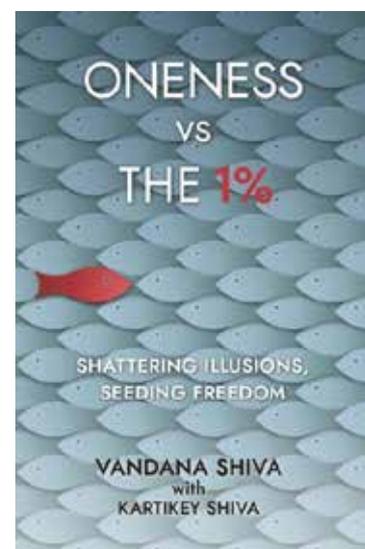
New Internationalist, 2021,
194 pp., £9.99, p/b – ISBN
978-1-78026-513-1

In this book of searing brilliance, Vandana Shiva goes to the heart of the ideological struggle between industrial capitalism represented by Big Agriculture, Big Pharma, Big Food, Big Energy and Big Tech and the holistic movements represented by systems science, agroecology and natural and complementary approaches to health – the last has been subject to prolonged and systematic attack by Big Pharma so-called quack busters, which has led to the closure of most courses on these subjects in British universities by attacking the gatekeepers, threatening them with loss of funding and reputation, and bullying them into submission.

In an epilogue only available in the US Chelsea Green edition, Vandana updates her argument in the light of the coronavirus crisis. In criticising the war language used by Bill Gates and widely prevalent in modern medicine – the battle against cancer – she writes that:

‘In fact, the pandemic is not a war. The pandemic is a consequence of war. A war against life. The mechanical mind connected to the money machine of extraction has created the illusion of humans as separate from nature, and nature as dead, inert raw

material to be exploited. But, in fact, we are part of the biome. And we are part of the virome. The biome and the virome are us. When we wage war on the biodiversity of our forests, our farms, and in our guts, we wage war on ourselves.’



She continues:

‘The health emergency of the coronavirus is inseparable from the health emergency of extinction, the health emergency of biodiversity loss, and the health emergency of the climate crisis. All of these emergencies are rooted in a mechanistic, militaristic, anthropocentric worldview that considers humans separate from—and superior to—other beings. Beings we can own, manipulate, and control. All of these emergencies are rooted in an economic model based on the illusion of limitless growth and limitless greed, which violate planetary boundaries, and destroy the integrity of ecosystems and individual species.’

These two paragraphs contain the kernel of her argument of the origins of the crisis in the prevailing Western world view and are worth re-reading as the imperialist trajectory contains the seeds of its own ultimate destruction: this is why we urgently need a course correction. ‘Health, she writes, ‘is about life and living systems. There is no ‘life’ in the paradigm of health that Bill Gates and his ilk are promoting and imposing on the entire world.’ Gates has funded global institutions and alliances like the WHO and GAVI to impose top-down analysis and prescriptions for health problems: ‘He gives money to define the problems, and then he uses his influence and money to impose the solutions.’ Plans for vaccine passports were already being hatched in early 2019 at meetings between the Big Pharma lobby and the EU (see Members’ Articles section). All this philanthrocapitalist activity not only makes Gates richer and more influential, but ‘results in an erasure of democracy and biodiversity, of nature and culture.’ In this way ‘philanthropic’ money is a tax-efficient means of buying influence and power while at the same time his Foundation invests in the same companies the manufacture the ‘solutions’.

Vandana continues: ‘The coronavirus pandemic and lockdown have revealed even more clearly how we are being reduced to objects to be controlled, with our bodies and minds as the new colonies to be invaded.’ She rightly asserts that ‘this linear, extractive logic is unable to see the intimate relations that sustain life in the natural world. It is blind to diversity, cycles of renewal, values of giving and sharing, and the power and potential of self-organising and mutuality. It is blind to the waste it creates and to the violence it unleashes.’ Chillingly, she concludes: ‘The extended coronavirus lockdown has been a lab experiment for a future without humanity.’ She also points out that in March 2020, Microsoft was awarded a patent ominously numbered

060606 that is effectively a colonising intellectual property claim on our bodies and minds by permitting the mining of data for a cryptocurrency system – Gates is already heavily invested in digital ID (ID2020) and digital currency systems.

This is where awareness raising and resistance come in. She writes: ‘We can seed another future, deepen our democracies, reclaim our commons, regenerate the earth as living members of a One Earth Family, rich in our diversity and freedom, one in our unity and interconnectedness. It is a healthier future. It is one we must fight for. It is one we must claim.’ She then concludes that we stand at a precipice of extinction and asks rhetorically: Will we allow our humanity as living, conscious, intelligent, autonomous beings to be extinguished by a greed machine that does not know limits and is unable to put a break on its colonisation and destruction? Or will we stop the machine and defend our humanity, freedom, and autonomy to protect life on earth? Nothing less is required of us.

Vandana writes with immense clarity, eloquence and passion, as readers can now appreciate. The four chapters of the book cover 1% versus One Earth, One Humanity, the money and technology machines of the 1%, and how the 1% subverts democracy while also evading responsibility for their actions. There are many revealing charts and figures showing the structure of investment conglomerates with their interconnected interests in the current extractive and exploitative system where further monopolistic concentration of money and power is built-in: corporations already control the political and regulatory systems so instead of democratic government ‘of the people, by the people, for the people’, we have government of the corporations, by the corporations for the corporations. This is nothing less than systemic corruption.

Last Saturday, thousands of people marched peacefully in London for freedom. The crisis has highlighted that humanity is at a crossroads and must ‘choose between freedom through oneness versus slavery to the 1%’ – this may sound overdramatic, but proponents of the ‘Great Reset’ envisage just such a revolution involving the Internet of Things, an untested 5G rollout, widespread automation of jobs, and the capacity for all-pervasive technocratic monitoring and surveillance involving the kind of data mining envisaged in the patent referred to above and already practised in China. Vandana draws on her Indian Gandhian Heritage to propose the three Ss of ‘Swaraj: self-organisation, self-rule,

freedom as autopoiesis; Swadeshi: self-reliance and creating local economies; and Satyagraha: the force of truth, of creative civil disobedience.’ All of this is based on interbeing and a ‘decentralised, homegrown, handcrafted mode of production’ that respects the diversity required for balance.

We also have a moral duty not to cooperate with unjust, exploitative and undemocratic processes, but rather to side with and stand up for healing, regeneration, reconnection, renewal and renaissance. We must resist ‘the power of domination and destruction, mastery and ownership’ with ‘the non-violent power of procreation, cooperation, co-evolution that comes from interconnectedness and oneness’ that leads to ‘responsibility and awareness, care and compassion.’ I hope the above exposition will persuade you to order the book immediately and make a point of attending our event with Vandana on June 12 and in the meantime watching the inspiring film about her life at <https://vandanashivathemovie.com>

SCIENTIFIC DICTATORSHIP

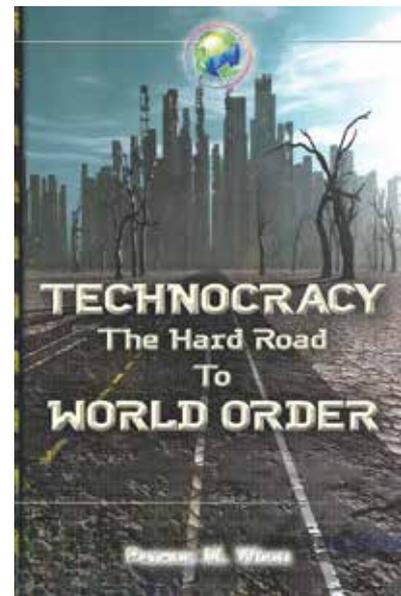
David Lorimer

■ TECHNOCRACY AND THE HARD ROAD TO WORLD ORDER

Patrick M. Wood

Coherent Publishing, 2018,
210 pp., \$24.95, p/b – ISBN
978-0-9863739-8-5

Reflecting on current developments, many people have been returning to the dystopian prophecies of Aldous Huxley and George Orwell, who both happened to be scholars of



Eton. Patrick Wood is the author of a number of books on technocracy and globalisation, and edits the informative digest *Technocracy News*. He worked with Antony Sutton in the 1970s on the plans by the Rockefeller-funded Trilateral Commission for a New International Economic Order, which is now being proposed under the banner of the Great Reset. The origins of technocracy go back to the 1930s, and the philosophy underlying it is that of scientism and social engineering where humans are biological machines to be modified, controlled and even upgraded in terms of operating systems – a paradigm that is reflected in pharmaceutical technocracy of the past year. All questions are to be answered only by science, even though the postulate of scientism is not scientific but philosophical. The first technocracy study course was put together in 1934 and postulates the superiority of the scientist while envisaging the transformation of education into human conditioning ‘to prepare them for a lifetime of work chosen for them by the Technate’ – in other words its aspirations are already authoritarian and dictatorial based on mastery and control.

China is already a fully functional technocracy and is as such an indication of emerging global trends. As of 2020, it had over 600 million facial recognition cameras, and a recent experiment in Guiyang, a ‘Smart City’ of 3.5 million people, was conducted to see how long it would take the police to apprehend a BBC reporter after his picture was fed into a massive AI facial recognition database – the answer is seven minutes! People are controlled through the social credit system linked to digital ID and based on massive data collection further enabled by 5G and the emerging Internet of Things (IoT). We are already subject to data mining and tracking through our mobile phones to the extent that casual conversations can result in pop-up ad within a few hours – soon this will be a few minutes, all without our consent. The future will bring total surveillance and predictive policing whereby people can risk arrest just by having an unwelcome thought. Cash is likely to be abolished so that all purchases can be tracked. Hence, in the Smart City of tomorrow, ‘people will indeed be living in a fishbowl: tracked, monitored, analysed, nudged, limited and directed. They will be told what to think, how to think, when to think and how they are allowed to speak. Nonconformists will be conformed or shunned. Trouble makers will simply be excluded altogether.’ (p. 133) The current Internet censorship is giving us a taste of things to come.

A controversial thesis is the equating of sustainable development –

and specifically the UN SDGs – with technocracy and economic development. The author links these with the New Urban Agenda to show how the concept and implementation of the Smart City is in fact driving a process, which, while it is collaborative is not constitutional. The prevalence of Public – Private Partnerships (P3) and Collaborative Governance create the kind of stakeholder capitalism where cities are beholden to investors and corporations rather than voters, readdressing ‘the way we plan, finance, develop, govern and manage cities and human settlements.’ The author regards this as entirely unconstitutional and a means of structuring the world through connectivity and supply chains linking smart cities in ways that are entirely independent of central government, all the more so since widespread deregulation. China is well aware of this with its Belt and Road initiative buying up global infrastructure ‘in order to achieve economic and trade domination.’ Underlying all this is a way of thinking bringing ‘more growth, more trade, more aid, more science, more technology and more management’ that stands in sharp contrast to self-organising principles in nature, as pointed out in my review of Vandana Shiva’s book above good. So we should be wary of fine inclusive rhetoric and question political motivations, even if many of the aspirations are in themselves admirable.

Technocratic developments are incompatible with the fourth amendment of the US Constitution: ‘the rights of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated.’ This means freedom under the law, which also enshrines freedom of expression and hence diversity while recognising our interdependence and reciprocity. No single view should be universally imposed, yet the attempted enforcement of uniformity through censorship is now enabled by Internet algorithms with no consideration for tolerance and respect for differences. I parted company with the author in his chapter on spirituality. He criticises the Esalen Institute for speaking of global transformation and a community of mindfulness, accusing them of pointedly excluding and disallowing Christian input. He also criticises religions for green statements that support the SDGs, while not proposing any solutions of his own. He is right to call out the implications of technocracy and its relationship to sustainable development, but wrong in rejecting every form of globalism that goes beyond our currently inadequate structures, as I discuss in my review of David Griffin below.

GENERAL

THE PROMISE OF BETTER ANGELS

Martin Lockley

■ A PROMISED LAND

Barack Obama

Crown Publishers, 2020,
751 pp., \$45.00, h/b - ISBN
978-15287-6316

“We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory will swell when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”
Abraham Lincoln

We have heard a lot about Barack Obama since he left the White House in 2016. Sadly, it was all negative nonsense perpetrated by “someone” as he says “diametrically opposed” to all Obama stood for, who succeeded him in the presidential office without winning the popular vote. Ironically, as psychology recognises, this “someone” proves the adage that “small minds are always the first to criticise great ones.” Obama can take it as a compliment that he was constantly on the mind of his successor. Thankfully this someone is not mentioned by name until page 672 of the lengthy 701-page autobiography: and rightly so. This is Obama’s story and only the first volume, dealing with his first term in office as the first black man in the White House. *A Promised Land* is a more than apt title.

Barack or ‘Barry’ as his mother like to call him wears his somewhat intellectual heart on his sleeve in this engaging and personal biography. He describes how his destiny “straddling two worlds” explains the “strangeness of his heritage.” His maternal grandmother hailed from Kansas, heartland of the USA, but far from being a stereotypical conservative she evidently brought up Barack’s mother, Ann Norton, in such a way that she inclined to reading “beatnik poets and French existentialists. “She recognised the world as a complicated place ... full of opportunities for moral instruction.” Barack stresses his mother’s, strong influence, coupled with the fact that “he did not know his father.” She encouraged him to read, and to discuss what he learned, so that by his second year at university he had decided to “live like a monk – reading, writing and filling up journals,” all valuable preparation for the superior skills he was developing as a writer and advocate for social justice. From his early days what captured his attention was “not politics but social movements” and his mother’s advice to put the interests of others before his own.

Given an SMN audience with interests in the health and conscience of society it is appropriate to draw attention to Obama's efforts to fix the notoriously-problematic American healthcare system. Those unfamiliar with the Affordable Care Act (ACA) which became his signature project, known as "Obamacare," might appreciate knowing that "the quest for some form of universal health care in the US dates back to 1912" when Teddy Roosevelt, aware of the national health insurance systems in the UK and Germany, first proposed a "national health service." The issue arose again under President Truman in 1945 and 1949, the latter date being a year after the UK founded its National Health Service [July 5th 1948]. Coinciding with McCarthyism, powerful lobbyists including the American Medical Association (AMA), and many Republicans, branded these efforts as bolshevism and what has become misleadingly known as "socialised medicine," which for conservatives has a derogatory connotation.

Although such obstructionism is not new, Obama faced it from day one of his administration, when senate leader McConnell, infamous for his opposition, declared his intent to make Obama a one-term president. Democrats warned him that the Republicans were intent on "breaking" him. In a world of greater promise, where Obama's brand of "social" awareness carried more weight, opponents might respect that leaders are elected to honour the will of the people and put the interests of others before their own. [They might even read that portion of the Hippocratic oath which reminds doctors that they are members of society, with special obligations to all fellow human beings]. Sadly, certain crass factions deliberately misinterpret social justice movements as 'socialism' and government interference with individual liberty.

Failure to devise a "single-payer program" other than the Medicare program introduced for seniors under the socially conscious LBJ (Johnson) administration, created "spiraling healthcare costs" with adverse economic impacts for all: "Detroit had to build in" an "extra \$1,500 in worker and retiree healthcare costs" to the price of each car produced. The result was to off-load healthcare costs on fellow citizens, to the point where 43 million Americans were uninsured by the time Obama took office. Famously the ACA became a huge, 'complicated' 2,700-page bill which opponents simplistically regarded as "a symbol of an out-of-control government takeover of healthcare"—a dangerous experiment. Opposition was fraught with idealistic objections involving often tangential religious issues related to abortion

and contraception, coming from, among others, the Catholic Bishops. When Obama asked opponents for alternatives, none were offered, and he found their obstructive answers "threadbare." But divine intervention would come in the form of "an unlikely ally... Sister Carol Keenhan, a ... perpetually cheerful nun who headed up the nation's Catholic hospitals." She broke with the bishops "by insisting that the passage of the bill was vital to ...the mission of caring for the sick." Obama would tell aids "I love nuns." Chalk one for social conscience.

Many will remember that Obama took office immediately after the financial crisis, largely caused by the greed and deregulation of the financial industry. Thus, he was acutely and presciently aware of the danger political parties faced by unexpected crisis when the H1N1 virus broke out in his first year. Having done his homework on US pandemic preparedness when in the Senate, he confessed that "what I knew scared the hell out of me." But as the WHO declared a pandemic he quickly declared a national public health emergency, went to Congress for emergency funding, put the Centers for disease Control (CDC) and Homeland Security on alert and "pulled together an interagency team to evaluate how ready the US was for a worst case scenario." He learned, as the new man on the job, that "we weren't ready at all." As a result, before he left office, Obama, created a "Playbook for Early Response to High-Consequence Emerging Infectious Disease Threats and Biological Incidents" through the National Security Council (NSC).

We expect to learn more about this very topical issue in volume two, which you will all no doubt also want to read(!), but suffice it to say that in November 2019, that certain 'someone' moved to gut the NSC, largely because whistleblowers were speaking up on other security matters that were causing that 'someone' to be impeached. Ironically for public health, the timing could not have been worse with Covid-19 just about to break out. As John Gans, author of *White House Warriors*, a book on the NSC, pointed out it made the White House "less equipped to handle" transnational issues like pandemics. This has been obvious from the Covid response and the pandemic statistics. I was just in South Korea (Nov. 22-Dec 18th 2020) and after a quarantine of 14 days travelled cautiously around a county which has recorded about 1 death per 100,000, compared with 100 per 100,000 in the USA. In South Korea one feels the security and support of a modest people and a nation committed to the collective good. The health authorities call themselves the "support team" and ask "Are you OK?"

Any commentary on Obama's activities post-2012, ventures beyond what he covers in *A Promised Land*, although he does, in his preface, note how his successor has tried to undo his good work. Almost all commentary since 2016, including reviews of this book, note the stark contrast between Obama and Trump, and how America is now perceived, almost pitifully, in the world. In this regard Obama's legacy remains strong. He won the Nobel Prize and modestly wondered "what for?" He was universally popular abroad. His signature healthcare bill has survived multiple republican attacks, and a challenge in the Supreme Court, not least because the American public likes it. One of my conservative acquaintances, whose ideology I find difficult to understand, admits "Obama was a class act." As he and Michelle famously stated: "When they go low, we go high." Acutely aware of his 'first black president' status, he was if anything too cautious and too reluctant to grandstand. He assembled good people around him and when asked by Michelle, in front of his campaign aids: "Why do *you* need to be president?" He hesitantly replied "There's no guarantee we can pull it off [but] ... one thing I know for sure ... [if successful] ...all kids – Black Kids, Hispanic kids, kids who don't fit in— they'll see themselves differently ... and that alone ...would be worth it." The room fell quiet, and "Michelle stared for what seemed like an eternity" before replying "Well Honey, that was a pretty good answer."

Much as his partisan opponents might balk. Obama came up with some pretty good answers. After the Bush era blunders in Iraq, Obama, who had voted against the war, became the chosen one – the right man at the right time. As Ted Kennedy advised him "You don't choose the time. The time chooses you." Interestingly, like



Bill Clinton, Obama had a quality that made people predict he would become president. It was perhaps that audacity and hopeful confidence spoken of in his earlier biography. But he had prepared himself well, absorbing his mother's moral instruction, working hard, absorbing American history as a true scholar and engaging with the American people at the grass roots level. It was as if he had made a promise to himself to stand for all the promising, fundamentally spiritual ideals one can aspire to and hope for in a *promised land*. To stand with Abraham Lincoln's better angels. In succeeding to the highest office in America, Obama overcame those 'strained passions and bonds of affection' and led the way in that promising direction as no other president before him. The 'mystic chords of memory' will always remember him as a "class act."

POWER VS GOODNESS

David Lorimer

■ REINHOLD NIEBUHR AND THE QUESTION OF GLOBAL DEMOCRACY

David Ray Griffin

Process Century Press, 2021,
198 pp., \$25, p/b – ISBN
978-1-94044-749-0

This book follows up a key theme from David's earlier works reviewed in these pages – *The American Trajectory: Divine or Demonic?* and *The Christian Gospel for Americans*. The first chapter takes as its starting point the anarchical character of civilisation identified by Bertrand Russell's friend G. Lowes Dickinson in the 1920s. Contrary to the prevailing orthodoxy of political realism based on 'power, self-interest, competition and self-help', David argues that this global anarchy 'can be overcome and that, if human civilisation is to have a bright future, perhaps any future at all, it *must* be overcome.' The main obstacle is nation-state sovereignty, which David points out has two dimensions: internally in terms of the legitimate exercise of coercive power, and externally as independence from outside authority in the control of territory and population. The central issue relates to a higher world authority putting limits on the external sovereignty of each state.

Western thinkers since Dante have been exercised about the political structures required to prevent war, and in 1761 (260 years ago!) Rousseau published an abstract of a 1713 work by Abbe de Saint-Pierre in which he noted that 'the misery created by war is so great that a plan to secure a lasting peace must be found.' Kant followed with

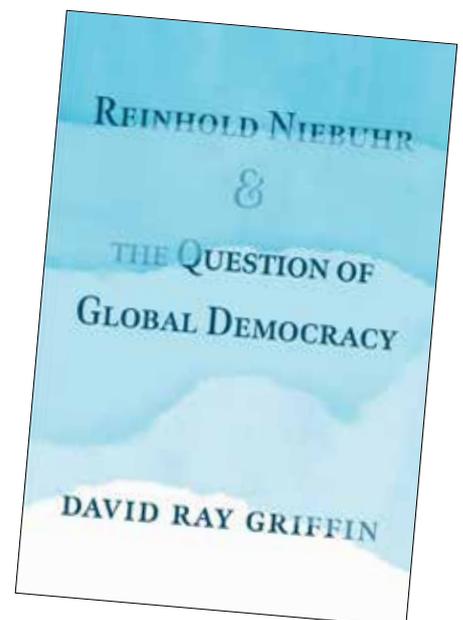
his own works at the end of the 18th-century, proposing a confederation without sovereign power that strongly resembles the later developments of the League of Nations and the UN. My own great-grandfather James Lorimer published *The Institutes of the Law of Nations* in 1883, in which he advocated disarmament alongside an international government with the 'necessary military force to provide security' and hence to guarantee the freedom of all national governments. The next two chapters outline the establishment and failure of both the League of Nations and the UN, precisely because the great powers wished to retain their own freedom of action and nationalistic dreams of hegemony: 'the UN has not been able to maintain peace because it was deliberately denied the [executive, legislative and judicial] power to do this.' (p. 34 ff)

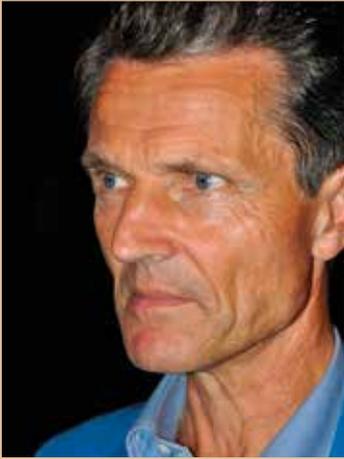
The longest chapter is devoted to Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971) on global democracy in relation to his theology. I read his *Moral Man and Immoral Society* over 40 years ago in which the egotism of individuals is sublimated into that of nations, who are expected to pursue their national interests in accordance with political realism. Niebuhr was influenced by the social gospel and the idea that God acts to create hope through ideals in moves towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God based on compassion, order and justice. He famously said that 'man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.' However, he failed to give full-fledged support to global democracy because of the realities of power grounded in historical realism. His moral realism recognised the need for a powerful and democratic global institution, but his political realism acknowledged the likelihood of the continuing domination by the most powerful. Indeed, this trend has accelerated since that time, and we now live in a systemically corrupted oligarchic and plutocratic world where power has become more concentrated and less accountable. As of 2021, we recognise that technology gives us greater powers for good and evil, and that the overcoming of anarchy through the imposition of order may result in tyranny and loss of freedom – all in the name of security.

Does this mean that the ideal of global democracy has no future? David thinks not, and I agree with him. He argues that 'global democratic government is now *necessary* for the survival of civilisation, that its creation would be highly *desirable* for many other reasons as well, and that are even reasons to consider it *possible*.' (p. 111) He envisages a federal structure with subsidiarity based on a global

bill of rights and responsibilities and incorporating a legislature, an executive branch and a judiciary system. Although his work is not mentioned, this is exactly what Nicholas Hagger proposes in his books *World State* and *World Constitution* (see Issue 127, p. 57). The necessity arises out of the war economy, the continued proliferation of nuclear weapons, and ecological degradation. Its desirability is a potential means of curbing plutocracy – one dollar, one vote – enshrining human rights and moving towards what Richard Falk calls universalist logic beyond the pragmatism and self-interest of statist and imperialist logic; also as a means of overcoming market economism and the unsustainability of economic growth.

Morality needs to trump posturing patriotism (the UK is upgrading its nuclear arsenal) if we are to create a world ordered on moral principles of justice, compassion and cooperation that would align power with goodness and altruism. David suggests that possibility of this coming about could arise through pressure from global civil society and an alliance of NGOs with the religions and, I would add, a global ethic. This is what the Bulgarian Sage Peter Deunov meant by a culture of love, the 'fourth degree' of human culture after violence, law and justice. Here, Love is life for and service to the whole, which is surely not an impossible ideal. This provides a compass direction for the future. The world will only be transformed when a sufficient number of people come together and non-violently rise up to call for a new system infused by love, compassion, empathy and care rather than power, coercion, violence and inequality. In this, we can each play a small part.





David Lorimer

Note: many of these books are now available in downloadable electronic form

Books In Brief

SCIENCE- PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

■ Helgoland

Carlo Rovelli

Allen Lane 2021, 188 pp., £20, h/b.

The title and context of this beautifully written book evoke the wild landscape of the barren island of Helgoland where Heisenberg had gone to reflect on the state of quantum theory, and there he reached his fundamental realisation of interaction and connectedness. Rovelli takes this story forward with his own work on relationality and contextuality, where the world is 'a fabric woven by relations' rather than a collection of objects or substances: everything exists only in relation to something else – including scientists and their instruments - while process become central. In this respect, I found the omission of any reference to Whitehead curious, and the author could also have drawn on participatory research as another perspective.

Ernst Mach tried to banish metaphysics from science in favour of relations between observable quantities where sensation is equally physical and mental (William James wrote about this), but doing away with metaphysics is in fact mission impossible. It is not in fact a question of 'adapting our philosophy to our science' but rather to recognise that philosophy, logic and language underlie the very articulation of thought and theory. Rovelli makes an interesting comparison with the work of the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna, with his ideas on co-dependent arising where nothing exists independently in itself – this is 'independence without autonomous essence' grounded in impermanence and nothingness.

The last part of the book is an expression of naturalism and consilience in the E.O. Wilson sense

but based on quantum mechanics. The author rejects the extension of concepts such as entanglement into other fields and is dismissive with respect to panpsychism, asserting that 'all the evidence suggests that without [the complex elaboration of information that occurs in our brains] we have no mental life. Like many mainstream writers, he has evidently failed to consider the wider evidence base. His position is one of the Popper and Eccles' promissory materialism that the workings of the brain 'will probably be clarified sooner or later.' The next chapter elaborates a physical explanation of meaning as relative relevant information within a web of correlations – I find David Bohm's approach more satisfying in this regard. There is then a tension between his notion of entity that includes animals, humans and machines and the primacy of process and relations where the world is known from within it. Here there are some stimulating reflections, since in his scheme there is no outside to the totality of things, hence 'the world *is* this reciprocal reflection of perspectives', an idea that could in fact be extended to other levels and worlds. The book is a very worthwhile exploration of the importance of relations though within a self-limiting metaphysical context.

■ The Immutable Laws of the Akashic Field

Ervin Laszlo (Hon SMN) with Kingsley L Dennis, Maria Sagi and Christopher M Bache (SMN) – foreword by Marianne Williamson and epilogue by Jean Houston

St Martins Essentials 2021, 178 pp., \$17.99, p/b

This short book is the latest iteration of Ervin Laszlo's Akashic Field as a cosmic field in which all information and knowledge are interconnected and preserved. The concept is an updated formulation of an ancient idea and builds on David Bohm, among others. The first part explains three laws in

terms of connectivity, memory and coherence, showing how these are embedded in quantum physics and evolutionary theory in ways that bring together science and spirituality – ‘a domain of complex evolving systems, oriented by universal “in-formation”.’ Kingsley Dennis’ comprehensive 40-page essay looks at life in the new planetary system that incorporates the latest technology, although I found his arguments on the optimistic side with respect to the deployment of surveillance and control mechanisms. I do accept, however, that there are trends towards increased connection, communication, decentralising, networking, consciousness, compassion and collaboration. The key question seems to be whether those currently in power and embodying a different set of C-values – competition, conflict, conquest, control and censorship – can be dislodged through grassroots activity. Our collective choice of values is absolutely critical, as are questions of human identity in relation to developing technology (p. 57). Open and informed debate around these issues is essential.

Maria Sagi draws on her experience of nonlocal healing to propose a wider approach to health that maintains harmony between body, mind and spirit, thereby enhancing our immune status and energetic coherence. Many readers will be familiar with the work of Chris Bache from his recent book and lecture, and here he contributes an illuminating essay on psychedelics-mediated Akashic experiences. He effectively offers a new epistemology and ontology based on deep inner knowing or gnosis, especially in S 19 – the Cosmic Tour where he experiences ‘how consciousness manifests itself in separate forms while remaining unified.’ He insists, rightly in my view, that this is a higher order of knowing that represents a quintessential insight into the nature of reality; also into Light as well as death and rebirth at every level. Such a proposition is not acceptable in terms of local realism, but is more plausible if one interprets the brain as a macroscopic quantum system capable of two modes of perception: direct-intuitive-nonlocal as well as sensory experience in terms of a perceptual-cognitive-symbolic mode. The book as a whole provides an accessible framework and guidance that can serve as a matrix for a regenerative and caring culture based on what Jean Houston calls the possible human.

MEDICINE-HEALTH

■ No Endings, Only Beginnings

Bernie Siegel MD with Cynthia J. Hurn

Hay House 2020, 215 pp., \$19.99, h/b.

Many readers will be familiar with earlier books by Bernie Siegel such as *Love, Medicine and Miracles*, and this latest one is subtitled ‘a doctor’s notes on living, loving, and learning who you are’ written in the aftermath of the death of his wife Bobbie after 63 years of marriage. The chapter headings are indicative: begin your quest for truth, live authentically, be an agent of change, seek the creator everywhere, just love, explore the mysteries, share your story, understand that endings are always beginnings. Crises in our lives can lead us to ask the big questions, and for physicians suffering and pain are present in their patients. The book contains many instructive lessons from such encounters that convey pivotal insights to the reader. One story relates an elderly resident confined to a wheelchair who asked the nurse if she thought God really forgives you for everything – even that she had stolen and sold her parents’ silver so she could afford to get married – and the nurse told her that God would forgive her. The next morning, the nurse discovered that the woman had come out of her room and walked the length of the hall with no assistance, put her teeth and Bible on the nurse’s desk, saying that she would not need these anymore, after which she went back to her room, lay down and died.

Synchronicities and intuitive prompts can occur when we are open to life, while humour can release a lot of tension. One of Bernie’s children did not want to leave home, so one day they dismantled his bed while he was out, and of course they were all waiting for a reaction when he went to bed. Not a peep, but the next morning at the breakfast table he said, ‘Thanks, my back feels a lot better now’ and they all had a good laugh. For Bernie, the reason we are here is the differences we can make and the care that we show, but this also entails caring for and forgiving ourselves. He reminds us that health is our natural state, but we also need to share our wounds and help each other heal. Death is also part of the natural order representing a new beginning. ‘Life is a series of choices, it is not about fighting death; it is about the relationships, humour, joy and vitality’ – living and loving fully in the moment. The final quote is from Gandhi. Here is an extract: ‘in the midst of death, life persists; in the midst of untruth, truth persists; in the midst of darkness, light persists.’

Hence I gather that God is Life, Truth, Light. He is Love. He is the supreme Good.’ Inspiring words in our troubled times.

■ Corona False Alarm? Facts and Figures

Dr Karina Reiss and Dr Sucharit Bhakdi

Chelsea Green 2020, 159 pp., £10.99, p/b.

Readers of this journal are likely to have formed their own strong views on Covid-19 – as the title suggests, this book by a cell biologist at the University of Kiel and a medical microbiologist from the University of Mainz takes a critical view of the official narrative based on the situation in Germany. Readers who have followed these developments will be familiar with the many arguments around the misclassification of deaths, the flaws of the PCR test, the collateral damage of lockdowns, the suppression of clinical treatments and practitioners, the controversy over Sweden and questions surrounding immune status in relation to vaccination. In addition to all this, there is the role of the mainstream media such as the BBC, which has uncritically rolled out the official line, despite questioning from thousands of health professionals, whose differing views have been suppressed and censored as envisaged in the scenario planning Event 201 held in October 2019.

For me, the situation forms part of a broader paradigm war in health and medicine that has been going on for more than 100 years where the pharmaceutical industry is dominant in every sector, including regulatory agencies, international bodies like the WHO, learned societies, politics and lobbying, advertising, medical journals, medical education and medical research. Governments have given no recommendations on maintaining immune status, but have resolutely driven the vaccine agenda while at the same time claiming that no other effective treatments exist despite evidence to the contrary, especially at early stages in the process – tens of thousands of lives have arguably been lost as a result and as a society we have been locked down in fear. The authors show how graphs and statistics have been manipulated to maintain fear levels – for instance the increase in the number of cases is related to increasing tests instead of using a per capita baseline. It is too early to judge the ultimate fallout of the whole situation, but there is a grave danger that restrictions on fundamental rights and freedom of expression, enforced conformity of the media, and defamation of dissidents will continue, undermining

our democratic enlightenment legacy and ushering in the kind of technocratic dystopia chillingly envisaged by Aldous Huxley and George Orwell.

■ The Energy Equation: From the Naked Ape to the Knackered Ape

Dr Sarah Myhill and Craig Robinson

Hammersmith Press 2021, 198 pp., £12.99, p/b.

In the last issue, I reviewed Sarah's magnum opus, *Ecological Medicine*, and here she and her mathematician co-author focus on ways of keeping the energy equation in our favour and avoiding the syndrome of being tired all the time. Despite the extraordinary progress in biomedicine, we face an epidemic of chronic conditions brought on mainly by poor nutrition and high levels of stress. Sarah discovered for herself that she had an allergy to dairy products that was being transmitted to her daughter Ruth through her breastmilk and resulting in howling, crying and sleeplessness. Cutting out dairy had a miraculous effect. Fatigue is now a very common condition and the authors create a 'knackerometer' before explaining the energy equation where supply has to exceed demand. They relate how the body generates energy for life but also inflammations resulting from allergy and autoimmunity that often have their source in addiction.

They describe metabolic syndrome as a background to more serious conditions with a further chart questionnaire and reasons given by patients not to change. The upper fermenting gut can be a serious issue and the role of mitochondria in energy generation is vital as well as in relation to the ageing process. Sleep and exercise are also crucial, as is the quality of our water, especially as featured in the work of Gerald Pollack. The next section explains energy expenditure and the immunological and emotional holes in the energy bucket, with advice on key interventions for good health – for her, this means the PK diet where energy comes mainly from fats rather than carbohydrates and sugars. The appendices contain more detailed advice divided into basic, acute and chronic. Another interesting note is the role of heat in detoxification – for instance baths with Epsom salts, but also saunas. Overall, the book provides a very readable account of the fundamentals of good health.

■ Energetic Cellular Healing and Cancer

Tjitze de Jong

Findhorn Press 2021, 256 pp., \$16.99, p/b.

Although this book is ostensibly aimed at cancer patients, its treatment of mental, emotional and spiritual imbalances at the root of disease is much more widely applicable. The author draws extensively on his own experience, but also the work of Wilhelm Reich and Barbara Ann Brennan, with whom he trained. The key to healing is 'recognition of self-limiting and self-debilitating beliefs, behaviours and patterns', most of which originate in formative years. The first part explains the nature of energetic cellular healing, and this is followed by 15 illustrative client stories. The third part consists of a series of chapters on cancer and emotional imbalances, including worry and frustration, fear, guilt and shame, anger, lack of self-worth, suppression of emotions and compromising one's essence. The fourth part addresses how to heal or prevent illness, starting with inner listening and going on to consider various aspects of the immune system. There is a chapter on pioneers who have been ridiculed and whose work has been suppressed by agencies and the pharmaceutical industry – for me this is one of the great scandals of our time, putting money before health and healing. An interesting general piece of advice deriving from the work of Bruce Tainio is to maintain a high frequency as disease requires lower frequencies in order to operate, which would be consistent with maintaining a strong immune system.

■ Healing Sick Houses

Roy and Ann Procter

Self-published 2020 (2000), 172 pp., no price given – see www.westerngeomancy.org

Roy and Ann are among the most senior Members of the Network, having joined during the 1970s. Roy worked as an aeronautical engineer, and Ann as a psychotherapist. They were both trained by the pioneering Bruce Macmanaway in dowsing and healing. The book opens up a wide range of modalities that only make sense in the light of the existence of subtle energies and realms in addition to physical factors such as electromagnetic and geopathic influences, especially in relation to houses. The authors have been involved in 10,000 cases over the years, some of which are documented here. Their method entails working from floor plan drawings to identify negative influences and energies, then

using spiritual healing to rectify the situation. They explain important principles as well as dowsing techniques very thoroughly, and their dedication to this important intuitive and healing work shines through. They note that the major change since the first addition is the intensification of what they call technopathic electrosmog. A highly informative read.

■ Crypto-Infections

Dr Christian Perronne

Hammersmith Books 2021, 340 pp., £12.65, p/b.

The title refers to idiopathic or mystery illnesses representing hidden long-term infections. The thesis of this book is about chronic crypto infections that may live behind many of today's prevalent diseases - this is controversial in conventional medical terms. The specific context is Lyme disease and the effect this has on long-term patients where most doctors are not 'Lyme-literate.' This means that they will resist the author's suggestion that an important factor is *Borrelia* bacteria. He positions crypto-infections as the missing link between Pasteur and Freud, the biological and psychological, which has led to many people receiving psychiatric treatment for what are in fact biological conditions – this includes many people with chronic fatigue symptoms. The author explains the struggle within the medical community in terms of taking his concerns seriously in spite of a wealth of supporting evidence. He also makes the important point that there is in fact one health with animals and humans sharing the same environment, including microbial. In addition, the notion of one microbe, one disease is outdated and we need to move beyond treating only the signs and symptoms of chronic disease rather than searching out hidden causes.

■ End Chronic Disease

Kathleen Dichiaro

Hay House 2020, \$15.99, p/b.

This book is based on the author's experience and explains the interconnected healing power of various aspects of beliefs, behaviours and bacteria along with their interrelationships. She highlights the importance of values, wisdom, nourishment, intuition, positive emotions and a sense of connection, suggesting that people ask themselves how they got to this point in their lives. Under behaviours, there are chapters on eating, breathing, sleep, exercise, cooking, redefining stress, connecting with nature and honouring your transitions. The third section

explains the importance of symbiotic relationships with microbes, including in the microbiome. The process begins at birth, and bacterial biodiversity is correlated with resilience. It was interesting to learn about the immunological role of the appendix and tonsils. Our immune system is described in a holistic context and it is evident that we need a new understanding of the processes of chronic disease, but the good news is that we can all make responsible and intelligent lifestyle choices to modify our bodily processes.

PHILOSOPHY/ SPIRITUALITY

■ Radical Loving

Rabbi Wayne Dosick

Monkfish 2021, 220 pp., \$24.95, p/b.

This lyrical and inspiring book sends out a prophetic call for us to rediscover our spiritual roots and have the courage to become voices for radical transformation representing the subtitle of One God, One World, One People. About 50 short chapters consist of stories, reflections and prayers working together and drawing on the lessons of the past as applied to the present: 'Temporal solutions in the political expediencies of the moment offer little. Not then. Not now.' To Re-Member is to come together, and to overcome fear and demonising of the other represented by fundamentalisms. Many readers will agree that 'these incredibly challenging times call us to nothing less than a radical shift in human consciousness, a radical embrace of a world of Oneness' to which we each need to respond individually and collectively in creative ways. This Oneness reflects our intrinsic essential nature obscured by our cultural sense of separation – also by various 'isms' - but which we are capable of recovering as Messengers of Peace and Warriors for Good. As Russell and Einstein proclaimed in the 1950s: remember your humanity and forget the rest.

Our contribution begins at home and in our local communities, which Rabbi Wayne articulates in potent statements about God and Love (pp. 52, 59). He sees our task as bringing 'God's Love and Light into the world, to be God's Love and Light in the world', spelling out exactly what he means by radical loving (p. 65) and insisting that we can indeed enact this through what he calls 'awesome holiness' and prophetic witness (p. 161). This involves an inner journey to discovery the universal at the heart of the individual, for which we need a set of mystical spiritual

tools including silence, listening and courage as well as capacities for kindness and compassion, gratitude and joy, especially in nature. We also need to restore civility, decency and dignity, integrating the Divine Feminine and Masculine in Oneness for the common good. If we don't believe and act as if another world is possible, then our inertia will allow the continuation of our self-destructive business as usual, so we are all invited to 'imagine, envision, create One World, One People United in Love.' This is what Peter Deunov meant when he said that Love is Life for the Whole. Variations of this message are now springing up around the planet as real seeds of hope to be nurtured into a process of worldwide regeneration.

■ Frederick the Great's Philosophical Writings

Edited by Avi Lifschitz

Princeton 2021, 249 pp., £30, h/b.

Frederick the Great (1712-1786) was characterised by Voltaire as a philosopher king in the mode of Solomon, although critics highlight inconsistencies between his writings and military policy – his reign was an enlightened absolutism (though see his justification on p. 169). He was unusual in being both a monarch and an author, writing not only philosophical discourses but also poems, essays and satires, almost entirely in French. He maintained an extensive correspondence with prominent European intellectuals. His principal and most striking work here is *Anti-Machiavel*, published in 1740 – the year of his accession – at the age of 28. It is remarkable achievement for anyone of that age, demonstrating a considerable knowledge of history and politics. The opening sentence sets the tone: 'Machiavelli's *The Prince* is to morality what Spinoza's work is to faith: Spinoza undermined the very foundations of faith, and it attempted nothing less than the demolition of the entire edifice of religion; Machiavelli corrupted politics, and set out to destroy the teachings of sound morality.' (p. 13) Frederick wants to confront sophism and crime with reason and justice in his detailed chapter by chapter critique with corresponding antidote; his view of human nature is far less cynical.

The sovereign should be concerned with the welfare of his people rather than his own interest and ambition – interestingly, Frederick repudiated the notion of divine right in favour of a social contract. Fundamentally, he puts forward the idea of upright and noble character, which is entirely incompatible with dissembling and

deception – he completely rejects the premise that all men are scoundrels. The Prince, however, should not be naïve and should have a realistic understanding of human nature without succumbing to vice and corruption himself. One of his historic examples is Marcus Aurelius, and his audience is the other sovereigns of his day – there is also an essay on forms of government where he concludes that we have to content ourselves with what is least imperfect.

Another theme of the day was self-love in relation to morality where Frederick argues that our true self-interest lies in the practice of virtue. He advocates education of women and is strongly critical of the politics of the Catholic Church, observing that the world is just as corrupt since the crucifixion and redemption – why would God have chosen an unsuccessful strategy? And his dialogue with the dead between Madame de Pompadour and the Virgin Mary is blasphemously irreverent while his examination of an essay on prejudice finds it full of prejudice, concluding 'I regret the time I wasted in reading this work, and the time I am wasting in giving you an account of it.' The same can certainly not be said of this volume, which is an important articulation of many Enlightenment ideals and establishes Frederick as a serious thinker in his own right and a man who strove to be a model of probity, integrity and practical wisdom.

■ Finding Love Everywhere

Robert Holden

Hay House 2020, 133 pp., \$17.99, h/b.

This beautiful and inspirational book is a real gem in the simplicity and directness of its message of love in action, echoing in tone the mystical poetry of Rumi and Hafiz. The five parts consist of text and poems on looking for love, loving others as yourself, loving when it's difficult, letting life love you, and being the presence of love. The author himself resolved to become the most loving person he could be, which is how he eventually found love, taking the Course in Miracles in along the way and following the advice of Tom Carpenter by making himself spontaneously available to the love of God. For him, St Francis of Assisi was a man who found love everywhere and Nelson Mandela an example of love-centred leadership.

There are too many memorable poems to mention but I especially loved Black Madonna, Butterflies, White Feathers, Start of Something Wonderful (doing nothing/ in its purest form/ is receptivity), Three Angels, A New Kind of Politics (where leaders who

dare to love the most always win the majority vote), Love's Instrument and Half a Poem (every poem is finished off/ in the heart, because poetry is,/ in essence, listening to the/ Voice of Love). Love is the very fabric of life, as Tom Carpenter states: 'there would be no life without love.' Every day we can be a loving presence in the world and our spiritual practice is nothing other than love-in-action. If you only buy one book from this section, this should be it.

■ Smoke Hole

Martin Shaw

Chelsea Green 2021, 127 pp.,
\$19.95, h/b.

Tellingly subtitled 'looking to the wild in the time of the spyglass', the three stories so eloquently developed in this book engage the imagination at a soul level. The title comes from a Siberian myth that one can hurt people by closing the smoke hole in their tent, which cuts them off from God and the divine world – the realm of prayer and the timeless, which our technologies have seduced us into forgetting. The author provides us 'something to hang your heart on' in stories featuring the handless maiden, the bewitched princess and the spyglass, each of which contains existential lessons for our spiritual journeys. The process of severance is initiated from the outside by poor decisions and from the inside by curiosity, resulting in a sequence of adventures and the ultimate vanquishing of evil.

However, we learn that 'little of substance gets forged without pressure. Duress can birth ingenuity.' (p. 31) Initiations negotiate a level of suffering and are 'an attempt to equip you to stabilise in moments of great stress.' (p. 51) The author asks how we can curate the wisdom that comes from suffering, engaging us with 'the very stuff of life'. He argues that there is a certain sacredness in defeat and that 'the mess out there is because of a mess in here': disorder in our outer world is in fact a mirror. We need to learn to listen more deeply, to cultivate a sense of awe and reverence, recovering elements of our true nature in a prolonged encounter with the wild. This can also encourage us to assume responsibilities, and such experiences can lead us to wisdom. The spyglass is a metaphor for the inhuman scrutiny of surveillance tyranny where 'the new normal is being more isolated than ever and being more connected than ever', belonging to a network rather than a community. However, it is possible for each of us to 'bring a nimble infusion of love and courage into the world' (p. 94) and reclaim our true imagination. A truly inspirational book.

■ The Divine Feminine Tao Te Ching

Rosemarie Anderson PhD

Inner Traditions 2021, 152 pp.,
\$16.99, p/b.

This is an important new translation and commentary of this classic text, which every enthusiast will want to buy, and, as the title suggests, puts the emphasis on the Tao as intrinsically feminine with its frequent imagery referring to mother, virgin and womb of creation, as well as the injunction to 'act without acting' – *wei wu wei* – an approach of deep listening that the author also applied to the process of translation. The two main texts used where a silk manuscript discovered in 1973 and 730 bamboo slips only unearthed in 1993. The current Chinese technocracy is far more Confucian than Taoist with its emphasis on surveillance and control, even if trying to apply the principle of harmony, in this case trumped by stability. The Tao says that

*Great rulers are unnoticed by the people
The next best are loved and praised
The next best are feared
The next best are scorned
When trustworthiness declines
Trust is not returned.*

Wise people are in harmony with the rhythms and cycles of the universe and are aware of paradox in action exemplified in so many of the eighty-one poems to which one can have daily recourse:

*Act before things appear...
Care at the end as at the start...
Return injury with virtue...
With non-interfering master the world...
To protect the tender is to be strong...
The wise have no set mind...
Know the masculine
But hold to the feminine....
Simple as uncarved wood.*

■ Spiritual Insights

Patricia M. Bateman

(<https://www.moldavitepress.com>)

Moldavite Press 2021, 415 pp.,
£7.99, h/b.

This book is a powerful transmission of spiritual wisdom in three parts, the first two of which – *A Guide to Eternity* and *States of Being* – are written in a simple lyrical format, while the third part – *Knowing* takes the form of essays on a series of topics: knowledge, empathy, courage, belief, happiness, understanding, pain and suffering. The divine speaks directly to the intuition of the reader covering the essentials of life in terms of understanding and insight. Here is an example:

*My Plan for the Universe
Is to bring about
Perfect harmony, love and peace
In all my creatures and creations.*

*I must use the Darkness
To permit the Light to shine.*

*Darkness not Darkness.
It is the absence of
Shining Light.*

*Once my Light
Shines
On any person, situation or event,
The Darkness dispelled.*

Or this:

*Believe
In Truth, Justice,
Mercy, Forgiveness,
Joy,
Abundance,
Fulfilment
And most of all,
Love.*

*Then you will call forth
Heaven on this Earth.
And know the unity
Of all Creation.*

'States of Being' ranges in a similar way over this territory in terms of hope, empathy, anger, mercy, misery, noise, restlessness, ruin, treasure. Again, the words are extremely powerful and charged:

*When actions are driven by
The all-powerful energy of
Love,
Then the universe will be filled
Increasingly
With the energy of love and peace.*

The "breakers of dreams" mired in vicious cycle of revenge and violence cannot achieve peace in this way – "only love, the light of love, will restore our inner peace." Keep this book by your bedside and drink from its inspiration on a daily basis!

■ Beyond Us

Fred Matser

iff Books (John Hunt) 2021,
107 pp., £9.99, p/b.

Fred Matser is founder and chairman of the Fred Foundation and a leading Dutch humanitarian who has been active for decades in social and ecological transformation. This inspiring book lays out his philosophy of life in a series of short interrelated essays reflecting on lessons from 75 years of experience. They speak directly on themes such as goals, competition, community, cooperation, knowledge, art, self-expression, growth, money, and dancing polarities. I found many valuable insights within these pages, for instance in reflecting on goals in relation to the process of living, where

Fred likens human life to sailing as a process whose ‘meaning is immanent in each and every moment’ rather than in reaching the end – the same applies for me to golf – one plays best when in the flow and fully present.

I loved Fred’s definition of consciousness as ‘the universal organising principle that “in-forms” – brings into form, shapes, orchestrates the myriad dynamisms of nature, which manifest themselves as “in-formed” transformation.’ (p. 36) As a corollary he sees our human role as cells of a universal organism in the ‘whole-and-all’. He encourages us to find and express our authentic voice, and to tune into deeper empathic feelings so as to ‘regain access to the streams of transpersonal, transcendent information that surround us at all times’ rather than to give in to an ‘epistemic inversion’. He describes his own experience of receptively ‘being thought’ in an ‘all-encompassing feeling of flow and non-resistance’ where he contrasts this sense of declenched freedom with the ‘highly clenched mode of the finite’ and its corresponding sense of resistance; however, he also recognises the key role of resistance and tension in the dancing polarities of life that must be restored to balance with more emphasis on the feminine. Ultimately, life is about being, attention and care on an inner journey that returns us to the silent ground. This is a fine book of distilled life wisdom.

PSYCHOLOGY-CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

■ Aham:I – The Enigma of I Consciousness

Anindita Niyogi Balslev

Oxford 2013, 232 pp., £22.50, h/b.

This technical book sets out to explore the enigma of the sense of self in both Indian and Western traditions. Our experience of I-Consciousness is immediate and ‘evidently indubitable, yet remains unfathomable.’ It is, as the author points out, ‘a phenomenon that simply cannot be formulated as a problem like any other phenomenon or subjected to a similar sort of objective critical examination’ – as the whole field of consciousness studies is coming to realise after three centuries of successful scientific reductionism applied to other fields. It is apparent by the end of the book that there are so many facets, levels and angles of approach that final agreement about the nature of I-Consciousness has never been reached and almost certainly never will be. However, this does not make the study any

less valuable, and for the western reader the focus on Indian philosophy is particularly useful in linguistic, epistemological and metaphysical terms.

The first chapter considers consciousness as epistemically primary, ‘that by means of which we know all’ as exemplified in the Upanishads. Next comes an analysis of facets of naturalism, represented in India by the Carvakas where selfhood is a natural phenomenon, as also maintained by physicalism, epiphenomenalism and reductionism favoured by modern philosophy and psychology. The self as substance is espoused by dualism but radically questioned by Buddhism and there are deep divisions about valid sources of knowledge and evidence. The Indian schools that advocate the idea of self as substance such as Vaisesika, are compared with the philosophies of Descartes and Locke. The Sankhya, on the other hand, maintains I-Consciousness to be composite and thereby making a conceptual distinction between ego and self, while projecting the idea of reality of many selves. The school of Advaita Vedanta also accepts the distinction between ego (ahamkara) and Self (atman) but denies the idea of plurality of selves. This school championed the idea of nonduality of consciousness, declaring that ultimately ‘the self is the self of all’ and thus ‘exploring subjectivity to its ultimate limit’ and linking this process with liberation, as one also finds in Western Gnostics. Then there are linguistic issues and differing layers of subjectivity as analysed by Hume, Searle and Anscombe. There is a special chapter on I and no-self theories in the Buddhist tradition, with comparisons to Parfit and Nozick.

A consideration of conceptual scenarios in cross-cultural context highlights Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology compared with Advaita Vedanta as well as self-awareness in Buddhism and existentialism. There is a famous story about F.E. Smith interacting with a mediocre judge who, after receiving a further explanation said he was none the wiser, to which Smith retorted that at least he was better informed. Readers here will indeed be wiser as well as better informed by this complex and sophisticated discussion of the nature of I-Consciousness, to which there is no simple solution and many contending views on a problem that can neither be resolved nor dissolved by thought and analysis. This book is a bold cross-cultural endeavour to explore this ultimate question and as such repays close study.

■ Mind, Memory and Quantum Entanglement

Nick Greaves (SMN)

Self-published 2019, 281 pp., no price given.

Provocatively subtitled ‘the estate agent who thought he was Einstein’, this engaging and original book is part memoir and part intellectual autobiography documenting a 40-year search for the relationship between mind, memory and quantum entanglement, while explaining the author’s key idea of duplication theory to account for pattern, order and structure: ‘equal intervals in space – similar structures – tend to duplicate themselves through all time in one location. Equal intervals in time – similar actions – tend to duplicate themselves through all space at one time.’ This idea is closest to the morphic resonance of Rupert Sheldrake, which the author discovered after reading *A New Science of Life* in the early 1980s, and there is some fascinating and detailed correspondence not only with Rupert, but also with Henry Margenau, Karl Pribram and Arthur Koestler. Nick falls within the category of the dedicated amateur making a serious contribution to important topics which will be appreciated especially by those with an interest in the interface of physics and consciousness studies as many details are relatively technical such as the transfer of information through time on a quantum basis in which randomness plays a role as Nick also postulates in relating intuition to random brain processes.

■ Towards the Unknown – Memoir of a Psychological Researcher

Erlendur Haraldsson (late SMN)

White Crow Books 2021, 183 pp., £11.99, p/b.

Readers may recall the obituary written by Bernard Carr in the last issue, and some will be more familiar than others with the research work carried out by Erlendur in his long and productive life. He worked as a professor of psychology at the University of Iceland and with many leading figures, including JB Rhine, Ian Stevenson and Karlis Osis. He covers a range of areas involving both laboratory and cross-cultural fieldwork, including children who remember previous lives, deathbed visions, mediumship, precognition, xenoglossy and phenomena associated with Sai Baba. His original interest was in philosophy, and I found it interesting that he specialised his studies in Plotinus and Meister

Eckhart. He describes a number of significant personal experiences that provide the background for his research work as well as a number of strikingly evidential case histories. Few readers will be familiar with his passion for growing trees, and his gentle nature comes across in the narrative, including towards the end when he is looking forward to the unknown.

He reflects on arguments for and against the afterlife based on research findings. The book also includes a selected bibliography of his work – it is altogether a fascinating and informative memoir.

■ The Universe always has a Plan

Matt Kahn (www.mattkahn.org)

Hay House 2020, 155 pp., \$17.99, h/b.

Subtitled ‘The 10 golden rules of letting go’, this is an accessible book of helpful reflections and advice based on life experience. It analyses projections and misunderstanding that can sabotage our outlooks and behaviour in a series of 10 chapters corresponding to the rules of the subtitle. It is fundamentally about managing one’s feelings and emotions and orienting towards gratitude, acceptance, integrity and forgiveness as expressions of love. One unique feature is a mantra at the end of each chapter, along with a section called ‘spiritual myth busting’ as a way of liberating readers from misconceptions. One chapter is about fast-tracking hardships through thankfulness, while another affirms that all change is ultimately for the better – we can also come to the realisation that everything we have hitherto experienced has created who we are now and that we are free to move in the direction of love and service to life.

ECOLOGY-POLITICS-FUTURES STUDIES

■ Systemic Corruption

Camila Vergara

Princeton 2021, 288 pp., £30, h/b.

This important book on political and constitutional philosophy addresses the issue that the majority of modern liberal democracies have become systemically oligarchic or even plutocratic whereby money buys power and influence over the political process. Election campaigns are hugely expensive, especially in the US, requiring millions of

dollars (\$20 million on average for a Senate seat), much of which comes from corporate sources that expect accommodating policies in return – and even political honours as in the UK. So, as the author points out, ‘political power is today de facto oligarchic’ and representatives form part of the richest 2% – in the US, the richest 1% currently owns 40% of the country’s wealth.

Corruption is a form of political decay whereby liberal democracy can degenerate into liberal oligarchy and then potentially into illiberal oligarchy, which I think reflects our current situation given the predominant metaphors of machines and control. The top people are also sometimes beyond the law; the few dominate the many, who then seek to emancipate themselves. Correspondingly, there are both elitist and plebeian interpretations of constitutional structures from Roman times on. The author explains the systems of Polybius and Cicero, and throughout the book there are diagrams representing various distributions of power and authority. The comparative discussion ranges through the constitutional proposals of Montesquieu, Machiavelli, Condorcet, Rosa Luxemburg and Hannah Arendt, moving in the direction of articulating a democratic counterweight to the power of the executive, the legislators and the judiciary in a mixed constitution that addresses the issue of inequality.

Many of these thinkers encountered huge opposition from the establishment with their emancipatory agenda. For the author, plebeianism is ‘an experience of self-emancipation through political action that challenges the established hierarchal order in which plebeians are subordinate subjects.’ Her answer is to develop the idea of the ‘Tribunate’ as an independent and democratic networked body that calls rulers to account in an enforceable fashion – the assembled many as guardians of liberty. She sets out her proposal in detail, addressing the current crisis of political legitimacy within the context of increasing oligarchisation of political power. In order for this to come about, her proposal would have to be espoused by social democratic parties as a constructive way forward. For me, a major omission is the systemic corruption embodied in the operating procedures of the CIA, and which never comes properly to light due to secrecy and its hold on traditional media – see the next review.

■ The CIA as Organised Crime

Douglas Valentine

(<http://www.douglasvalentine.com/>)

Clarity Press 2021, 446 pp., \$19, p/b.

This is a deeply disturbing but hugely eye-opening series of interviews and articles covering the illicit activities of the CIA from its inception until the present day. As a preeminent imperial power, the US has stated and unstated policies, overt and covert activities corresponding to the government and the CIA. However, there is no doubt that the centre of political power is the latter, both nationally and internationally and that Presidents are in a relatively subservient position. Covert operations expanded from 60 countries in 2008 to 120 in 2013. A few extracts below convey some of the book’s essential messages:

‘The CIA is the most corrupting influence in the United States. It corrupted the Customs Bureau the same way it corrupted the DEA (the Drug Enforcement Agency). It corrupts the State Department and the military. It has infiltrated civil organizations and the media to make sure that none of its illegal operations are exposed. Many CIA officers spent their careers posing as federal narcotics agents.’ (p. 52)

‘CIA and military intelligence units now operate out of a global network of bases, as well as secret jails and detention sites operated by complicit secret police interrogators. Their strategic intelligence networks in any nation are protected by corrupt warlords and politicians, the “friendly civilians” who supply the “death squads” that are in fact their private militias, funded largely by drug smuggling and other criminal activities.’ (p. 98). All this involves blackmail, torture and death lists, the very embodiment of evil. Valentine explains that ‘America’s policy of war crimes for profit cannot exist without the complicity of the mainstream media, which shamelessly exploits our inclination to believe that our leaders behave morally.’ Moreover, ‘war crimes are not a mistake; they are a “repugnant” and thoroughly intentional form of modern American warfare.’ (p. 149)

In terms of the media, an article quoted says that “One must be adept at manipulating the media to alter domestic and world opinion. On this new psychological battlefield, television news may become a more powerful operational weapon than armoured divisions.” Importantly, ‘the purpose of CIA propaganda is to create plausible deniability: to hide or disguise the fact that it is the source of a particular piece of misinformation designed to mislead the American public. It has briefing officers who tell PR people in

other government agencies what to say, to hide the fact that it is engaged in a particular covert action that is designed to start a war or that supports a terrorist group, or subverts a friendly government, or promotes a fascist political party in Ukraine or a military dictatorship in South America. (p. 347) This means that ‘the media have us trained like sex-texting teenagers to focus on things that have nothing to do with how our perceptions of events are being controlled. It is important for people to take a broader view and to try to put these things in perspective, not only to understand what is happening now, but to see where things are going in the future and to plot a way to deal with it. (p. 217)

As far back as 1950, the Senate Kefauver Committee ‘concluded that local law enforcement managed local crime and that federal agencies were powerless to stop it. Street cops were taking payoffs from pimps, gamblers and drug dealers and kicking a percentage up to their bosses, who kicked another percentage back to the politicians who appointed them. The industrialists who put the politicians in power were happy, as long as the cops made sure the Mafia sold dope to blacks and Puerto Ricans.’ (p. 230) This is a classic divide and rule policy carried on to this day and the awful thing is that we the people are powerless to abolish this manipulative dark secrecy trading on terror and fear, even if this book shines a bright light on it. Only when a critical mass of people is properly informed can such structurally violent systems be brought to account – one can only hope this is sooner rather than later.

■ Scorched Earth

Emmanuel Kreike

Princeton 2021, 521 pp., £34, h/b.

This is a major reframing study of environmental warfare as a crime against humanity and nature – what the author calls ‘enviroicide’. He points out that environmental infrastructures sustaining societies have since time immemorial been a target and instrument of war ‘resulting in famine and disease, displaced populations, and the devastation of people’s livelihoods and ways of life.’ What he defines as total war is ‘an indiscriminate and simultaneous destruction of society and environment’ – this is ecocide and genocide in modern legal parlance, and perhaps the most immediate image is the one on the cover of Flanders in 1917, but one should also recall the US use of Agent Orange in Vietnam. His term environmental infrastructure is designed to overcome the dichotomy of nature and culture while also highlighting the enormous costs of restoration. In our own time,

resource wars are likely to proliferate given pressures of rising demand and population. The bulk of the book is devoted to historical accounts of environmental warfare from the 16th century onwards, also covering a large geographical area from Europe to the Americas, Africa and Asia – all this provides ample proof of his important thesis as a means of raising awareness of a particularly destructive form of ecological devastation that we can ill afford.

■ Climate in Crisis

Robert F. Kennedy Jr and Dick Russell

Skyhorse Publishing 2020 (2017), 226 pp., \$17.99, p/b.

The 2020 introduction on the Deep State by Robert Kennedy is alone worth the price of this book, summarising as it does the machinations of the corporatocracy in an unholy alliance with the CIA, the power of which the Kennedy family has challenged to their cost over three generations and which has played a central role in transforming America from a democracy into a National Security State. The war on terror is now being replaced by health security as an instrument of fear, manipulation and control. We live in an increasingly beleaguered world. In his initial chapter, Dick Russell details the anti-environmental appointments in the Trump administration before describing the rise of the youth climate movement.

The bulk of the book is devoted to a description of the major fossil fuel players, especially Exxon Mobil which has funded numerous ‘conservative’ think tanks and foundations over the last 40 years to pump out messages contradicted by their own scientists over that whole period. It is pretty staggering to read about the views and influence of Rex Tillerson both as Exxon CEO and Secretary of State. His mentality is based entirely on the engineering metaphor and he asks what good it is to save the planet if humanity suffers; the melting of the Arctic is seen as a new business opportunity! Then there are the powerful interests of the Koch brothers and the disingenuous PR orchestrated by Richard Berman through various front organisations. By and large, these people portray themselves as devoted to family and good works, while their companies wreak environmental havoc. There is an interesting chapter on pushback by the Rockefeller family against Exxon Mobil and another on fracking interests. Overall, the book paints a vivid picture of the personalities and forces trying to maintain fossil fuel supremacy.

■ Grassroots Rising

Ronnie Cummins

Chelsea Green 2020, 181 pp., £14.99, p/b.

Ronnie Cummins is founder and director of the Organic Consumers Association, a US-based network of more than 2 million consumers ‘dedicated to safeguarding organic standards and promoting a healthy, just and regenerative system of food, farming and commerce.’ He has been an activist his whole life and uses this experience to set out a roadmap for regeneration with five drivers: grassroots awareness, political mobilisation and marketplace demand; carbon farming, reforestation and ecosystem restoration; politics and public policy; and public and private investment. For anyone who wants to play an active part in this essential process of regeneration to replace the current degenerative policies, this is an absolutely vital handbook, based on a positive, solutions-oriented message. The arguments and proposals are set out with clarity and force in an attempt to overcome powerlessness and inertia in making a contribution towards systems change – single issues are all connected and none provide a complete solution.

The big picture is that the health of the soil, plants, animals and humans is one and indivisible and, as Sir Albert Howard pointed out 80 years ago. We need a profound shift in public consciousness, political power, public policy, farm practices, business practices, consumer practices, investments and international relations in bringing in a regenerative Green New Deal that is not just disguised technocracy. The good news is that we vote with our consumption, but this is also what keeps existing food systems in place, reinforced by addiction – 70% of what Americans currently eat is effectively junk food. His counter message is that ‘industrial, GMO tainted, pesticide-laden, factory-farmed foods are bad for your health, bad for farm animals, bad for small farmers, bad for the environment and, as we are starting to understand, bad for the climate.’ However, it is encouraging to learn that smallholders in fact feed 70% all the world’s people with 25% of the resources. Progress depends entirely on global civil society, as industrial agriculture, pharmaceuticals and food have captured not only regulatory agencies, but also politicians of all parties through lobbies and campaign contributions. If you would like to be part of this, please see www.regenerationinternational.org and www.organicconsumers.org where you can also sign up to their excellent newsletter.

■ After the Apocalypse

Srecko Horvat

Polity 2020, 194 pp., £14.99, p/b.

Apocalypse is in the air, so it is as well to consider current articulations carefully, as in this poignant and original study drawing on the work of neglected philosopher Gunther Anders. Capitalism is on a collision course with nature, with its three principles of extraction, exploitation and expansion, embodied in the idea of endless economic growth. This means that what we used to regard as normal and to define as progress is in fact unsustainable, dominated as it is by the military industrial pharmaceutical complex and surveillance capitalism: 'extinction already happened if we continue with the current barbarism.' The choice before us is a stark one: radical reinvention of the world or mass extinction. The author contends that extinction is 'supraliminal' in the sense that it goes beyond our understanding when we are confronted with 'multiple eschatological tipping points.'

It is the function of prophets to issue warnings in the hope that these will not come to pass. Anders conjures this up with a carpenter saying 'let me help build you an ark, so that it may become false.' The three chapters and a postscript eloquently address the climate crisis relating to the Mediterranean, nuclear age tourism around Chernobyl and the spectre of the Marshall Islands, site of early nuclear tests. The feeling of loss and anticipatory grief is captured by the new term 'solastalgia' denoting a homesickness in relation to the destruction of ecosystems. Paradoxically, we have a sense of timelessness associated with visiting ruins. Covid-19 calls into question our predatory relationship with nature, and the author could also have mentioned the folly of gain of function research, which may well be responsible for the outbreak and which continues as I write – not enough people are aware of this issue to call for a worldwide ban on what are effectively already outlawed biological weapons, and funded by Dr Fauci's Institute! We need a major 'prise de conscience' on a massive scale in order to generate the necessary transformational energy within our global systems.

■ The Mighty Heart – How to Transform Conflict

Scilla Elworthy

Peace Direct 2020, 55 pp., £6, p/b.

Many readers will be aware that Scilla has devoted her life to peace and the resolution of conflict.

The mighty heart of the title is about opening to pain and healing and therefore to love. This short book offers practical tools and skills to address whatever conflicts readers are currently engaged in. The skills include engaging feminine intelligence, negotiating with your inner critic, using anger as a fuel of transformation, developing presence, meeting your shadow, and the path of centring. Different forms of conflict are described, and then treated in more detail in a series of good chapters. It is important to define the best possible outcome as well as the source of the conflict and listen to people's needs. Antagonism between groups requires non-confrontational communication and building trust through dialogue. Another chapter addresses local anger about top-down decisions and how to engage decision-makers, while the example of Mandela shows that we should call on women and begin by listening to antagonists separately first. The most important recommendation, however, is prevention. The book is packed with sound advice based on a lifetime of practical experience.

■ A Chicken Can't Lay a Duck Egg

Graeme Maxton and
Bernice Maxton-Lee

Changemakers Books 2021, 109 pp.,
£7.99, p/b.

This important book forms part of the Resetting our Future series as an agile response to our current situation. The authors are both long-time environmental activists and provide a succinct overview and potential blueprint for system change while not underestimating potential resistance and general inertia. The most significant current economic and political drivers are economic growth and neoliberalism. They trace the latter to the influence of the Mont Pelerin Society, and warn that our extractive model requires a fundamental overhaul, observing that Covid-19 has taught us that societies can change course quite rapidly. However, the risk of doing nothing is likely to bring certain climate disaster.

It is not enough to tweak the system, but we will need a concerted effort to galvanise people in sufficient numbers to create the necessary pressure and overcome inevitable obstacles as well as outdated postcolonial and over-individualistic patterns of thinking. The authors provide a summary fact sheet and offer constructive advice on what individuals and organisations can do, advising them to be prepared for pushback and grief in the process. They regard technical fixes as an illusion when fundamental behaviour

change is required in the next few years. If one agrees that a reset – and I would add regenerative here – is essential, then we must think very clearly about the nature of what is on offer from the World Economic Forum and commit ourselves to a version that is localised and communal rather than centralised and controlled.

DEATH AND DYING

■ Where After

Marief Forde Clarke

6th Books (John Hunt) 2021, 193 pp.,
£11.99, p/b.

When I first began to research the evidence for consciousness after physical death over 45 years ago, I wanted to know what death could teach us about life and living by enlarging the context of my understanding of reality. In asking the question where do I loved ones go after they die, Marief shares her journey with a remarkable depth of compassion and insight, drawing on the full range of research evidence going back as far as Swedenborg while matching this with her own experiences and those of her family and clients. She transforms her suffering in an alchemical process of forgiveness, and shows us how we can do the same. The three main parts of the book address the fear of death, navigating grief, and love and forgiveness as the keys to inner peace and freedom. The short sections review the literature while illustrating important points with significant personal experiences. Marief's living relationship with the invisible world comes across very clearly throughout the book as she weaves multiple threads and narratives into a systemic understanding of life and death. Her father dramatically comforts and rescues her from the other side on two occasions, while she has also been witness to transitions and has averted potential suicides by uncovering the hidden dynamics, often relating to a trauma from a life in another time and place.

At a time when there is so much ignorance and fear around the nature of death, this book is a treasure trove anchored in authentic experience that can speak powerfully to our condition without shying away from life's challenges while also offering a wealth of practical advice. Everyone who has a deep encounter with the material described here comes to the conclusion that the essence of life is Love in a cosmic sense: 'Love holds everything in the universe together. Love is the language that speaks within the heart; it is the centre of the universe. Love is the universal key that opens

the gateway to our immortality.’ (p. 21) ‘Nothing exists without love and nothing is healed without forgiveness... Love was in me and I was in it. I was one with all of creation. Love is a powerful force that can penetrate any of life’s great challenges... Love is a gift that can heal the world if only people would open their hearts to replace all wars, fears, violence, angers, control and greed, and use the power of love to bring ultimate peace to the earth.’ (p. 146) ‘Love is the most powerful energy on the planet. Humans thrive on love, plants grow with love, water responds to love and negativity is dissolved with love.’ (p. 149) Hardly less powerful is forgiveness, in itself a capacity of love and of which Mariel gives a number of potent examples. This also enables us to let go and helps us remember to live in the present and be grateful for the many opportunities offered by life. I strongly commend this beautiful, wise, touching and profound book as a companion on your journey.

■ To Heaven and Back

Mary C. Neal MD

WaterBrook Press 2011, 222 pp., £17, p/b.

I missed this book when it first came out, and heard about the author’s experience during the recent Netflix series on death. It is a striking story involving a kayak accident which should have resulted in her death but became instead a central and catalytic life experience, especially given her medical background as an orthopaedic surgeon. Her rescue and recovery can certainly be regarded as miraculous, and her faith in God shines throughout the book, which also includes an account of the tragic death of her son Willie in a freak accident. Her creed involves an absolute trust in God and the interconnected nature of life events, the reality of heaven and God’s unconditional love and support. In this respect, she quotes some key passages of the New Testament on prayer and joy. She is sensitive to the different forms that messages can take, including on one occasion the persistent presence of an owl that persuaded her to make a trip when her stepfather was dying. The reality of the invisible realm comes through strongly, especially in relation to her son’s untimely death – he had many intimations that his life would be a short one, but also that his death was part of a larger plan in understanding more deeply the nature of loss – there is a moving incident with a Rwandan Catholic priest in relation to massacres in his country. Readers are encouraged to make their own lives a form of dedicated service to the glory of God, listening to His inner guidance and giving thanks in all circumstances. The book is another powerful expression of the overall spiritual message of NDEs.

■ The Far Horizon

Michael Prescott

White Crow Books 2021, 203 pp., £11.99, e-book £6.99, p/b.

Subtitled ‘perspectives on life beyond death’, this fascinating book provides four different approaches to understanding the evidence, all with extensive illustrative case histories from the literature based on over 30 years of research. The etymology of the word ‘concept’ literally means to grasp with, as does comprehend; we do so through language and metaphors as ways of mapping territories and making sense. The author’s four approaches are a fully immersive first-person computational virtual reality game, a continuum of frequencies, a hierarchy of dimensions, and a diamond of many facets.

Each corresponding chapter draws on particular cases to highlight the usefulness of the approach in considerable depth. One can intuitively understand the relationship between the metaphors of frequency, dimensions and facets, while the capacity to know is inherent in consciousness itself. The final chapter considers the nature of the I-Thought as the ‘universal awareness, the Mind of God, which branches out into countless individual minds.’ This lies beyond all the models, and the author lucidly explains how this is refracted through his models (p. 177). In every case, we have to hold together the perspectives of linear time and existence outside time where ‘each perspective is correct on its own terms’ even if this is logically paradoxical as in ‘all is one, and everything has already happened, and will happen, and is happening now.’ Or ‘all facets of the diamond have always existed, and yet it is only our struggle that brings them into being.’ I’m sure that the author is on the right track here, and it is well worth joining him on the journey even though it is already complete at another level....

■ No One Really Dies

Michael Tymn

White Crow Books 2021, 177 pp., £11.99, p/b.

This well-informed book sets out 25 reasons to take the evidence for an afterlife seriously and come to one’s own conclusion. Almost all those who have investigated the extensive evidence have concluded that it has to be taken seriously, but, as the author points out, the materialistic belief system excludes the possibility of life after death by definition instead of questioning its philosophy in the light of well-attested facts. Much of the best evidence emerged between 1850 and 1935, when the focus was switched to laboratory parapsychology. Many of the greatest scientists of the day were convinced by

evidence and experience, even though sceptical colleagues derided their efforts. The author introduces the book with his own story that of his publisher before considering the full range of available phenomena and evidence, all based on wide reading.

Two of the most interesting cases concern the orientalist Neville Whyment and a chess game played by a deceased grandmaster. In the first case Whyment engages in a conversation about classical Chinese philosophy, in which he gives the first line of poem and the voice proceeds to recite the remaining 14 lines as well as explaining a puzzling error in another poem. During the 12 sittings, 14 foreign languages were used, a feat impossible to fabricate. In the second case, the deceased Geza Maroczy plays a game of chess against Viktor Korchnoi over a period of nearly 8 years at least at the Master level over 47 moves. To anyone with an open mind, this book provides an excellent overview with an appendix detailing 30 reasons why such evidence has been ignored, a situation likely to continue until there is a radical paradigm shift, which, ironically, this evidence could initiate if taken seriously.

■ When the Time Comes

Dr Magnolia Cardona and Nurse Ebony Lewis

Hammersmith 2021, 146 pp., £14.99, p/b.

This is a very important book of stories from the end of life, raising many issues around care, hospitalisation, living wills and relationships – and encouraging readers to plan for this inevitable eventuality. The accounts are as varied as peoples’ differing experiences and all the more important in a context where ‘no one should underestimate the ability of modern medicine to prolong life and suffering at enormous expense’ – there is always something more that could be done in terms of tests and treatments, but our attitude to death gets in the way and we are inclined to put such things off. Each story raises its own issues, and at the end of each chapter are reflective questions and observations. We also need to know when to let go of love and life and how to navigate sudden changes in circumstances and the whole question of hope. Sometimes the right thing to do is nothing – this would be much easier if we recognised death as a transition rather than extinction. As Norman Swan observes in the afterword, ‘death is part of life and it should be as good as life, not the horror that it can be, needlessly, if we’d only planned ahead.’

GENERAL

■ The Corona Transmissions

Edited by Sherri Mitchell, Richard Grossinger and Hathy Glass

Healing Arts Press 2021, 378 pp., \$19.99, p/b.

This stimulating book consists of alternatives for engaging with Covid-19, 'from physical to metaphysical.' There are 35 contributions consisting of stories, poetry, inspirations, medical information and healing modalities, and interdisciplinary analyses where the standout essays are by Richard Grossinger and Charles Eisenstein. Richard weaves together multiple and conflicting narratives and his message is to seek common ground on the basis that the virus has brought to light many long incubating crises as well as the limits and hazards of dominant scientific and medical approaches. Some readers may already be familiar with Charles' essay The Coronation – rereading it a year on reinforces its importance and originality; it can be found online on his website. Two of the main themes are the reflex for control and the war on death.

Charles points out that Covid-19 is a crisis for which control ostensibly works, with an identifiable enemy, but more interesting is his contention that progress 'is a matter of extending control onto the world', in pursuit of which we now have much more sophisticated technology permitting technocratic totalitarianism. A second trend is the obsession with safety, security and risk reduction for the separate self – yet we live in a matrix of relationships. And a focus on reducing numbers of deaths raises the question of other values such as freedom and community, especially with the danger of temporary emergency measures becoming permanent in the name of protection. The fundamental question is whether we opt for a path towards 'greater insulation, isolation, domination and separation' – based on fear – or turn to 'a path of reunion, of holism, of the restoring of lost connections, of the repair of community and the rejoining of the web of life....building an intentional society on the love already shining through the cracks of the world of separation.'

■ Forever in my Veins

Lionel Friedberg

O Books (John Hunt) 2021, 418 pp., £20.99, p/b.

This is the extraordinary autobiography of an award-winning filmmaker who grew up in South Africa and emigrated to Hollywood. It is a rollercoaster ride, and the main

interest for readers of this journal will be his encounter with African shamans and healers following his diagnosis with a life-threatening illness in the late 1990s (his documentaries also include experiences around death). He subjects himself to major cathartic herbal enemas and a drumming ceremony (*femba*) that puts him in touch with his grandfather partly through a condition in his foot that resonates with the grandfather's health challenge when he was alive. The shaman is seemingly taken over by a wild beast and he seems to extract some kind of toxin from the author's diseased kidney and promptly vomits. He is to receive healing from his ancestors while at the same time helping his grandfather.

The next day, his friend PH astonishes him by saying that his grandfather had spoken to him and instructed him to find a walking stick. PH had carved one only two weeks before, commenting that he also needs a blue cloth and recommending him to find a signet ring – these items turn up as if miraculously and are to be used in his ritual meditation sessions. In the West, we have almost no regard for relating to our ancestors apart maybe from All Souls Day on November 2. This gives pause for thought as healing may be transgenerational and our ancestors may be looking after us without us being remotely aware of this. He then receives another remarkable herbal treatment that completely cures him and restores his energy levels. The shamans understand the intrinsic connectedness of the web or grid of life through space and time, and penetrate to depths largely ignored and denied by sophisticated modern science. We really need to find means of reconciling these complementary ways of knowing

■ Fermentation as Metaphor

Sandor Ellix Katz

Chelsea Green 2020, 116 pp., illustrated, £20, h/b.

This is a thought-provoking reflection about what fermentation can teach us about ourselves, our culture in relation to food, life and transformative change. It is especially relevant at this time in relation to complex life processes where the metaphor of war on bacteria and viruses rather than mutual coexistence is profoundly unhelpful. He calls for a transformation and localisation of food production and therefore security and uses the term microbiopolitics to encourage ecological thinking and biodiversity and minimise the risks of microbial resistance through selection pressure – a risk we are currently running. The author gives an interesting example in relation to

wine where we used to allow crushed grapes to sit with their skins and stems until they began to ferment. Once you scale up, you need chemicals to kill the organisms on the grapes and for sanitation purposes – this monoculture thinking mirrors the adversarial processes of big agriculture. It is good to remember that fermentation produces the bubbles in champagne as well as that the natural dynamics of biodiversity 'will not permit monocultures to be sustained'. The final message of the book is that fermentation is a powerful metaphor with infinite regenerative power and that mutation is a creative regenerative force within human cultures – it is an encouraging thought.

■ Biodynamic Wine Growing

Edited by Jean-Michel Florin

Floris Books 2021, 244 pp., £20, p/b.

This is the definitive book on the subject, although I was surprised that there was no mention of the excellent book by Nicolas Joly from Coulee de Serrant which I read some years ago and which explains the whole basis of the biodynamic approach. Subtitled 'understanding the vine and its rhythms', this beautifully illustrated book explains the Goethean approach to the archetypal plant, observation and metamorphosis before going on to more general considerations and examples of vineyards at work. Goethe studied the process of growth through time and the 'gesture' of individual plants as they unfold. In the case of the vine, there is also the formation of wood during the autumn. The editor explains the history of the grape louse and draws an interesting comparison between American and European vines in their ability to take up water. Rather than trying to control a monocultural process through chemicals, the biodynamic grower accompanies the vines through their annual cycle, and the overall approach is one that emphasises health – salutogenesis – rather than disease, pathogenesis. I see this as part of a much wider shift towards and emphasis on health and resilience that highlights the connections between the health of soil, plant, animal and human as stated by the pioneering Sir Albert Howard.

■ Why We Get Mad

Dr Ryan Martin –

www.alltheragescience.com

Watkins Books 2021, 210 pp., £12.99, p/b.

When angry count to ten before you speak. If very angry count to 100 – timeless advice from Thomas Jefferson. In this definitive book on anger, the author draws on 20 years of research as well as his own

family experience of being on the receiving end and a few of his own meltdowns. His basic approach is to regard anger as fuel that needs to be controlled and channelled. The book is divided into three parts, the first of which introduces the psychology and biology of anger as well as explaining a sequence of processes along with cultural and gender factors. He presents his own model, beginning with what he calls the precipitant and leading through appraisal into angry feelings and expressions of anger. The second part addresses violence and impulse control, the damage that anger can wreak in close relationships, its effect on mental and physical health, and the nature of irrational thinking – this is all illustrated with telling case histories, and the reader can undertake a number of self-assessments. The final part is about healthy anger, which explains how it can be understood, managed and used in positive ways. Without anger and outrage at injustice, the energy for revolution and reform would not be galvanised, and some of the greatest works of art like Picasso's *Guernica* would never have been created. Many of us have issues with anger and its expression and will benefit from the insights of this important and authoritative book.

OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED

■ In Search of Mycotopia

Doug Bierend

Chelsea Green 2021, 336 pp., £20, p/b.

The world of fungi has hit the headlines since the publication of Merlin Sheldrake's *Entangled Life* last autumn. This readable book tells the story of the author's meetings and adventures with many communities around the world involved in fungi in a variety of ways; also their lessons for the way that we ourselves relate to nature and each other and pointing a way beyond ecological collapse to transformation and the promotion of systemic health of soils, plants, animals and ourselves.

■ The Business of Botanicals

Ann Armbrecht

Chelsea Green 2021, 288 pp., £20, p/b.

As director of the Sustainable Herbs Program, this fascinating investigative journey takes the reader into the world of herbal supplements, on which consumers spent \$9 billion in 2019. It contains many memorable encounters around the world in a generally trusting domain. The message is that connections between people and plants need to be

awakened and sustained by care, intention and attention. The author observes how the journey is 'about learning how to live in the presence of a world we did not make. Like the plants, the world is alive. And the task first is to meet that aliveness. That realisation, in turn, helped me listen more deeply.'

■ Selfhood, Autism and Thought Insertion

Edited by Mihretu P. Guta and Sophie Gibb

Imprint Academic 2021, 302 pp., £19.95, p/b.

Looks at first-person thoughts across a number of disciplines addressing questions relating to the ontology of selfhood and asking if it is more than a linguistic concept.

■ A History of the Church through its Buildings

Allan Doig

Oxford 2021, 376 pp., £30, h/b.

This is a fascinating approach linking history with architecture and therefore the spaces of ritual and ceremony implying certain types of relationship. Building on a grand scale was initiated by Constantine after his conversion, which represents the Church as a worldly as well as spiritual power. 12 buildings are chosen and illustrated, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, St Peter's Old and New, Aachen, Cordoba, Hagia Sophia in Istanbul and Coventry Cathedral, all of which provide a multifaceted and a vivid picture – 'a standing history of passing waves of humanity.'

■ Planetology

Annie Botticelli

Watkins 2021, 344 pp., £14.00, h/b.

This book is about living in tune with the natural rhythms of the planets, especially the inner ones of Mercury, Venus and Mars as well as the sun and moon. The author proposes five means of doing so – awareness, strategy, techniques, remedies and openness (ASTRO) – advanced practices and advice based on her extensive knowledge and experience as a comprehensive guidebook.

■ The Mystery Tradition of Miraculous Conception

Marguerite Mary Rigoglioso PhD

Bear and Co 2021, 182 pp., \$16, p/b.

As the title suggests, this book, based on the Gnostic *Infancy Gospel of James* and on extensive cross-cultural research paints a very different picture of the Virgin Mary within an ancient tradition of parthenogenesis or miraculous conception. Mary

emerges as a high priestess, an active holy woman and a living embodiment of the great goddess. The book certainly recontextualises the whole issue of virgin birth and is a powerful statement of the emerging Divine Feminine that has also seen a redefinition of the role of Mary Magdalene.

■ Empowering Climate Action in the United States

Edited by Tom Bowman and Deb Morrison

Changemakers Books 2021, 125 pp., £7.99, p/b.

This remarkable book sets out the results of a collaboration between 150 diverse Action for Climate Empowerment leaders in drawing up a national strategic planning framework for the United States, with a shared vision, specific recommendations, and a procedural roadmap as a means of promoting public understanding and participation in addressing the climate challenge. If this were adopted at the federal level, it would represent an extraordinary demonstration of visionary leadership that is absolutely essential in our time.

■ Ahead of her Time

Judy Piatkus

Watkins Books 2020, 206 pp., £14.99, h/b.

Many readers may remember the pioneering story of Piatkus books, which this book recounts first hand, with all its lessons learned and consequent valuable advice to would-be entrepreneurs and especially publishers about how one initiates and builds a business while tapping in to emerging trends such as nutrition and holistic health. Judy was also astute enough to sell her business at just the right moment prior to 2008 after 3,000 publications.

■ Ghosts of Atlantis

J. Douglas Kenyon

Bear and Co 2021, 456 pp., \$25, p/b.

A comprehensive book indicating evidence for a lost great culture and the way in which it still haunts the collective unconscious, even though much of the story is not taken seriously in academic circles.





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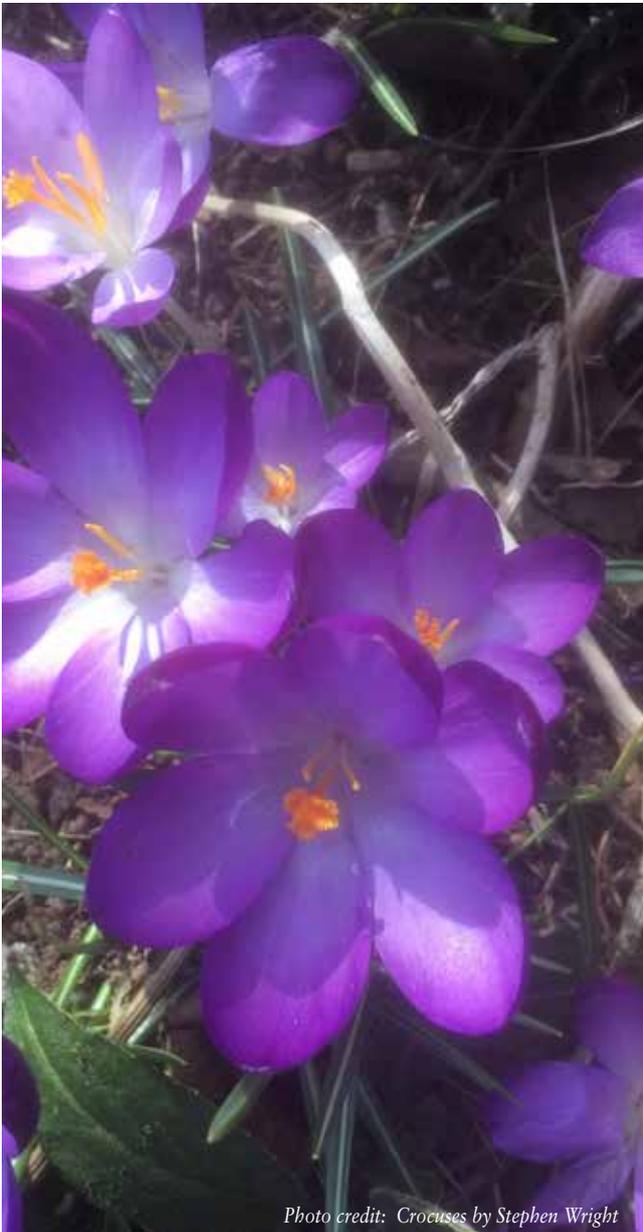


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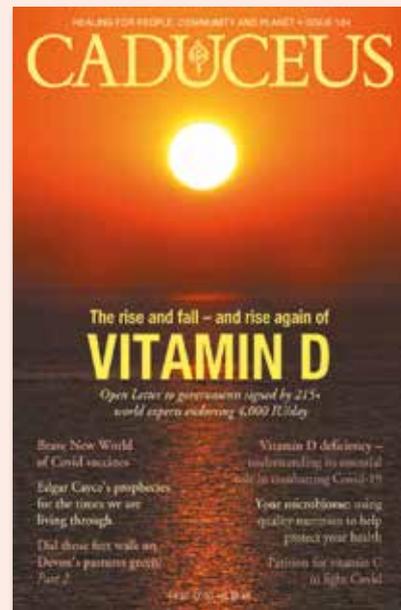


A Few Recent Topics

- Mindfulness... is it Enough? • Emerge from Darkness to Light • Spiritual Graduation • A Super-Quick Thought-Management Technique • Learning from Long Covid • Sound Conditioning for Hearing Loss & Tinnitus
- 7 Ways to Help Beat SAD • Best Plants for Meditation & Healing • Fluoride - Links with Cancer • Flower Power
- Top 5 Trends for Veganuary 2021 • A Vaccine may be Here - But Where Now for Vitamin D & Covid-19 Research?
- Can You Take Fat Supplements If You Miss Working Out For A Day? • The Prevalence of Aluminium & the Role of Silicic • The Vagus Nerve • The Best Food to Fuel Sleep - Plan Yoga Nidra Practices for Stress Relief

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Editor: Simon Best

The Scientific and Medical Network is a leading international forum for people engaged in creating a new worldview for the 21st century. The Network brings together scientists, doctors, psychologists, engineers, philosophers, complementary practitioners and other professionals. The Network is an educational charity which was founded in 1973.

The Network aims to:

- *challenge the adequacy of scientific materialism as an exclusive basis for knowledge and values. See www.galileocommission.org*
- *provide a safe forum for the critical and open minded discussion of ideas that go beyond reductionist science.*
- *encourage a respect for Earth and Community which emphasises a spiritual and holistic approach.*

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