

Paradigm Explorer



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Re-Enchanting the World



The Scientific &
Medical Network

NETWORK CALENDAR 2021

Wednesday September 29	Dr Rosemarie Anderson – <i>The Divine Feminine Tao Te Ching</i>
Wednesday October 6	Philip Wade – <i>A Case of Mistaken Identity</i>
Wednesday October 13	Dr Annine van den Meer – <i>Mary Magdalene Unveiled: A new view, based on recently discovered source texts</i>
Wednesday October 20	Prof Lance Butler – <i>Between Two Enlightenments</i>
Thursday October 21	Galileo Event, Dr John Torday – <i>Consciousness-based Evolution</i>
Friday October 22	Prof Ervin Laszlo, with IONS – <i>My Journey</i>
Wednesday October 27	Sally Denham-Vaughan - <i>Transformational Self Process: Egological and Relational Dimensions</i>
Thursday October 28, 6 pm	Book Briefing with Satish Kumar – <i>Pilgrimage for Peace</i>
Saturday October 30	Dr Iain McGilchrist day seminar – <i>The Matter with Things</i>
Wednesday November 3	Dr Joan Borysenko – <i>The Mystic Heart: the Neuroscience of Spiritual States</i>
Thursday November 4	<i>Federico Faggin film and panel</i>
Friday November 5-Sunday November 7	<i>Beyond the Brain</i>
Wednesday November 10	Dr Robert Holden – <i>Finding Love Everywhere</i>
Friday November 12	Dr Iain McGilchrist (IONS) – <i>The Matter with Things</i>
Saturday November 13, 4-6:30 pm	Prof Ravi Ravindra and Elleke van Kraalingen - <i>Patanjali's Yoga Sutras</i>
Wednesday November 17	Dr Robert Lanza – <i>The Grand Biocentric Design: How Life Creates Reality</i>

LONDON GROUP

ONLINE MEETINGS - CLAUDIA NIELSEN – claudia@pnielsen.uk

PHYSICAL MEETINGS – EDI BILIMORIA – edibil@btinternet.com

For online presentations - 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.

For physical presentations – payment of £10 is made on the night. Information on the venue etc is found on the website. 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.scientificandmedical.net

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 us an email and we will put your address on the circulation list.

UPCOMING EVENTS - 2021

SEPTEMBER - London Group Online

Monday 20 *Dr. Natalie Tobert* *Exploring Global Spiritual Interpretations of C-19*

OCTOBER - London Group Online

Monday 11th *Dr. David Luke* *Death, Near-death, DMT & Discarnate Entities*

NOVEMBER - London Physical Group

Information in due course on the website

DECEMBER - London Group Online

Monday 13th *Prof Bernard Carr* *Making Space and Time for Survival*

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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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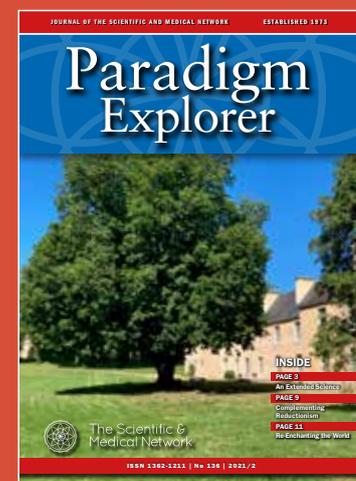
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Cover: 400 year-old Chestnut Tree at Bonnevaux Abbey - David Lorimer



Going Forward

Paul Filmore, Chair - chairman@scimednet.org

*Last evening at dusk
I watched a flock of ten
swallows, wheeling high in
the air, enjoying the last of
the evening sun before
finding a place to roost.
As it is now September, the
swallows were starting to
gather, in anticipation of
their arduous journey back
to South Africa. In a few
days they will be to us but a
memory, having departed
these shores. Should we
mourn their leaving or
simply celebrate their time
with us?*

To see swallows always gives me a sense of joy. Perhaps it is because of the transient nature of their presence, which arouses in me the almost unconscious, almost childlike question: 'Will they come back again?' that I have learned to celebrate them fully whilst they are here, and hold them in my memory until they return.

Previous editorials testify to my affection for swallows, although, over my lifespan, I have watched the numbers dwindle alarmingly in this part of rural Cornwall. Perhaps because swallows do migrate, the leaving and return cycle is made obvious to us, whereas, in contrast, some more continuously present aspects of life, or those changing slowly (as in swallow population numbers) can sometimes be ignored, or may run the risk of their change going unseen. It is often only by a shock recognition of a passing, ending, or disappearing, that we can acknowledge that something had been there, and appreciate in retrospect the difference that that something had made by their presence – but it may then be too late! Aspects of similar situations are being daily highlighted by the media.

Why am I mentioning this difficult and challenging subject? The reason is that often it is not yet too late to do something if we are aware of the potential threat, change, or loss. As in the case of the swallows, we must surely, with that awareness, celebrate and nurture what we have. Reinhold Niebuhr's Serenity Prayer reminds us to be practical, balanced and courageous in our thinking, and to consider what part we can play:

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the
things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.*

We considered what part the SMN could play during the difficult pandemic transition period of change. Our organisational approach has been to do our best to support you, our Members. We did this with, for example, weekly informative webinars and Zoom meetings, virtual conferences and in-house social media style networking facilities (our new intranet). We need now, however, we feel, to go further. Our personal world is changing (as in the metaphor of the declining swallow population), and if we do not wish to lose some things we feel are worthwhile and which we can perhaps save, we may have to update our approach with innovative courageous thinking for an emerging new future, rather than passively hoping that all will work out well. Perhaps one of the biggest pressure points will be upon the young people of our society and their need, potentially, for considerable adaption to changes in their security, social norms, expectations, and deviation from past media-promoted lifestyles.

The SMN has considerable resources and a group collective wisdom in the area of understanding a move from traditional exclusive materialistic thinking towards a more enlightened spiritual life. I suggest we need to, at least, introduce tailored support and appropriately targeted webinars and services for the young generations. I would not wish here to presume to prescribe or limit this development. Kally and Yohance are together looking into this topic now, from a young person's perspective, with additional contributions from previous gatherings of young people within the SMN.

There is, in addition, an area for discussion on our Members' website on this topic (under Groups > Subject Interest Groups > Sub-Groups). This area is tentatively named the 'Young People Developmental Support Initiative' and is at present described as being 'for Members to help articulate, develop, and resource possible directions that the SMN can take to support young people who have a latent burgeoning curiosity in SMN type ideas'.

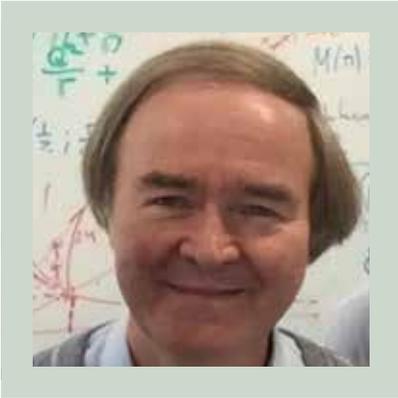
I also ask you, our Members, to consider how best you might bring your experience and wisdom to the SMN, and help us in supporting new initiatives? For most Members, an initial step may be to simply add your country or region of the UK and your professional area and areas of interest onto your **Membership** profile, and additionally update your **Account**, **Email Preferences** and **Privacy** setting to make it possible for other Members to contact you (which will only happen via the Members' side of our website: your email address is never made available). This gives the potential for meaningful discussions on new initiatives to be developed and shared between Members.

In addition, it would be wonderful if you could visit and sign up to some of our **Groups**, i.e., the **Subject Interest Groups** (click **Sub Groups** to see all of these), and our **Local Groups** or **Country Groups**. In each of these group areas, there is space to share with others under the **Discussions** tab, or by **Send Message**. This may, to some, sound a little daunting, but to help navigate the site easily, we have introduced the **Dashboard** (scientificandmedical.net/members-dashboard/), a very simple web page of icons, each of which takes you to appropriate areas and also helps undertake simple tasks such as:

- **Renew My Membership**
- **Browse the Video Library**
- **Update your Profile**
- **Make a Donation**
- **and Help**, etc.

Looking forward to going forward in your company.

Paul



Can an Extended Science Bridge the Worlds of Matter, Mind and Spirit?

Bernard Carr

Bernard explains that science is usually associated with the material world but postmaterialist science requires that it be extended to the mental and spiritual worlds. This has both methodological and theoretical aspects and suggests that there must be a conceptual bridge between the three worlds, rather than their being non-overlapping magisteria. He postulates an expanded paradigm of physics which connects them.

The three worlds and their links

All of us inhabit the three worlds of matter, mind and spirit, although the amount of attention we give to each of them clearly varies. This theme was addressed in an important article [1] by Marilyn Monk in the last issue of *Paradigm Explorer*. By chance I published an article on a similar theme in *Quest*, the journal of the Theosophical Society, at around the same time [2] and I was intrigued by both the similarities and differences in our views. Her experience of the three worlds in her own life and the problems in balancing them very much parallel my own (as described in my *Quest* article). However, I have a somewhat different perspective from Marilyn about the relationship between the three worlds and one motivation for this article is to resolve that difference. This is also relevant to the remit of the SMN and it has important implications for the Galileo Commission project [3].

The first point to emphasise is that the three worlds arise in many different contexts. Indeed, it is only through a discussion of these contexts that the meaning of the terms matter, mind and spirit can be clarified since they are hard to define precisely. Marilyn stresses that they are associated with different modes of

being (scientist, poet, mystic) or different paths in life and this is certainly important from a personal or practical perspective. For while everyone has a foot in all three worlds, how far we tread depends on our goals. Ambitious people generally focus on a single path because success depends on being very dedicated. For example, a successful scientist must be narrowly focused – not only on science but also on their particular specialty within science. On the other hand, a dedicated mystic must devote their whole life – or even many lives – to their goal, unimpeded by distractions in the material domain. Specialisation is necessary because the evolution of humanity as a whole evidently depends upon numerous individuals fulfilling their potential in some area of expertise. However, it is important for at least some people to follow all three paths because the three worlds are connected and a full understanding of the Universe must surely embrace them all. This has certainly been my personal aim, even if it means that I've not progressed very far in any of them.

The three worlds arise in many other (less personal) contexts. For example, they correspond to different types of truth (objective, subjective, transcendental – also mentioned by Marilyn), different modes of knowing (senses, reason, contemplation),

different academic disciplines (sciences – as the term is currently understood, humanities, religious studies) and different types of embodiment or levels of existence (physical, mental, spiritual) within esoteric traditions. In the latter context, one can envisage a more complicated classification (e.g. the seven planes of Theosophy or the four worlds of Kabbalah) but there is a still a sense in which three is the most basic. These different aspects are illustrated in Figure 1 but others could have been included. As discussed below, the three worlds also correspond to different modes of perception (normal, paranormal, transpersonal).

Marilyn has a similar diagram but an important difference is that my version emphasises the *connections* between the three worlds, reflecting the existence of various bridges between them. The SMN places a lot of emphasis on the bridge between science and spirituality (e.g. through its *Mystics and Scientists* meetings) but the other two bridges are equally important. Because of my specific interests, I regard *psychical research* as providing a bridge between matter and mind, *transpersonal psychology* as providing a link between mind and spirit, and the *anthropic principle* as providing a link between matter and spirit. This is indicated by the green labels in Figure 1 and discussed further in a box.

However, there are numerous other bridges between the three worlds, depending on which branch of science, which art form and which mystical tradition is involved. For example, the mind-spirit link was explored in Olly Robinson’s book *Paths Between Head and Heart* [4], although he uses a 2-fold rather than 3-fold division, the science-art link in Leonard Schlain’s book *Art and Physics* [5] and the music-mystic link in June Boyce-Tillman’s and Anne-Marie Forbes’ book *Heart’s Ease: Spirituality in the Music of John Taverner* [6]. The literature-religion link has been emphasised by Salman Rushdie, who points out that nearly all early literature was sacred [7]. So even someone aspiring to follow all three paths only glimpses a small part of the rich nexus of connections.

Marilyn downplays the importance of these bridges: “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.” She thus regards the three worlds as non-overlapping magisteria. Certainly bridge-building tends to be resisted and I summarise some of the reasons for this in the box. Personally, I disagree with the opponents to bridge-building but I think the debate with Marilyn goes beyond any

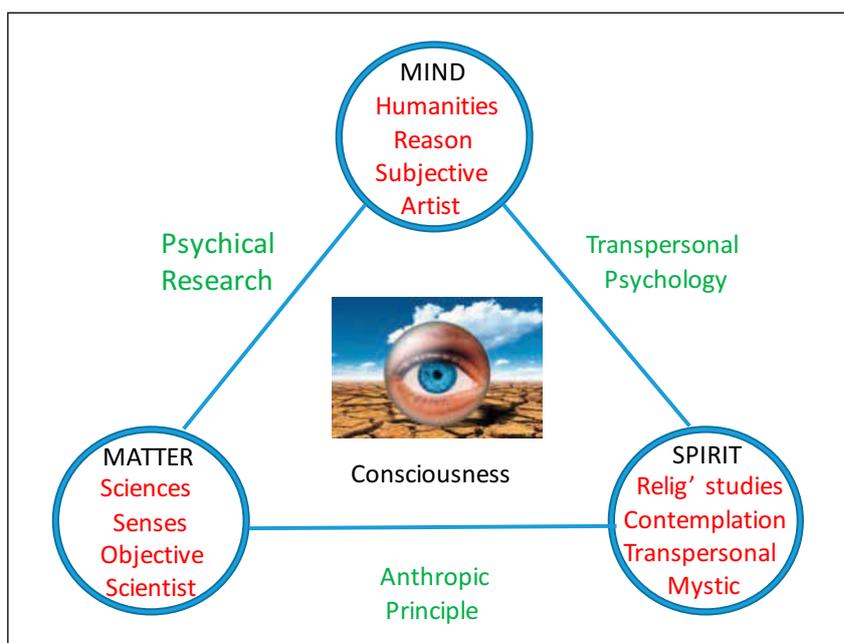


Figure 1. This shows various aspects (red text) of the three worlds (blue circles), some bridges between them (green links), and the central role of consciousness.

of these specific arguments and involves deeper issues.

One point is that a bridge is only a metaphor and its associations are sufficiently vague to generate disagreement. In the sense that I use the term, a bridge merely connects two sides and does not necessarily attempt to merge them. As illustrated by the examples given above, there are undoubtedly connections and influences between the three worlds but to what extent this implies “merging” is unclear since the meaning of this word is itself fuzzy.

Another point is that Marilyn is usually discussing the relationship between the three worlds from a personal perspective, her subtitle being “complementary ways of knowing and being”. In this context, I agree with her but this is distinct from the issue of whether there is a *conceptual* link between the three worlds. In particular, if one needs an expanded view of science to accommodate mind and spirit, as indicated by the title of this article, then that expansion itself provides a conceptual bridge between the three worlds. Most scientists – possibly including Marilyn – may not agree that science can be expanded in this way. But this aim certainly underlies both the postmaterialist science movement and the Galileo Commission agenda with its strapline “Towards an Expanded Science”.

Of course, everything hinges on what one means by ‘science’. This is a complicated issue, involving both methodological and theoretical aspects. Nevertheless, there have been many proposals for a unified paradigm, including the perennial

philosophy and various forms of esoteric science. An excellent exposition of such approaches can be found in the three volumes edited by Ed Kelly et al: *Irreducible Mind* [8], *Beyond Physicalism* [9] and *Consciousness Unbound* [10]. These resulted from a series of workshops held at Esalen in California, some of which I also attended. The group seeks a middle way between the polarised fundamentalisms of science and religion, an enlarged conception of nature anchored in science and including spiritual realities. The following quote summarises their position very cogently: “We think it requires astonishing hubris to dismiss *en mass* the collective wisdom and experience of a large proportion of our forbears, including persons widely recognised as pillars of all human civilisation, and we believe that the single most important task confronting all of modernity is that of meaningful reconciliation of science and religion.” I would only add that these volumes also address the problem of mind and so involve all three worlds in Figure 1.

What is science and can it be extended?

Science is traditionally associated with the material world and this is even assumed in Figure 1, which uses the label ‘science’ in the *current* sense of the term. Marilyn associates science with ‘objective truth’, whereas poetry is associated with ‘subjective truth’ and mysticism with ‘transcendental truth’. Furthermore, she regards science as “rational, logical, relying on facts and evidence, and reproducible by anyone anywhere”. However, it is unclear that these qualities are unique to studies of the material domain. Instead, I would

argue that the essential feature of science is the assumption that even non-material worlds are governed by *laws* which can be discerned by observations of some kind (both inner or outer) and formulated mathematically. The role of mathematics is itself of great interest, since it might be regarded as an attribute of mind rather than matter and it has even been described as the language of God, implying a spiritual aspect.

From this perspective, the science of the material domain may only be the first stage of a three-step process, as indicated by the red circle in Figure 2. Many scientists have argued that there are good reasons to extend science to cover at least the mental world. Indeed, this is the purpose of *psychical research*, whose aim is 'to study scientifically those faculties of man – real or supposed – which cannot be explained under any generally recognised hypothesis'. Since it uses the *methodology* of science, it might be regarded as the second step and is indicated by the red ellipse in Figure 2. However, there are other (more mainstream) motivations for this extension. Indeed, psychology itself might be regarded as a manifestation of step-2 (viz. the science of mind), as might the social sciences.

The third step – to accommodate spirit – is indicated by the red triangle in Figure 2 and corresponds to the remit of the esoteric sciences. This is more controversial and would not be acceptable even to most people willing to take the second step. One objection is that science is based on rationality, which might be regarded as an attribute of mind rather than spirit. However, one must distinguish between the mental process of rationalizing and the conceptual rationality associated with the existence of laws. In terms of the green bridges in Figure 1, I would argue that there is no sharp division between psychical and transpersonal phenomena, so extending science to mind is just the thin edge of a wedge leading to spirit. Of course, the red boundaries in Figure 2

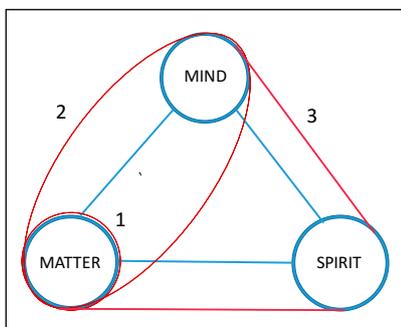


Figure 2. This shows the expansion of science from (1) the material domain (current focus) to (2) the mental domain (near future) and then (3) the spiritual domain (more distant future).

Particular Bridges: How they help and why they are opposed.

Psychical Research: Matter-Mind Bridge.

Psychical research studies a variety of anomalous (paranormal) phenomena which involve a direct interaction between consciousness and the physical world. It purports to use the methodology of science, so this involves both experimental work (parapsychology) and theoretical investigations. In the latter context, having some extension of physics which accommodates such phenomena would be good for psychical research because it needs a theory before it can be accepted as part of mainstream science. It would also be good for physics because important developments in physics have often followed from unexplained anomalies. On the other hand, most physicists do not want a link with psychical research because they do not believe in the phenomena, while most psychical researchers do not want a link with physics since they see it as reductionist and materialistic.

Transpersonal Psychology: Mind-Spirit Bridge.

The study of transpersonal (spiritual) phenomena supports religion by suggesting that there may be a component of mind which goes beyond brain function. On the other hand, spiritual development is often accompanied by the development of psychic powers or 'siddhis' and accounts of psychic events can be found in nearly every religious tradition. Despite this, most psychical researchers prefer to avoid trespassing into spiritual domains because they fear this will damage their scientific status, while many spiritual practitioners believe that psychical phenomena distract from the spiritual path. Spirituality may also help science through 'clairvoyant' insights into the nature of physical reality since many ideas in religious philosophy seem to have presaged discoveries of modern science. It might be argued that transpersonal experiences go beyond science because they cannot be investigated in the laboratory in the same way as paranormal phenomena. However, I would claim that both must be encompassed by a single all-embracing *theoretical* framework.

Anthropic Principle: Science-Spirit Bridge.

Anthropic arguments suggest that there are unexplained coincidences involving the constants of physics, required so that there can be observers in the Universe [24]. There are different interpretations of these coincidences. Although the term *anthropic* comes from Greek word for 'man', they are not specific to humans – they are just required in order to have galaxies, stars, planets and chemistry – so I prefer the term Complexity Principle. I wrote a review of this topic with Martin Rees in *Nature* more than 40 years ago [25]. At that time it was very controversial, often dismissed as philosophy or even theology. However, it is now more mainstream because of the multiverse proposal, in which our universe is just one of a huge number of universes with different constants [26]. This provides a natural basis for a selection effect, since we have to be in one of the universes where life can arise. The anthropic arguments certainly suggest a matter-mind link in Figure 1. Whether they suggest a matter-spirit link (e.g. the possibility a Creator who fine-tuned the Universe) is more controversial. In fact, some physicists regard the multiverse as just as unacceptable as God. Nevertheless, many physicists of a mystical disposition have seen evidence for a divine element in the material universe [27, 28].

correspond to different *types* of science, so there is still a semantic issue to resolve. Also I would not claim that all aspects of the spiritual domain are amenable to science.

A key feature of this extended science is that it must involve *consciousness* and include a 1st person as well as a 3rd person perspective

(i.e. it must refer to experience as well as experiment). Here consciousness is being associated with all three worlds, since even our experiences of the material world are ultimately mental, and this is why it appears in the centre of Figure 1. The central role of consciousness is emphasised in Edi Bilimoria's forthcoming magnum opus *Unfolding Consciousness* [11].

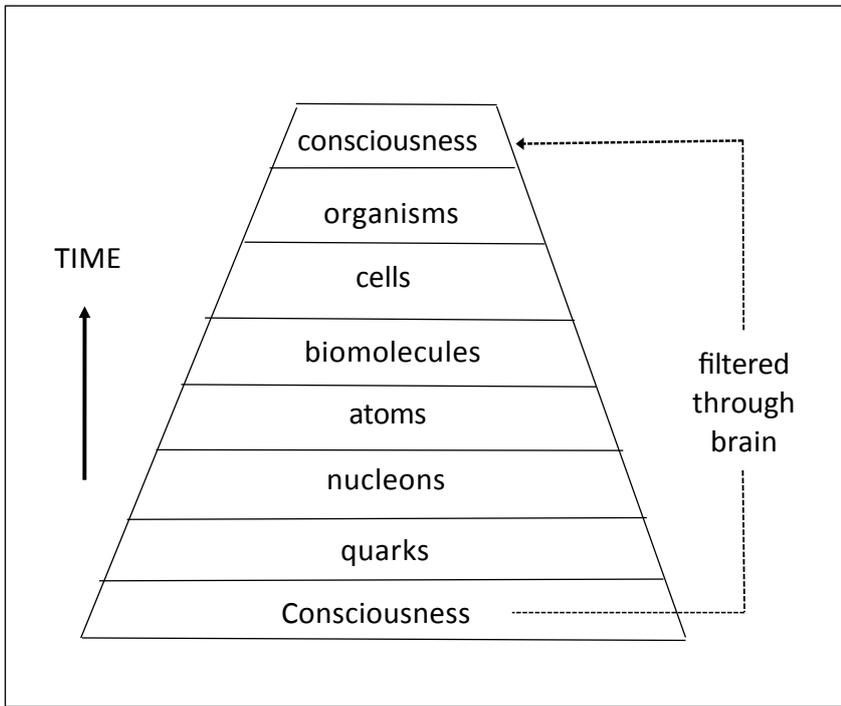


Figure 3. This shows the Pyramid of Complexity which arises through the Big Bang, with individual consciousness being filtered through the brain but Universal Consciousness underlying everything.

There are several distinct issues: (1) Is consciousness a fundamental rather than incidental feature of the Universe? (2) Even if fundamental, is consciousness relevant to physics or is 1st person experience necessarily outside the domain of physics? (3) Is consciousness filtered through the brain rather than being generated by it? I believe the answer to all three questions is positive. If so, individual consciousness must in some sense be a fragment of Universal Consciousness, as argued by Larry Dossey in *One Mind* [12]. Of course, this is not the mainstream view, in which consciousness is supposedly generated by the brain and merely represents the culmination of complexity in an evolving Universe. However, as illustrated in Figure 3, one can also take the view that Consciousness (big C) is primary and that evolution has merely led to the production of filters of sufficient complexity (i.e. brains) to support localised individual consciousness (small c). This would then require the fragmentation of the Universal Mind into numerous individual minds. One might then label as ‘Science’ (big S) the maximally expanded version of science (small s) in Figure 2 [11].

Even more controversially, I will argue that the paradigm required involves an extension of *physics*. This is not to deny the importance of other branches of science (chemistry, biology, psychology etc), since these must also reflect different aspects of the new paradigm. However, even without adopting a reductionist perspective, there is a sense in which

physics provides the most *fundamental* level of description. Lest this be interpreted as a vindication of physicalism, I should stress that the word ‘physics’ raises similar semantic issues as the word ‘science’, so I prefer to use the term ‘hyperphysics’. Within my proposed paradigm, there is a clear division between the material, mental and spiritual domains but they are all described by a unified mathematical structure.

Extending physics to accommodate mind and spirit with higher dimensions

Physics has been triumphant in explaining the multitude of structures in the material world, from the smallest scales of subatomic physics to the scale of the observable Universe. These structures are illustrated in the image of the Cosmic Uroborus, shown in Figure 4. An earlier version of this figure was included in an article I wrote for *Network Review* [13] and its features are explained more fully there. This version also indicates the paradigm shifts as we have probed ever larger and smaller scales. In the macro domain, we have evolved from the geocentric to heliocentric to Galactocentric to cosmocentric view. In the micro domain, we have evolved from the atomic to ‘standard model’ to ‘grand unification’ to higher-dimensional view. The red horizontal lines in Figure 4 also show the various forces which link the microscopic and macroscopic domains. The culmination of this link is the Big Bang from which the Universe emerged 13.8 billion years ago.

Although the forces appear very different at low energies, it is thought that they merge at high energies and are manifestations of a single unified force, corresponding to a vertical connection in Figure 4. Physicists even claim to be close to ‘Theory of Everything’. However, one might be sceptical of this claim when their model makes no reference to the most conspicuous aspect of the world – consciousness and the whole domain of mental experience. Indeed, despite the

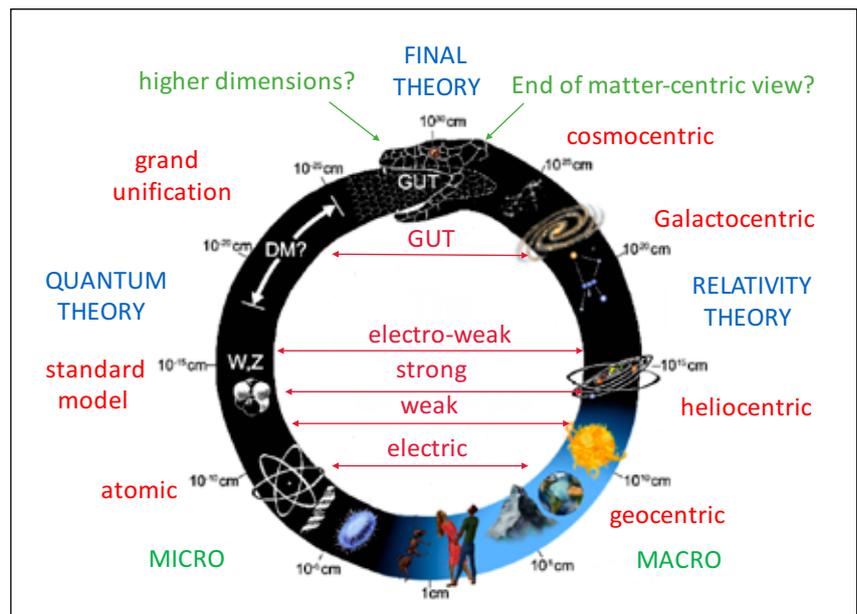


Figure 4. The image of the Uroborus summarises the different levels of structure in the physical world, the link between the microphysical and macroscopic domains provided by the forces of nature, and the paradigm shifts associated with these developments.

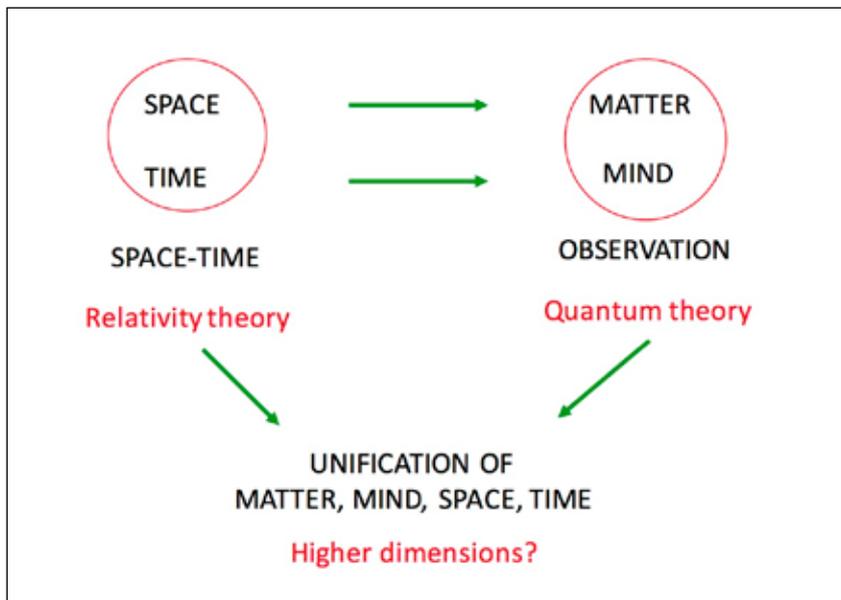


Figure 5. The amalgamation of space and time by relativity theory, and of matter and mind by quantum theory, suggests a deeper amalgamation with higher dimensions.

current interest in mindfulness, Figure 4 might be regarded as depicting the triumph of mindlessness.

Some physicists would argue that consciousness and mental experiences are necessarily outside the domain of physics because they involve a 1st person rather than 3rd person perspective. However, there are many reasons for believing that consciousness may be relevant to physics and these involve my bridges. The anthropic principle suggests that the structure of the physical world is determined at least in part by the requirement that observers can arise. The process of observation may also play a role in quantum theory, with some physicists (admittedly a minority) suggesting that consciousness may collapse the wave function or even determine how it collapses [14]. If psychic phenomena are real, they involve a direct interaction between consciousness and the physical world, so one requires some extension of physics to accommodate them.

Even if consciousness does collapse the wave function, I do not believe that quantum theory can provide a full explanation of mental experience. Besides, nobody understands quantum theory anyway, so this is just replacing one mystery by another. One surely needs a deeper paradigm which underlies both quantum theory and mental experience. Indeed, we know that neither quantum theory nor relativity theory can provide a complete theory of physics. They must be amalgamated in some final theory, probably associated with the top of the Cosmic Uroborus, and it seems likely that the link with consciousness will only appear with this final theory. Thus our

honorary member Roger Penrose [15] anticipates that “our present picture of physical reality is due for a grand shake-up – even greater, perhaps, than that provided by present-day relativity and quantum mechanics”. Just as relativity theory links space and time through spacetime and quantum theory links matter and mind through observation, perhaps the final theory which amalgamates relativity theory and quantum theory will accommodate mind in some way. This is illustrated in Figure 5, which suggests that the top of the Uroborus is also associated with the end of the *matter-centric* view.

My own view is that the paradigm required relates to the existence of higher dimensions. A full description can be found in previous articles [16-18], so here I just provide a brief summary. Let me start by explaining how extra dimensions arise in conventional physics. Most people adopt the common sense Newtonian view that the arena of reality is 3-dimensional space. This works well in everyday life but this view was demolished with the advent of Einstein’s theory of special relativity in 1905, in which reality is 4-dimensional spacetime, with time being the 4th dimension. This picture was modified in 1915 by general relativity, in which gravity is interpreted as the curvature of spacetime.

One might hope for a similar geometrical interpretation of electromagnetism and in the 1920s Theodor Kaluza and Oskar Klein showed that gravity and electromagnetism could be unified by introducing an extra spatial dimension. However, this fifth dimension would have to be wrapped up on the Planck length of 10^{-33} cm, which is why we cannot see

it. For many decades most physicists lost interest in this possibility, but we now know that there are other forces and in the 1980s it was realised that these could also be described by invoking extra dimensions. Superstring theory posited that there are ten dimensions, so one has the four macroscopic dimensions – three space plus one time – together with six microscopic dimensions. There were many different versions of superstring theory but then in the 1990s it was realised that one could have an amalgamation of all these theories, called M-theory, with one more dimension (i.e. an eleventh). In a particular version of this, one extra dimension is extended and the material world is regarded as a 4-dimensional ‘brane’ in a 5-dimensional ‘bulk’ [19].

My suggestion is that one also needs a higher dimensional space to describe mental and spiritual experiences. Indeed, I claim that even normal mental experiences associated with the physical world require a 5-dimensional space, with the fifth dimension being associated with mental time rather than physical time. The neuroscientist John Smythies [20] also took this view, arguing that physical and perceptual space are different cross-sections of a single psychophysical space. But what about non-physical experiences like dreams? These take place in a space which closely resembles physical space and the philosophers H.H. Price [21] and C.D. Broad [22] suggested that it is equally real in some sense. Dreams might be regarded as ‘normal’ but what about paranormal experiences? Telepathy suggests that even non-physical percepts have attributes of externality (i.e. reside in some communal space), while clairvoyance suggests physical events have attributes of internality (i.e. are contained in some kind of mental space). There are also collective apparitions which are seen by more than one person at the same time but do not seem to reside in normal physical space since they cannot be photographed. Likewise, some transpersonal experiences – such as OBEs and NDEs – seem to involve a space which is not the same as physical space but bears some relationship to it. I argue that the space required in all these cases must have more than the five dimensions associated with physical perception. Indeed, many mystical and psychedelic experiences involve a space which is explicitly described as higher dimensional.

So my claim is that many experiences – be they normal or paranormal or transpersonal – involve some form of space or more precisely a hierarchy of spaces. I term this the ‘Universal Structure’ and since it is communal it corresponds to an extended reality or Universal Mind. The next step is to link this with the higher-dimensional space of physics.

For if the physical world corresponds to a 4-dimensional brane in a higher-dimensional bulk, it is natural to ask what else resides in the bulk and the only other entities of which we are aware are mental. The important point is that this higher dimensional approach provides an expanded view of physics, which goes beyond the normal 4-dimensional view of materialistic classical physics. Although it is not subject to the same laws and modes of investigation as the physical world, it is still subject to *some* laws and modes of investigation, which is why it can be labelled 'Science'. I should stress that my proposal does not represent the mainstream view since most physicists are not interested in or do not believe in the phenomena I am trying to explain.

The final challenge is to explain how 1st-personhood arises. Claiming that a myriad of individual minds are connected as part of a Universal Mind which has somehow fragmented does not explain why I am associated with a particular fragment (i.e. why I am *me* rather than *you*). I believe the resolution of this problem requires another radical feature: one's sense of time and personal identity must be associated with another dimension which is compactified on a scale associated with the specious present (i.e. the minimum timescale of conscious experience). In this case, the extra dimensions in the Universal Structure must correspond to a hierarchy of times and a hierarchy of levels of consciousness. The concept of such a hierarchy has also been stressed in another article by Marilyn Monk [23] but linking this to the specious present makes an interesting connection with physics.

Implications for the SMN

The view of the worlds of matter, mind and spirit as non-overlapping magisteria makes sense from a *personal* perspective but this is distinct from the issue of whether there is an extension of science which connects them (i.e. a *conceptual* link). Without such a broader perspective, any postmaterialist paradigm is doomed, as is the *Galileo Commission* project. This is why I feel it is important to respond to Marilyn's article on this topic, although I regard our different views as complementary. Of course, people who feel that science cannot be expanded beyond the material domain may still hold the distinct magisteria view. Indeed, this is probably the opinion of the majority of scientists, which suggests that a change in scientists as well as science is required. Presumably a spiritual paradigm can only take root if scientists themselves become more spiritual.

This is also relevant to the broader remit of the SMN. Our strapline, "A leading international forum for people engaged in creating a new worldview for the 21st century", does not specify what that worldview is and there are inevitably different views on this because of the broad range of interests of our members. This breadth has increased since our founding and we now collaborate with many other organisations with overlapping but somewhat different aims. In view of these considerations, perhaps we should not try to specify our remit too precisely. Nevertheless, one can detect trends and I would suggest that our remit has become somewhat broader than it used to be. Traditionally we have mainly focused on the science-religion dialogue but perhaps our activities should now encompass all three domains rather than two. Our meetings have always done this to some degree, so it is just a question of emphasis.

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Complementing Reductionism: Goethean Science

Alicia Landman-Reiner

Two hundred years ago, renowned poet and playwright J. W. von Goethe achieved a holistic scientific perspective: seeing scientifically but not mechanically. Approaching living nature as essentially in process, Goethe aligned his own thinking with that dynamism. The work of contemporary biologists whose research is inspired by Goethe's methods can complement, and does not conflict with, the achievements of reductionist science.

Introduction

"The physico-chemical mode of studying the animal or plant has, indeed, everything to recommend it, so long as its limitations are never forgotten." Agnes Arber¹

Medicine's scope has broadened over the past 50 years, challenging one-sided materialism and reductionism. Yet while health *practices* are evolving, the way in which scientists view the world remains almost entirely restricted to *nature as molecular matter*. This strongly shapes research and determines funding. The focus of research on medicinal plants, for example, is overwhelmingly on isolated compounds, their biochemistry and molecular genetics. While such findings are tremendously useful and important, we can only see through a viewfinder, the region at which we aim it. If we are to provide a solid

scientific basis for a broadened integrative medicine and a balanced understanding of nature altogether, we must expand where and how we look.¹²

Most of us can little imagine what an expanded biological science might actually look like. By what scientific, but not narrowly material, ways of thinking and researching might we better apprehend aspects of nature that are resistant to the overly reductionist strategies of orthodox science? A significant body of work pioneering this task has emerged in recent decades from Goethean science. This article offers an overview of that work.

PART 1. QUALITIES AND WHOLENESS

WHAT IS GOETHEAN SCIENCE?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) was, typically for the scientific seeker of his day, a gentleman with a home-based laboratory and time to study nature. Although he well understood the achievement of Isaac Newton (1642–1727),^{13,14,15} Goethe had a deep affinity for nature's character and an approach that conflicted in style and method with the advances in science of his period, which he critiqued as one-sidedly analytic.¹⁶

Goethe's scientific writing was understood by few, and then largely forgotten, while reductionist science and technology grew in extraordinary ways.^{17,18} But 90 years later, the significance of his scientific work was recognised and explained as an epistemologically valid and important *methodology* for understanding life, by the young scientist and philosopher Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925).¹⁹⁻²² Steiner recognised that Goethe was attempting something (new): knowing the natural world without necessarily bringing to bear a way of thinking derived from physics, mechanics and chemistry. Rather, Goethe was knowing the living world in a living way.^{23,24}

Goethe and Steiner have not been alone in viewing reductionist and quantitative science as a one-sided, and therefore incomplete, understanding of life. Twentieth-century scientists E.S. Russell²⁵ Kurt Goldstein,²⁶ Rupert Sheldrake, Brian Goodwin, Agnes Arber, Rachel Carson²⁷ and others, have advanced holistic views. In recent decades, a more contextual, multi-level holistic concept of the organism has been emerging from within mainstream cancer cell biology,²⁸ and from the fields of evolutionary development ("evo-devo"), embryology, and systems biology.²⁹ One group of researchers is less well-known: those inspired by Steiner's explication of Goethe's unique perspective.

GOETHEAN SCIENCE: A WORLD WITH QUALITIES

The "ultimate aim" of modern biology, articulated by molecular biologist Francis Crick (1916-2004), is "to explain all biology in terms of physics and chemistry."³¹ But if we do science bounded by such a large unexamined assumption, we risk missing findings or principles that *might be unique to life*. Goethe's way of proceeding was, above all, to bring to his field of inquiry as few preconceptions as possible about his objects of study. If living organisms are our object, the Goethean approach does not *assume* that the organic will function as does the inorganic.³² Goethean-influenced scientist Andreas Suchantke states, "(our scientific method) must not be *applied to*, but rather *take its lead from* its object of study."³³

How Goethean biology looks more deeply into an organism, via attention to qualities, can be seen, for example, in the work of Craig Holdrege. He characterises his "phenomenological science" as "contextual, qualitative and holistic,"³⁵ skirting "a path of endless analysis that leads us further and further away" from the organism itself.³⁶

To understand this, consider Holdrege's careful and detailed process of studying the elephant. Holdrege's first step is

observational: making *detailed, factual, sense-based observations* about an organism. Anatomically, the elephant's trunk – part nose, part upper lip – lacks the cartilage typical of the mammalian nose (except where the trunk meets the skull), instead being composed of “a complex fabric of lengthwise, crosswise, radial, and diagonally spiraling layers of muscle”³⁷ allowing the trunk to move in all directions, from full circle to spiraling, entwined gestures between elephants. The trunk's distal end, with its one or two finger-like tips, is hand-like for “sensitive exploration”³⁷ of its environment and subtle gestures. This broad repertoire of fine and gross-motor movements allows for “picking,” massaging, rolling, peeling, “grabbing, enwrapping...lifting and pulling...spraying water,” mud or sand; “caressing, slapping...trumpeting in social interaction.” This extraordinarily all-purpose organ enables the elephant to “shift rapidly from one activity to an entirely different one.” Behaviorally, elephants continue to learn throughout life, can eat a great variety of foods, and unlike many higher animals can adapt to novel situations by modifying long-standing patterns of behavior.³⁷

Holdrege points out further phenomena: the elephant's “long phase of growth...long period of social maturation;” continuous replacement of worn-down molars with new ones; and lifespan into the seventh decade.³⁷



Fig. 1 Elephant, Minneriya National Park, Sri Lanka. (Photo: Eli Solidum CC BY-SA 4.0)

Holdrege's first step is precise observation. His second step is cognitive: he *gathers together* those observations that form *patterns*.³⁸ One such qualitative pattern, that emerges when we consider the above observations, is the elephant's *flexibility*. Another is of *slow and continuous development*.

If we watch a Goethean-influenced scientist at work, we find them using their *senses* broadly. Is this unusual in science? It is, insofar as the full sensuous spectrum, all that our senses bring us, leads us inevitably to *the qualitative*. We cannot formulate scent or taste quantitatively; we cannot convert the quality of a particular color, such as the soft gray-green of a desert sage, or the vivid yet pale green-yellow of a willow at its first leafing-out, into quantitative terms without losing something essential. When, as scientists, we insist on only what can be characterised quantitatively, we thereby

forgo a lot of information. Yet experts who work in *practical* fields such as design, stage lighting, perfumery, or wine making, rely for their living on such fine qualitative distinctions.

Four hundred years ago, Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) argued that evidence from the more “subjective” senses, like color vision, touch, or smell, give us sensations of qualities, but the qualities are not to be found in the external world.⁴¹ The Enlightenment largely banished hard-to-measure qualities from the mainstream of modern analytic science, and it was left to the likes of Goethe, Steiner, and Arber to re-awaken us to the narrowness of such a mindset. By re-introducing qualitative methods that *broaden scientific observing and thinking*, the scientific endeavor gains access to a broader *reality* than can be known from organisms' biochemistry and adaptive traits alone.

Goethean science relies not *only* on feeling, but must test the veracity of what we think we know. Research on *typologies* developed within sociology and psychology dealing with such issues as inter-observer variability, can be applied to verifying whole-organism work.⁴⁷ Kienle et al. discuss research methodologies for qualitative aspects of medical care.^{48,49}

GOETHEAN SCIENCE: QUALITIES LEAD TO WHOLENESS

The plant *Hypericum perforatum* produces bright yellow flowers with radiating petals and many stamens (Fig.2). It blooms at the height of the summer sun, when ambient light is maximal. Translucent oil glands can be seen in the leaves held up to the light (Fig.3). *Hypericum's* leaves and flowers contain much volatile oil. The flowers, pressed between the fingers, release a red-purple oil; and if we submerge the upper portion of the flowering plant in oil and expose it to light, a brilliant red color develops. Animals that ingest the plant and subsequently are exposed to sunlight, can develop a painful, even fatal, skin rash (USDA). Humans ingesting this herb also have risk of a light-sensitive rash.



Fig.2: *H.perforatum*, flower. (Photo: Doronenko, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Fig.3: *H.perforatum*, leaves. (Photo: Matt Lavin, CC BY-SA 2.0).

Thus, when we grasp *Hypericum* qualitatively, this plant reveals, through many phenomena, a motif, a *wholeness*: its close relationship to light. *Hypericum perforatum's* common name is St. John's Wort, demonstrated to have an anti-depressant effect in humans, and possible efficacy for seasonal affective disorder (SAD).^{58-60,4} (Endnote I)

If in the laboratory we study the leafy and flowering portion of the plant *Hypericum perforatum*, we can find a great number of compounds.^{61,62} It was thought for some time that first hypericin, and later, hyperforin, were “the active compound” accounting for mood-regulating effects of *Hypericum*. But a 2015 literature review makes clear that *multiple* constituents of *Hypericum* have a *variety of effects* on brain and nervous system tissue potentially relevant to depression or anxiety; animal behavioral studies support this multiplicity.⁶² The authors conclude that “*the total extract* must still be regarded as *the active constituent of SJW*”⁶² (St John's Wort).

APPREHENDING WHOLENESS

Henri Bortoft (1938-2012), physicist and philosopher of science, describes an authentic whole as “*to be encountered in the midst of the parts*.”⁷⁵ This *whole* is more than the sum of its parts. For Agnes Arber (1879-1960), it is possible to grasp that “*the whole is the cause of the parts*.”⁷⁶

Researchers studying nature under the star of Goethe's methodology, describe a characteristic finding: *coherence from within*.⁷⁷⁻⁸⁰ Bortoft calls it “intrinsic” vs. “extrinsic” coherence. The organism is thus viewed not *only* as an aggregation of traits selected for their adaptive advantages. The focus is not on the utility of each feature of an organism, but on the character of the whole animal or plant species or family.^{81,82}

One might well ask, what can be the *source* of wholeness in an organism? If we do not wish to outsource wholeness, either materialising it via the genome, or

positing a personified (godly) mediator of it, then what integrates? Goethe himself speaks of the “type,” also referred to as an “archetype”⁸⁶ or “prototype;”⁸⁷ but nothing abstract is intended. Rather, it is a reality, an *organising principle*⁸⁸ that is graspable as an *objective idea*;⁸⁶ an *objective cognitive experience that is dynamic*.⁸⁹ Such an objective idea works through the particularities to be found in living things, “the universal shining in the particular.”⁹⁰

PART 2. LIFE'S UNIQUE PRINCIPLES

GOETHEAN NATURAL SCIENCE: LIFE'S UNIQUE DYNAMICS

Throw a ball. Its trajectory in space and time follows the well-defined laws of physics. Imagine a mountain, pushed up by forces of heat deep in the earth, and worn down by wind and water over eons: the same set of laws are at work as in the ball's motion, only more to compute. But to watch a dandelion's green leaf rosette appear in the lawn, send up a shoot, open into a yellow flower head made up of dozens of minute florets, and fade to a pale seed-head on a stalk which withers and disappears, is to witness changes in space and over time which speak of an altogether different level of complexity and organisation. Unifying principles of physics allow our thinking to penetrate the motion of inanimate objects. Goethe proposed unifying principles for *dynamism in organic nature*.

Goethe was already an acclaimed novelist and playwright in his twenties, when he began studying plants in his own large garden. Ten years later, on a two-year journey from Germany to southern Italy and back, he observed plant life in different environments.³ What drew his attention was growth and change: *metamorphosis*.⁴ His method was to look, not for forces working unseen *behind* the phenomena, e.g. of chemistry; but for patterns in plants' visibly changing forms. He viewed *the leaf as the primal structure* of all plants. He discovered two (further) principles, “the two great driving forces in all nature”: *polarity* and *enhancement*.⁵

Using the annual plant as his model, Goethe described the dynamics of plant growth as a series of *alternating polar gestures of contraction and expansion*. Each typical annual goes through three contraction-expansions as it grows: from the contracted seed, expanding into leaves; again contracting into sepals, then expanding into a flower; contracting for a third time into stamen and pistils, and finally expanding into the fruit. This is an orderly and complex metamorphosis.⁶

Goethe's second principle is *enhancement*, meaning *rising to a qualitatively higher level*.⁸ We can find *enhancement* in a plant's transformations, from the simplicity of green leaves to the emergence of a colorful, diversely-petalled and scented flower corolla; above and beyond this, the duality of stamen and pistils' forms and their elaborate interactions with insects and birds; and finally the resulting fruit, containing in its seeds the whole plant's potential in miniature. This is progression from something simpler to something altogether “more,” a qualitative enhancement, a richness, a ripe complexity.

Goethe and the current scientists whose work has been inspired by his ideas, advise that, to fully cognise a plant's transformation processes, we should *picture* what we see in sequence: with precise imagination, moving forwards and backwards from one form to the next, like practicing scales in music, to gain proficiency with metamorphic perceiving and thinking.⁹

We thereby refine our cognitive technique, “releasing new powers of mind.”¹³ Studying its footprints, the living world seen macroscopically can become legible: its dynamic in time, utterly different from the world of inert matter...following well-articulated principles, or laws.¹⁴

Jochen Bockemuehl (1928-2020) has described in great detail over many plant species, how leaf forms change shape, as leaves successively emerge from bottom to top of the stem. This change of shape progresses in four stages: *stemming* in which the petiole (leaf's stem) is prominent; *spreading* or enlarging; *segmenting* or indenting; and *sprouting* (diminishing and pointing like a sprout). Bockemuehl shows that while leaf configurations vary greatly across plant species, these qualitative changes are lawful (Fig.4)²⁰.

Fig.4 Leaf sequence from base of stem upwards (phyllotaxis), two series showing progression of shape and size. (Bockemuehl 2010 p 40, courtesy Mercury Press.)

Bockemuehl furthermore describes shape progression within the leaf *meristem*, the embryonic plant tissue, finding, remarkably, that development from meristem to full-grown leaf gives rise to forms *in inverse order* from the shape progression of individual leaves up the stem.²¹ Suchantke identifies this as an example of *juvenilisation*, also referred to as *neotony*, the retention of youthful traits in maturity, a well-recognised principle of evolutionary developmental biology.²²

Brazilian researchers (M.C. and O. Dornelas) have shown that Goethe's principles can be applied to (known molecular) patterns in plant growth.¹⁵ The *primacy of the leaf* is consistent with the current “ABC” model of the genetics of floral development.²⁵ (The) Goethean principle, *enhancement*, is seen in the regulation of the development of floral structures. Thirdly, they describe *polarity*: “cycles of *expansion and contraction*” of gene expression within the meristem, where succeeding forms arise over the plant's life cycle.

The authors summarise, “Put Goethe's three formative principles together and the vast botanical diversity of our planet falls under the chief vision of formalism: production of a final form from interaction of a few abstract, general, and internally based (not externally imposed and adaptationally driven) morphological laws.” They conclude that Goethean principles may contribute to “the elaboration of a theoretical frame,” i.e. provide formal context for advances in evolutionary and developmental plant biology.¹⁵

GOETHEAN NATURAL SCIENCE: STEINER'S THREEFOLD ORGANISING IDEA

An influential example of Goethean science is Steiner's threefold *organising idea*^{31,32} for human body and mind. Applications of his threefold principle are fundamental to Anthroposophic Medicine, an integrative medical approach,³³ and the child-developmental basis of Waldorf education.³⁴

The threefold idea starts from the whole: a unified human organisation composed of two poles, qualitatively opposite in their morphology and function, mediated by a middle sphere operating at a higher level.^{35,36}

Steiner posits a primary polarity between the nervous and sensory apparatus or *nerve-sense system* on the one hand, and the metabolic organs and limbs, *metabolic-limb system*, on the other. These functionally and spatially polar arenas are responsible, respectively, for input – taking in the world through our senses and cognitively; and for output – acting upon and changing the world through digestion, and through the use of our limbs.

Those polar *functions* are also reflected in human *structure* in archetypal forms: the enclosing rounded container of the skull, its nerve-sense functions centered *within* it; and, spatially polar, in the radial, linear spine and limbs, with metabolic and muscular functions arrayed *around* their bony supports.

Between polar forms and functions, Steiner points to a third element, centered between head and abdomen in the chest cavity, the region of heart and lungs. Between the quiet head and the ever-mobile limbs and metabolism, the heart and lungs *rhythmically* alternate contracting and expanding. There in heartbeat and breathing, the polarities are not separated in space, but “actively complement each other in time.”³⁸ The rhythmical organs resolve a polarity, not by neutralising or “cancelling” it (Schad) but by rising to a higher level: encompassing both poles.

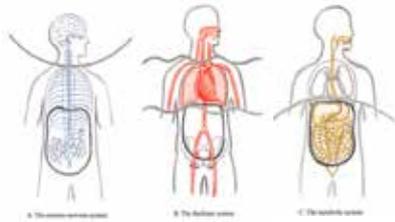


Fig. 5: Nerve-Sense, Rhythmical, and Metabolic-Limb Systems. (Rohen, courtesy Adonis Press.)

Goethe’s “two great driving forces in nature: the idea of polarity and (that of) enhancement” resonate in Steiner’s threefold law.³⁷ Its first Goethean principle is the *polarity* of human macro-organisation, nerve-sense and metabolic-limb systems. Its second is *enhancement*, which Goethe finds in the plant, sequentially from leaf, to blossom, to fruit formation, to seed. In human organisation, Steiner proposes that the middle sphere of heart and lungs mediates the poles by *enhancing*.

Mainstream science localises consciousness solely in the brain, problematic for any body-mind concept of physiology, health and illness. Steiner’s threefold idea was from its outset a body-mind concept.⁴⁴ A spectrum of distinct consciousness states are seen as distributed over the three great systems of our organism, rather than exclusively the province of the brain.^{45,46}

The threefold organising principle has been recently applied to a wide variety of fields. Two recent comprehensive works develop the explanatory power of this Goethean-scientific idea:

- In *Functional Morphology, The Dynamic Wholeness of the Human Organisation* (2007) Johannes Rohen, M.D., renowned anatomist, comprehensively applies the threefold organising principle to organ systems’ structures, function, and embryology.
- In Wolfgang Schad’s two-volume *Understanding Mammals, Threefoldness and Diversity* (2018), the author shines “sharp light on incongruities

in conventional biological wisdom, realigning them to show us nature’s inherent organic coherence, wisdom and order.”⁵² (Endnote II)

Several other publications based on the threefold organising principle are listed here, highlighting its potential *breadth* of application:

- Niemeijer MH, Baars EW, Hoekman J, Ruijsenaars AJJM. *An instrument for dimensional diagnosis of a child’s constitution (ICC)*. Int J Compl Alt Med. 2018; 11:68-73.⁵³
- Suchantke, A. (2009) *Metamorphosis, Evolution in Action*. Hillsdale, NY: Adonis Press; 2009.⁵⁴
- Riegner, M. (2008) *Parallel Evolution of Plumage Pattern and Coloration in Birds: Implications for Defining Avian Morphospace*. Condor, 2008; 110:599-614.⁵⁵
- Lockley M (2007) *The Morphodynamics of Dinosaurs, Other Archosaurs, and Their Trackways: Holistic Insights into Relationships Between Feet, Limbs, and the Whole Body*. In: Bromley, R, Melchor R, eds. *Ichology at the crossroads: A multidimensional approach to the science of organism-substrate interactions*. Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists Special Publication. 2008;88:27-51.⁵⁶

CONCLUSION: FULL INTEGRATION

To progress, broadening scientific *knowledge* by broadening scientific *knowing*, is an essential piece. To meet human goals for medicine, a positive conceptual framework and methods for a balanced science of the living world are a necessity.⁷⁴ As Heusser argues, “concepts (would be) developed which would include the conventional and the complementary,”⁷⁵ the analytic and synthetic, in an encompassing perspective. This would constitute full integration.

Contemporary Goethean science offers a significant effort in that direction, a map and tools for scientific practice. This body of work can stand as an example, a model, for walking the path: apprehending the qualitative, wholeness, the dynamism of growth and development, and giving rise to a proposed body-mind organising principle applicable to integrative medicine.

Courage is needed to broaden sensory and cognitive capacities beyond those identified by Galileo, by now so well honed. Science is an “open-ended, never-finished process.”⁷⁶

It can evolve, without compromising its mission of seeking truth in nature.

Expanded capacities of discernment such as those developed through a Goethean approach can help to evolve science and medicine.

Alicia Landman-Reiner, MD practiced family medicine and anthroposophic medicine (AM). She founded and directed the USA anthroposophic physician training, and has taught doctors about AM around the world. Alicia received an A.B. from Harvard and an M.D. from Albert Einstein College of Medicine. She loves to hike and garden. She and her husband live in southern California.

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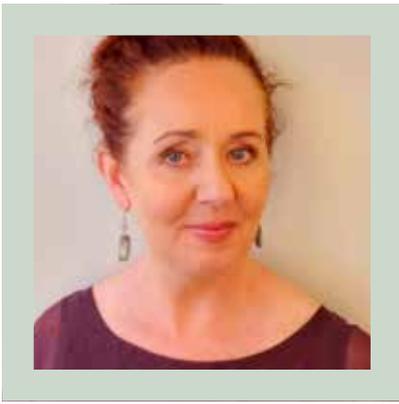
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ENDNOTES:

St. John’s Wort (Hypericum)’s use requires a qualified health professional, for correct diagnosis, and to avoid potentially serious herb-drug interactions.

At the time of the original articles of which this piece is an excerpt, Schad’s book was in print as: *Understanding Mammals, Threefoldness and Diversity* (2018). References correspond to that 2018 edition. The *current* (2020) edition is differently titled. The 2020 edition is given on “Further Reading,” above (and highly recommended).



Hypnopompic Power: Please Mind the Gap

Helena Daly, Ph.D.

Helena argues that the state of consciousness between sleeping, dreaming and waking realms is an important state of being, yet one that is largely forgotten, overlooked and misunderstood. In academic circles, this semi-waking state is referred to as the hypnopompic state and is rarely differentiated from the hypnagogic state of consciousness that precedes sleep. This short paper details distinguishing features and differences between these states, and highlights the dream-waking state as a unique and important state in its own right—a liminal third state of being through which higher states of awareness, embodied knowledge and healing can be known and experienced. In light of this, she offers a more balanced, circular way of seeing and understanding to help bridge the gap between the nocturnal realm - where inner perceptual life is transmitted from within sleeping-dreaming depth - and the daylight realm.

Between sleeping, dreaming and waking realms

Upon awakening in a state dwelling between the realms, a natural, ordinary yet extraordinary state of consciousness manifests—one that plays a crucial role in helping to understand the phenomenon of dreaming as a useful means of accessing knowledge, guidance and healing. This is ordinary in the sense that everyone regularly passes through this state from sleeping to waking, and extraordinary in terms of its healing potentiality and as a goldmine for accessing information about subtle reality and death.

Early philosophical, religious, theosophical and esoteric traditions and practices highly valued this overlapping state where inner and outer worlds meet. Iamblichus, for example, a third century Neoplatonic philosopher and practising theurgist, described this state as a ‘waking condition’ through which divine dreams were received. Their divine status was recognised as such by the presence of a clear voice and the shining forth of a bright and tranquil light (Taylor, 1984, pp. 116–118). Similarly, centuries later Swedenborg, a visionary theologian, referred to this ‘spiritual state’ (Lachman, 2009, p. 87) as one that opens *midway* between sleep and wakefulness, and *right at the time* of wakefulness when the dreamer is still waking up. These waking moments were identified as a “privileged state for experiencing divine revelation” (Powell, 2018, p. 474), and as the sweetest of all states, with heaven infusing into the rational mind in utmost tranquillity (as cited in Lachman, 2009, p. 94).

Yet today, this natural state of being largely is forgotten, overlooked, misinterpreted and devalued. While the modern world has retained an interest and fascination with dreams, it has largely lost contact with dreams as a

sacred form of knowing. It has moved away from the riches of the inner world and has little knowledge of the powerful, healing modality that is the dream-waking state of being. Scholars and contemporary researchers, in particular, are no longer in touch with the deep spiritual and symbolic effects carried by subtle dreaming experiences, and how this impacts the creative and visionary imagination.

In academic circles, this highly sensitive state of being has been all but stripped of its in-between-ness and primary *receptive* status through which potent spiritual experiences are accessed and known. This soft, open, fluid state is now described in hard, technical terms—words that all too often barricade themselves behind an impenetrable language incapable of giving any sense of, let alone access to, subtle life. And it does not help matters when this waking state is commonly associated with the state of consciousness that precedes sleep—the hypnagogic state.

These states of being while similar differ in significant ways and the purpose of this essay is to highlight this and bring to light distinctive features of the dream-waking state. This differentiation is based on my own extensive experience and observations as a dream practitioner, as well as my reading of the literature. I have come to know this state as a liminal state of being through which healing, embodied knowledge, higher states of awareness, and the workings of the soul and its relation to death and beyond can be known and experienced (Daly, 2016). This in-between state is known as a ‘third mode of reality’ within Celtic perceptions of a three-realm cosmology (Moriarty, 2005)—an ancient Irish tradition to which I belong.

So what you will read here is borne out of my own practice, from the inside-out as opposed to the outside-in. It is born of

my deep trust in sleep and dream—a trust W.B Yeats was well known to have held having once remarked that all he knew of any value had come from sleep (Bridge, 1953, p. 147). This value, I too know, given that some of the most profound transformative and healing experiences I have ever had, occurred during sleep in deep dream states, and in those gapping, liminal moments upon awakening between the realms.

Hypnopompic is not hypnagogic

This in-between waking state was termed *hypnopompic* by Frederic Myers in the late nineteenth century. Its meaning derives from *hypnos* after the mythical Greek God of sleep and *pompe* which means a “sending forth.” Myers, a classical psychologist and psychic researcher devoted to the study of consciousness and post-mortem inquiry, coined this term to help differentiate the waking state from the state of consciousness that precedes sleep—the hypnagogic state. Earlier that century, the French psychologist L. F Maury applied the term *hypnagogic* to this state, with the latter part *gogeus* meaning “leading” as in leading towards sleep (as cited in Mavromatis, 2010). The technical reader will understand the hypnagogic state as rational waking cognition trying to make sense of non-linear images and sensations, and the hypnopompic state as dreaming cognition trying to make sense of waking reality.

While the term “hypnopompic” is sometimes correctly employed to refer to this state, it is more frequently used as a temporal differentiation in relation to the hypnagogic state. The lack of deeper differentiation between hypnopompic and hypnagogic states may in part be due to their similarities, given that both open through subtle modes of consciousness along the continuum between the unconscious and conscious mind. Moreover, both states have been found to serve as a vehicle for extra-sensory perception. This is supported by literature from esoteric and occult practices, numerous experiential studies and spontaneous cases of parapsychological phenomena (PSI) (Sherwood, 2002). Phenomenal experiences of varying degrees that include visual and auditory features associated with precognition, telepathy, light phenomena, out-of-body experiences and apparitions (Mavromatis, 1987; Sherwood, 2002; Schacter, 1976; Gertz, 1983; Waters, 2016) have been well-documented within hypnagogic literature—literature that tends to include hypnopompic experiences as part of the overarching hypnagogic state.

This lack of differentiation may also be due to the fact that the hypnagogic state is the much better known and more commonly reported state of consciousness (Sherwood, 2002; Jaenke, 2004; Mavromatis, 2010), which has naturally led to this state being more extensively researched. Experimental and survey-based research on the hypnagogic state abounds with research findings frequently published in interdisciplinary fields of study, such as neuroscience, psychology and consciousness studies. The hypnopompic state, on the other hand, is much less commonly reported, with minimal research findings (Mavromatis, 2010; Sherwood, 2002, Jaenke, 2014).

Researchers and writers across interconnecting fields of study frequently do not differentiate between these states. Experiences clearly described as manifesting on coming out of sleep, are regularly referred to as “hypnagogic” visions (Lachman, 2009). Even the most comprehensive, extensive research to date on this subject matter (Mavromatis, 2010) does not differentiate between hypnagogic and hypnopompic states, and describes sleep dreams and day-dreams as being comparable in all aspects. This statement is not true and reflects a lack of consideration of different types of non-ordinary sleep dreams.

Transpersonal/archetypal dreams are such dreams—deep dreaming events that give rise to hypnopompic experiences. From within these dreaming events, inner subtle processes are reflectively observed with active absorption and self-conscious participation in and through them, as opposed to more ordinary dream states within which inner processes are experienced and remembered.

In the dream-waking state, hypnopompic images arise from internal sources and come fully formed (McKellar, 1957), in contrast to hypnagogic images, which tend to form themselves in front of subjects, with eyes open or closed and are more external experiences. The images experienced on coming out of sleep and dream into hypnopompic consciousness, possess an *internal coherence* and *relational participation* not present within hypnagogic experiences which are much more fragmented and marked by a general lack of participation (Leroy, 1933). Intellectual perception is deepened by heart-centred, embodied knowledge (von Franz, 1998), through allowing the actual experiential contents of experience to inform perception. Observing archetypal content in a big dream, for example, may allow inferences to be made, but knowledge gained through relational participation from within live

elemental dream structures (a significant feature not present in hypnagogic states), is another thing entirely.

Hypnagogic states are also significantly characterized by a lack of somatic elements (Waters, 2016), and affective components" (Mavromatis, 2010, p. 206).—central components of hypnopompic experiences that serve a huge therapeutic, transformative role. Herein lies the distinguishing difference between theoretical and therapeutic understanding of the numinous—the experiential means through which deeper transformative healing processes emerge. Jung (1960/1969) proposes these types of unmediated experiences of the numinous as an experience of God, and that therapeutically, the healing value lies only in the experience of the numinous. This depth component highlights the important role of Eros and transpersonal elemental forms of the numen that come through the body into expression—a depth that highlights important distinctions between the hypnopompic experience and the hypnagogic state.

In my opinion, based on my experience and understanding of the literature, I believe a hypnagogic state manifests in a similar way to day-dreams with dream-like phenomena, where there is an interplay between surface mental imagery and levels of awareness. To my mind, this state of being is comparable to more ordinary types of dreams in which inner processes are observed without becoming absorbed in them, thus reflecting more of a cognitive sensing and experiencing. I am inclined to describe this type of state as more reflective of an “intellectual state” (A. E., 1918).

Hypnagogic explorers, such as the twentieth century Danish philosopher, Mosikivin (as cited in Lachman, 2009), and the Russian mystic philosopher and spiritual teacher, P. D. Ouspensky (1974), knew the hypnagogic state as one through which the preservation of awareness could be practised, and *double consciousness*—waking and dreaming experienced. From within this practice, some degree of control could be exerted over dream-like phenomena—discoveries that led to the development of techniques for deeper exploration in lucid dream states. While double consciousness also operates from within the hypnopompic state, the manifestation of this state does not come about as a result of controlling and manipulating dream imagery - a crucial and significant difference. This waking state manifests through letting the emerging dream phenomena be, without rational interference, thus allowing powerful experiences to emerge naturally.

This allowing is vital. Increasing *lucid awareness* is an exceptionally strong hypnopompic feature and this emerging subtle presence ensures a deepening of the experience into transpersonal and mystical domains (Stumbry, 2018). It is through this exceptional lucid quality that some insight into the nature of consciousness is granted, particularly through the natural emergence of *innate self-reflexive properties*, and *meta-awareness capacities* (Stumbrys, 2018). This is important as the intrinsic, intricate working of lucid presence in dream-waking experiences is very different to how lucid dreaming is received and understood.

Lucid dreaming is commonly referred to as being aware that you are dreaming when you dream, and using this awareness to change aspects of the dream, or its direction. This type of dreaming is fertile ground for the exploration of intentionality and creative powers of the mind. However, lucid awareness experienced within dream-waking states increasingly serves to sustain this heightened awareness and being a lucid, participant observer of what is naturally unfolding, as opposed to trying to direct or manipulate any type of outcome.

By allowing subtle life to unfold from within its own reality, without any kind of imposed control, through focused attention and acutely attending to what arises, one does not prevent any deeper emergence of significant ontological import from coming through (Irwin, 2015). Heightened and deepening lucidity can be understood as openings into self-healing properties, and as a form of mediating awareness that links sleeping, dreaming and waking states of being.

This deeper emergence in dream-waking encounters and hypnopompic consciousness is experienced through unifying symbols within “conflicting autosymbolic tension” (Silberer, 1965). A meaningful awareness of the significance of symbolic presence in the hypnopompic state is keenly felt, the awareness and implicit understanding of which is largely absent in the hypnagogic state. From within this waking experience, one apprehends the tension and conflict that naturally exists between a stable consciousness and a charged unconscious. These simultaneous realities (the dark night world and day world of light) oppose one another, thus reflecting the tense inner-outer merging through which dream-waking states emerge.

This enormous dual tension manifesting a dual-aspect inside-outside world brings forth high creative energy. When endured, an energetic transmutation occurs (Neumann, 1974, p. 19) through which a state of suffering is called forth, one that gives birth to the third. In traditional Celtic practice, this is experienced through the third mode of reality (Moriarty, 2005)—also known as the third force (Evans-Wentz, 1988). There unfolds a *triplicity within duality* within this bridging state, enabling the emergence of a highly creative process. This bi-polar tension is central for the emergence and understanding of transpersonal phenomenal dreaming and waking experiences, through which the transformative power of *One* unifying presence can be known.

While hypnagogic states also manifest through tension, it is a very different kind of tension, one produced between drowsiness and an effort to think (Silberer, 1965), where the conscious ego remains alert and interacts with the vision. Creative tension experienced within hypnopompic states manifests within conditions of much greater drowsiness and an effort *not* to think, through the suspension of egoic activity, withdrawal of mental activity and preservation of psychic energy and being with whatever arises, without control or manipulation.

These important and meaningful differences highlight the dream-waking state as a state of being that is significantly different from the hypnagogic state. While both states are receptive modes for subtle forms of consciousness and varying degrees of extra-sensory perceptual transmissions, the semi-waking state is quite different. It is a primary receptive state of being that arises through deep experiential knowing and powerful transformative affective components, and it serves a huge therapeutic role. The combined activity of identified distinctive features that open in sleep and dream lead to profound and extraordinary hypnopompic experiences upon awakening. These types of experiences are very different from hypnagogic experiences that do not arise out of inner spatial depth and dreaming dimensionality—the intrinsic characteristics of which highlight transpersonal states of being experienced in sleeping-dreaming dimensions as distinctly different from dream-like phenomena that opens in the hypnagogic state. It follows then, that important methodological differences exist in relation to how these states of being are approached and understood.

Bridging the gap: a circular way of seeing and understanding

The dream-waking state, I believe, offers a third way of experiencing reality, one mediated by the depths of the psyche through the body. Opening to this way of understanding invites a more balanced approach, one that does not veer off too far left, nor too far right, but takes a more central position. It approaches the dream-waking state as a revelatory state of being that naturally applies itself to a hermetic field, one that opens through powerful symbolic expression.

From within this way of seeing, the waking state of being could be perceived as a ‘post-dual third’ that sits in the middle—within continual, dynamic opposing tense interaction between psyche and soma, fluid invisibility and condensed visibility, allowing for synthesis and reconciliation of apparently separate elemental realms. And, it can be embraced as an energetically emerging third mode of being—a mode of seeing associated with an emergent feminine consciousness (Moriarty, 2005) that moves through the body—and collective earth body. From within ancient Celtic cultural contexts of its expression, this type of understanding is “intimately tied to dreaming visionary perspectives” (Romanyshyn, 2007, p. 238).

Coming to understand the intricate working of subtle conscious activity in deep dream states and in-between waking states is not something that can be understood by the power of the intellect alone. Perception, after all, is a whole bodily affair. When we allow ourselves to be informed through bodily depth, we open to a way of seeing, thinking and understanding that naturally bridges masculine and feminine principles. Both primary, archetypal energies exist within all of us—male and female, along the gender spectrum. These distinctive, *seemingly* opposite, complementary, relational energies work through and of one another—within which deeper understanding of higher states of consciousness opens. It is crystal clear to see the catastrophic and detrimental effect the lack of integration of these vital energies has had culturally and globally. Individual and collective psyches are in severe states of great disequilibrium on massive scales, accompanied by increased anxiety, loneliness, fear, hopelessness and existential isolation.

A more balanced approach is critically called for then, one that enables the inward turn, allowing for natural mediation between “the dark, nocturnal realm of subtle psychic activity and the daylight realm of the human psyche” (Jung, 1933, p. 11). This circular approach recognises the important harmonising process between the solar and lunar mind. It naturally bridges opposing dichotomies between reason and rationalistic thinking and non-rational forms of knowledge (left and right brain processing), and embodied forms of knowing. A circular way of seeing and understanding folds into its centre the vast subtle perceptual field of intelligence that opens through sleeping and dreaming dimensions—superior intelligence that transcends the waking mind’s linear way of thinking and limitations so severely imposed by western scientific and cultural paradigms (Jaenke, 2014).

Circular sight loops back and forth within, between and without. It drops down into the naturally altered liminal domain that is sleep and dream where spiritual potentialities are inwardly opened, and through which living manifestations of soul, ancient presence and deep heart knowing are experienced. It embraces those gapping threshold moments between sleeping and waking, visible physical life and invisible spiritual reality, life and death—through which fleeting glimpses into the mysteries and passages of what lie beneath, between and beyond are granted.

Dr. Helena Daly worked as an independent practitioner in the field of death and dying for many years in San Francisco, while pursuing her doctorate degree in depth psychology and consciousness studies. Her dissertation “Shadowy Beauty: The Art of Hypnopompic Inquiry” was a hermeneutic-phenomenological study of the dream-waking state and non-ordinary dreams of numinosity that manifest there for which she was awarded the Esalen Research Scholarship for her transpersonal dreamwork and its relation to post-mortem survival. For the last few years, she continued to work in this capacity as a spiritual and psychological care practitioner in hospice and palliative care in Ireland. Helena has a special interest in end-of-life experiences that occur during the dying process (dreams, visions and death-bed encounters) and is currently writing her first book “Between Worlds: Subtle Life in Dreams, Dying, Death”. In addition, she practises dream therapy, offers educational dream courses and workshops, runs small dream groups and is a freelance writer.

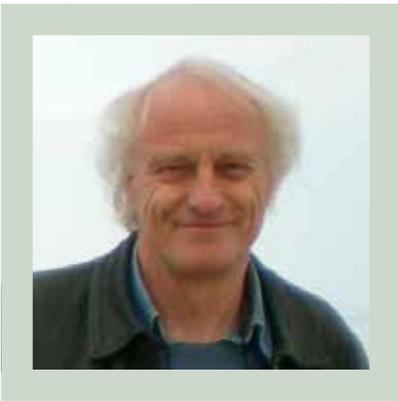
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Prayer for Tolerance

Voltaire

O Thou God of all beings,
of all worlds and of all times,
we pray that the little
differences in our clothes
in our inadequate languages
in our ridiculous customs
in our imperfect laws
in our illogical opinions
in our ranks and conditions,
which
are so exaggeratedly
important to us
and so meaningless to you,
that these small variations
that distinguish those atoms
that we call human beings,
one from another,
may not be signals of hatred
and persecution.



How the Mind Heals and Harms the Body and Handles Covid-19

Adrian Parker

Adrian argues that there are well-established findings showing how psychological effects have a major influence during the onset of illnesses, which is crucially relevant to dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. The immune system shows learned responses whereby stress and the perceived degree of control help deal with infections. Many of the measures implemented have been shown not only to be largely ineffective but may well have been counter-productive by inducing fear and so-called collateral damage in populations. He concludes that dire dictatorial handling of the pandemic is at least in part due to a failure of science journalism to present less dogmatic and counter viewpoints and evidence-based research.

The difficulties in making correct predictions concerning Covid-19 suggest that epidemiology is far from being an exact science. The efforts by politicians and their advisors to retain credibility in the face of this uncertainty may have led to categorical opinions over issues where there is actually insufficient evidence (such as the use of masks) on which to base mandatory decisions. This may also have contributed to a complete absence of any discussion of the probable influence of psychological factors on the course and spread of the pandemic since the very acknowledgement of such factors in medical terms would be seen as adding further uncertainty. As will be shown later here, the ways such factors operate can be clearly specified and some of them do indeed indicate that many of the imposed restrictions were almost certainly counter-productive.

If there is any scepticism amongst readers concerning the value of psychology in the medical arena, then there can be no better demonstration of its potency than that seen in the remarkable use of hypnosis as an analgesic for major surgical operations. Although more common historically, the use of hypnosis for analgesic purposes still occurs and is well documented.^{2,3} Furthermore, some of the components of hypnosis such as visualisation and focused awareness are operative in cognitive therapy and the placebo effect. However, hypnosis is not just illustrative in showing what can be achieved by psychological intervention, it highlights almost paradoxically another the major issue central to health, the issue of control.

The issue of control

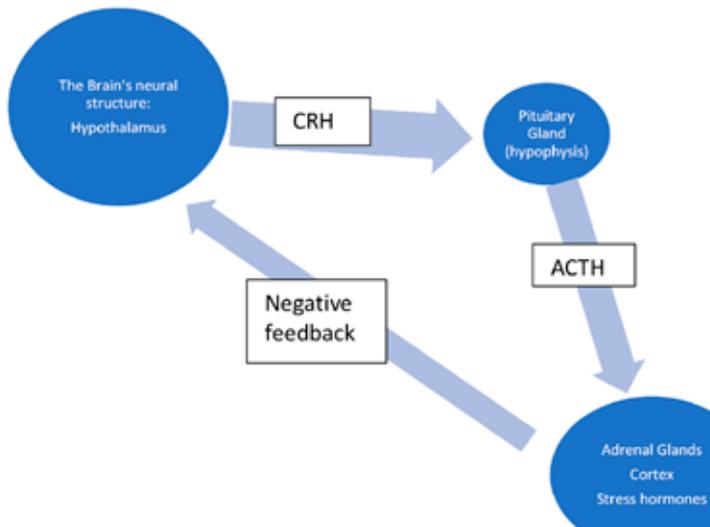
In classical hypnosis there is an image in the mind of the public of the control being with hypnotist, yet the correct and contemporary use of hypnosis is to enable patients to become aware of and to take control of their own latent resources that are activated by the hypnotist. Although

there is divergent opinion as to which factors constitute hypnosis, it is generally agreed that hypnosis facilitates expanded awareness and receptivity to expectancy and suggestion.^{5,6}

This issue of control is a vital aspect here because its prolonged loss is actually considered to be pathological and is a major component of depression. Depression is part of the collateral damage of lengthy lockdowns such as have occurred in the UK. An on-line survey found a threefold increase in clinical levels of anxiety and depression during lockdown with the most vulnerable being the young and unemployed. Sleep disturbance was common with 28% of respondents scoring above the cut-off point for clinical insomnia.⁷ Another British study found that 18% of the large number surveyed reported suicide or self-harm thoughts during the first month of lockdown – again with a three-fold increase in compared to the previous year.⁸ These findings are hardly surprising given that the established finding in clinical psychology that the feelings of helplessness and hopelessness are closely linked to the prevalence of mental disturbance and bodily illness.

A further study from the UK with potential implications for the influence of lockdowns on mental health⁹ used the UK's hospital scale large data "biobank" to locate psychiatric patients with pre-pandemic diagnoses. Compared to a control group, the patient group was found to have more than double the Covid-19 admissions and mortalities. One might speculate that their life circumstances had increased their vulnerability, yet the measurements of numerous social variables gave no support for this hypothesis. The authors concluded from this that stress via brain mechanisms is able to "suppress cell-mediated and humoral immunity" making the person more vulnerable to COVID-19 infections. Let's look at these "brain mechanisms" and their link to immunity.

Figure 1 Linking the Hypothalamus, Pituitary and Adrenal Glands to the release of stress hormones



The brain as a pharmacy

The brain is actually more a pharmacy rather than any form of mechanism and one of its two glands is the *hypophysis* (pituitary gland), located at the base. The hypophysis has a rich supply of blood vessels and is packed with hormones so that when the gland is stimulated, these are released into the blood. This occurs as a response to signals from the major center of nerve tissue in the brain, the *hypothalamus*. In effect the hypothalamus exerts control over the body's hormonal (endocrine) system, and it does so by the secretion of corticotrophin releasing hormone from nerve fibres that reach directly into the hypophysis.

In the case of stress, the crucial hormone released from the hypophysis is adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), which on reaching the adrenal glands causes the release of the stress hormones, cortisol and adrenalin. These directly affect the body's major functions and one key result is the mobilisation of the body's fat and sugar to provide energy to deal with the impending stress. Normally, there is a positive and negative feedback system which regulates the level of hormones circulating in the blood. However, when the stress level is constantly high and the feedback doesn't function anymore, hypertension occurs. This means that the fat circulating in the blood stream may in chronic cases lead to a thickening of the walls of blood vessels, contributing to the risk of thrombosis and hemorrhages.

The initial effects of lockdowns can undoubtedly activate these bodily reactions in many stress susceptible people. The good news is that the stress responses gradually tend to normalise but the bad news is that when the stress events

repeatedly happen, the bodily stress responses do not entirely normalise. It is therefore quite likely that subsequent lockdowns reinforce these responses and result in increased hypertension and other illnesses in a sizeable proportion of the population, which now is reported to be the case.¹⁰

In the case of prolonged lockdowns there is a further potentially damaging or so-called nocebo effect. Nocebo effects are due to hormones such as adrenalin, noradrenalin and cortisol reaching a level where they exert immunosuppressant effects. Psychological factors enter the picture here again but now with respect to the immune system.

The psychological link to the immune system

There are two types of immune reactions that complement each other: humoral immunity, which refers to antibodies circulating in the blood and lymph, and cell-based immunity referring to cells which devour and destroy viruses and bacteria (antigens)..

Antibody immunity concerns the so-called B-lymphocytes produced in bone marrow. B-cells first ingest the antigens and then present their remains on their surface. The T-cells (called so because they mature in the thymus) react to these remains and this reaction stimulates the B-cells to clone into memory cells and into plasma cells. It is these B-memory lymphocytes that enable the future recognition of the infectious antigen. The net result is the mass production of antibodies by plasma cells, which will combat the specific infection initially identified by B-cells.

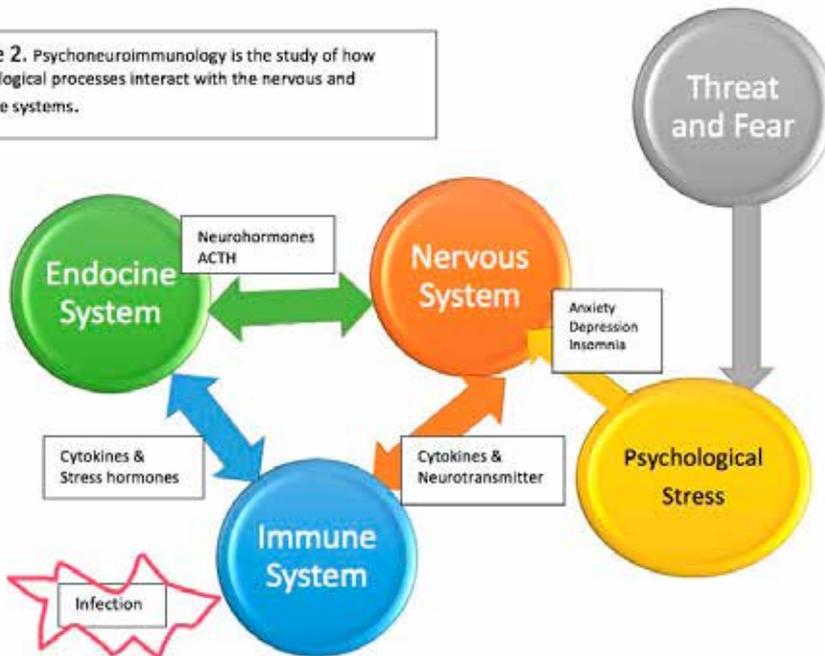
Cell-based immunity is based on the devouring property of various T-lymphocytes. In the first instance, the helper T-cells ingest the viruses etc so that the remaining virus fragments appearing on the surface serve as markers for Killer T-cells to attack any such infected cells. There are also two further vital components of immunity which maintain the defence at an appropriate level. These are the natural killer cells which attack cancerous cells and the regulatory T-cells which suppress any overreaction in the form of auto-immune responses where lymphocytes attack the body's own cells.

This classical account fails to account for learning responses shown by the immune system.¹¹ This means that repeated experiences that have hitherto produced no reaction from the immune system begin to do so as a learned habit. The significance of this can hardly be overstated since it implies there are mutually reinforcing reactions, that is to say synergistic links, between stress, hormones, immune responses and illness.¹² Perception and awareness are therefore crucial in terms of our response. The evidence also suggests that psychological intervention is most effective in the prevention and the *early* treatment of major illnesses but probably less so with stabilised chronic ones.¹³

This is further support for a psychobiological view of how the immune system works. When they are at a low concentration in the blood, stress hormones stimulate the maturation and production of B- and T-lymphocytes, but when the concentration of stress hormones reaches a high level, then they become immune suppressors. Moreover, both the thymus and bone marrow have neural connections to the autonomic nerve system, which can potentially pass on the brain's responses to stress.

Even this view is noticeably incomplete since the interaction between stress, psychological factors, hormones (the endocrine system), and the immune system is further influenced by chemical messengers called *cytokines*. Cytokines are locally released by T-cells and these "cleansing cells" (macrophages) and their messages stimulate the immune cells to react to any *acute ongoing infection*. Problems can however arise when this reaction is provoked by infection into becoming a "cytokine storm". It is this overreaction that is most damaging to respiratory tissue and explains the serious or even lethal reactions to viral infection. Moreover, it is also believed to be a residual reaction which lies behind so-called "long Covid-19".¹⁴

Figure 2. Psychoneuroimmunology is the study of how psychological processes interact with the nervous and immune systems.



Nevertheless, caution is needed here concerning the diagnosis of long Covid-19. Fatigue is a common post-viral symptom following most serious infections. In the case of long Covid-19, this psychobiological way of looking at the causality emphasises the synergistic or interdependent relationship between the various factors. It is conceivable that in *some cases* negative expectancy surrounding the after-effects of infection may contribute in a self-fulfilling manner to a chronic state. Certainly, the previous use of stress-related diagnoses with misleading names such as myalgic encephalomyelitis and fibromyalgia, seems only to have prolonged the fatigue associated with the post infection state. Shakespeare's Macbeth has made us aware of what is probably the most effective remedy: "Sleep puts each day to rest. Sleep that relieves the weary labourer and heals hurt minds."

Sleep as a protective agency

As noted earlier, insomnia appears to increase markedly in populations during lockdowns. Stress together with any incumbent psychological problems easily interferes with the integrity of sleep patterns. It is not just the requisite eight hours spent in sleep that are a vital part of well-being but also the regularity of *unfragmented sleep*. It has been known for some time that serious disruptions of this integrity lead to failures of attention and memory, making sleep deprivation a major cause of car accidents. Now we also know that sleep deprivation and insomnia are associated with stroke, dementia, diabetes, and cancer. Most recently, Alzheimer's Disease has been added to the list since the deep (non-REM) stages of sleep appear to play a vital role in eliminating toxic waste

products (specifically, amyloid protein) from the brain.¹⁵

While there appears to be an absence of research linking sleep quality to vulnerability to infection by the Covid-19 virus, there are major findings connecting sleep with infection by the seasonal influenza virus. A recent study monitored body-movement as a means of assessing time spent in sleep amongst volunteers who had received samples of the influenza virus. In the week before they received the virus, those volunteers who had slept less than five to six hours per night had more than four times the infection rate than those individuals who had slept for seven and nine hours. The authors concluded that sleep "exerts substantial regulatory effects on the immune system."¹⁶

Protective and risk factors

Beyond sleep, another major protective factor is "sense of coherence in life" which, at least according to self-reports, confers a healthy resistance to illness.¹⁷ A sense of coherence occurs when the world is perceived to be comprehensible, manageable and meaningful. From this perspective, stressful restrictions during covid-19, whether advised or mandatory, should be presented as worthwhile challenges rather than demands in the face of punitive threats.

What do we know about risk factors for Covid-19 infections and fatalities? Statistics from "excess deaths" (over representation of deaths) in European countries do indicate that, at least during the high points of the first and second waves, deaths exceeded those of recent years.¹⁸ It is also clear that there is an enormous international variation in both the fatality rate and the infection rate, which appears depend on socio-economic factors. It seems now well established that "co-morbidities" (especially obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure) are major risk factors.¹⁹ It may well be that some of the high infection and fatality rates in the US and UK relate to the fact that their obesity rates are amongst the highest in the world.

Another major risk factor concerns excessive exposure to the virus: "high viral loading". Foremost vulnerability here of course concerns hospital staff but it also includes immigrant populations living overcrowded conditions where viral exposure is intense.^{20, 21, 22}

The enormity of the second covid-19 wave in India might make the role of psychological factors appear to retreat



'I was too fat': Boris Johnson explains his 'nasty' brush with Covid | AFP

into marginality. Yet the infectious disease expert asked by the BBC to explain why their second wave had gained such impetus, while acknowledging the viral overload was linked to unrestricted festivals, attributed a major role to anxiety: "...the overbearing requirement [is] for people to have two things. Firstly, the need to get into a hospital and have a bed with oxygen where they can feel a bit secure. And secondly, the amount of anxiety that comes from not getting a bed. That has been the overwhelming sentiment of most people who may or may not need hospitalisation, but feel it is the most secure place for them."²³

It is also claimed that the death of young and healthy individuals from Covid-19 shows the overwhelming its indiscriminatory effect. It is however difficult to draw conclusions from anecdotal cases, and research on reported autopsies of Covid-19 patients concerns mainly older adults. These autopsies indicate the presence of storm-like responses from the earlier mentioned cytokines giving rise to lung embolism and thrombosis, but no distinct pathology has yet been found which distinguishes Covid-19 from other corona viruses.²⁴ The few autopsy studies of the younger population indicate a link to obesity.²⁵ The respected forensic pathologist Klaus Püschel **shocked the German government by stating** that there are underlying major illnesses in all cases.²⁶

Defenders of strict lockdowns further argue that they have been shown to be effective in reducing the rate of infections and fatalities. However, this claim may be due the fallacy of "delayed data inference". Swedish epidemiologists have pointed out that in several countries when infections and deaths increase and reach their peak, politicians panic and introduce lockdowns at a point in time when infections are already declining. Politicians will then falsely claim the decrease occurs because of the lockdown.^{27,28}

Do lockdowns work?

There is a variety of measures evaluating the effectiveness of restrictions: infection rates, mortality rates and seasonal excess mortality. Despite this complexity, the Greenwich University research psychologist Oliver Robinson systematically balanced these variables, and objective evidence emerged that lockdowns did have some *initial* effect - but other milder measures were just as or in some cases more effective.²⁶ Crucially, the collective outcome of studies found no association between lockdowns and reduction of mortality. As well as confirming the above immunosuppressant effects of lockdowns on individual mental health, Robinson highlighted the devastating economic effects with their long-term consequences for

public health and almost paradoxically for a reduced life expectancy in the population.²⁸

The enigma is of course why EU and UK governments have made such apparently poorly based decisions. An editorial in the *British Journal of Medicine* - a journal surely not given to hyperbolic or conspiracy thinking - issued the following condemnation: "The medical-political complex tends towards suppression of science to aggrandise and enrich those in power."²⁹

A similar situation occurs also in Germany where the opinions of leading academics and clinicians appear to be ignored and they are even ostracised when their opinions deviate from government policy. One of Germany's foremost medical microbiologists, Sucharit Bhakdi, issued a potentially devastating critique of government policy on biological grounds.²⁰ Another serious researcher, clinical psychology professor Harald Walach, exposed the myths and fallacies in the official lockdown policy in Germany. Walach went so far as to find major faults with the "fact checking" provided by journalists, replacing this with his own source-referenced list.³¹

Sweden as the non-lockdown control group

Robinson in the above review depicted Sweden as the control group for judging lockdowns. This is because Sweden is the only industrialised country in the world that neither imposed lockdowns nor facial masks on its population. Although some minor legal restrictions concerning crowding and early closing of bars were imposed during 2021, the policy was to observe social distance, maintain good hand hygiene, prioritise home-based work, and to stay at home when ill.³²

The Swedish death rate per capita is currently in Spring 2021 at average or less for EU countries and lower than many countries which had both lockdowns and masks such as England, France, Italy, Spain and Belgium. Moreover, the death statistics for regions in Sweden where the pandemic was most prevalent were later shown to be gross overestimates.³³

There was naturally enormous pressure on Sweden to conform to the measures used by other EU countries: The Swedish Science Academy, in direct opposition to Sweden's government and to that of its Public Health Authority, did *recommend* the voluntary use of face masks. Asked for the evidence for their effectiveness, the Academy gave the rather lame response: "They cannot do any harm". But this may not be so. It is surely good clinical practice to avoid long-term

interventions where there can be serious effects on health, in this case by reducing the body's normal oxygen-carbon dioxide exchange.³⁴ The largest and seemingly most well-controlled study is the Danish study that randomly assigned 6,000 participants to either a non-mask group or a mask group. The mask group wore *three-layered disposable masks* for periods of at least 3 hours outside the home every day during a whole month. The study did not find the expected reduction in infection rates.³⁵

The policy of the Swedish Public Health Authority is to reduce the spread of the virus by using measures that can be maintained and which interfere minimally with normal life so as not to produce stress-related illnesses: schools were kept open and outdoor recreation actively encouraged. Rather than restricting exercise as occurred in many lockdowns, exercise and motion were encouraged. Belatedly, in Spring 2021 Prime Minister Boris Johnson began efforts to reduce his overweight since he attributed his difficulty in handling his own Covid-19 infection to being "hampered by being too fat".

Conclusions

Many of the policies of governments claim to be influenced by the recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and by science. Despite these claims, there has been a total failure to take modern psychobiological science into account and to listen to the opinion from many respected epidemiologists and clinicians. An example of this incongruity which should have led to other less panic-driven approaches, was published in the *Bulletin of the WHO* by the Stanford epidemiologist, John Ioannidis. After reviewing the international rates for Covid-19 infection fatality, this publication concluded that while there is great variation between countries, "Most locations probably have an infection fatality rate less than 0.20%"³⁵ - which is about the same as that of seasonal influenza.^{35,36}

Despite having the longest period of lockdown in the world, the UK had in March 2020 the second highest Covid-19 mortality rate per capita.³⁷ Given the above review of the way psychoneuroimmunological factors interact, it seems an inescapable conclusion that lengthy lockdowns have enforced practices which may well have been damaging rather than protecting health and that in doing so it is conceivable they contributed further to the pandemic.

Part of the difficulty in realising this is conceptual. Many people might accept that psychological factors can play a minor role in certain illnesses, and some might even accept that radical procedures (such as the example given with hypnosis) can effect

dramatic cures, but very few are conversant with the idea that psychological factors can have a major causal role in how the immune system reacts to infection.

In democracies, the diversity of expert opinion needs to be respected. The earlier examples indicate one of the greatest failures in the pandemic is the near absence of neutrality and objectivity in science journalism. Science in this area has been largely replaced by politicised accounts.

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Resisting the War on Life

Vandana Shiva

In March 2015, Bill Gates showed an image of the coronavirus during a TED Talk and told the audience that this was what the greatest catastrophe of our time would look like. The real threat to life, he said, is 'not missiles, but microbes.' When the coronavirus pandemic swept over the earth like a tsunami five years later, he revived the war language, describing the pandemic as 'a world war'. 'The coronavirus pandemic pits all of humanity against the virus,' he said.

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.

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.

New diseases arise because a globalised, industrialised, inefficient agriculture invades habitats, destroys ecosystems, and manipulates animals, plants, and other organisms with no respect for their integrity or their health. We are linked worldwide through the spread of diseases like the coronavirus because we have invaded the homes of other species, manipulated plants and animals for commercial profits and greed, and cultivated monocultures. As we clear-cut forests, as we turn farms into industrial monocultures that produce toxic, nutritionally empty commodities, as our diets become degraded through industrial processing with synthetic chemicals and genetic engineering, and as we perpetuate the illusion that earth and life are raw materials to be exploited for profits, we are indeed connecting. But instead of connecting on a continuum of health by

Vandana is saving these seeds for biodiversity





protecting biodiversity, integrity, and self-organisation of all living beings, including humans, we are connected through disease.

According to the International Labour Organisation, '1.6 billion informal economy workers (representing the most vulnerable in the labour market), out of a worldwide total of two billion and a global workforce of 3.3 billion, have suffered massive damage to their capacity to earn a living. This is due to lockdown measures and/or because they work in the hardest-hit sectors.' According to the World Food Programme, a quarter of a billion additional people will be pushed to hunger and 300,000 could die every day. These, too, are pandemics that are killing people. Killing cannot be a prescription for saving lives.

Health 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 created global alliances 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. And in the process, he gets richer. His 'funding' results in an erasure of democracy and biodiversity, of nature and culture. His 'philanthropy' is not just philanthrocapitalism. It is philanthroimperialism.

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. Empires create colonies, colonies enclose the commons of the indigenous living communities and turn them into sources of raw material to be extracted for profits. 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. The extended coronavirus lockdown has been a lab experiment for a future without humanity.

On March 26, 2020, at a peak of the coronavirus pandemic and in the midst of the lockdown, Microsoft was granted a patent by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). Patent WO 060606 declares that 'Human Body Activity associated with a task provided to a user may be used in a mining process of a cryptocurrency system....'

The 'body activity' that Microsoft wants to mine includes radiation emitted from the human body, brain activities, body fluid flow, blood flow, organ activity, body movement such as eye movement, facial movement, and muscle movement, as well as any other activities that can be sensed and represented by images, waves, signals, texts, numbers, degrees, or any other information or data.

The patent is an intellectual property claim over our bodies and minds. In colonialism, colonisers assign themselves the right to take the land and resources of indigenous people, extinguish their cultures and sovereignty, and in extreme cases exterminate them. Patent WO 060606 is a declaration by Microsoft that our bodies and minds are its new colonies. We are mines of 'raw material'—the data extracted from our bodies. Rather than sovereign, spiritual, conscious, intelligent beings making decisions and choices with wisdom and ethical values about the impacts of our actions on the natural and social world of which we are a part, and to which we are inextricably related, we are 'users.' A 'user' is a consumer without choice in the digital empire.

But that's not the totality of Gates' vision. In fact, it is even more sinister—to colonise the minds, bodies, and spirits of our children before they even have the opportunity to understand what freedom

and sovereignty look and feel like, beginning with the most vulnerable.

In May 2020, Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York announced a partnership with the Gates Foundation to 'reinvent education.' Cuomo called Gates a visionary and argued that the pandemic has created 'a moment in history when we can actually incorporate and advance [Gates'] ideas...all these buildings, all these physical classrooms—why with all the technology you have.'

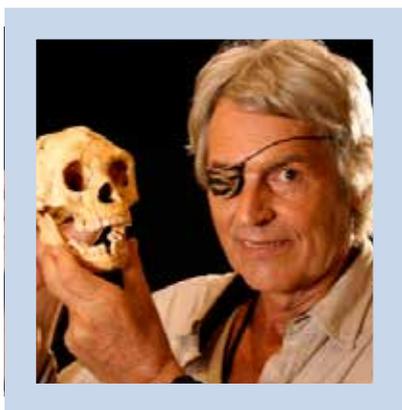
In fact, Gates has been trying to dismantle the public education system of the United States for two decades. For him students are mines for data. That is why the indicators he promotes are attendance, college enrolment, and scores on a math and reading test, because these can be easily quantified and mined. In reimagining education, children will be monitored through surveillance systems to check if they are attentive while they are forced to take classes remotely, alone at home. The dystopia is one where children never return to schools, do not have a chance to play, do not have friends. It is a world without society, without relationships, without love and friendship.

As I look to the future in a world of Gates and Tech Barons, I see a humanity that is further polarised into large numbers of 'throw away' people who have no place in the new Empire. Those who are included in the new Empire will be little more than digital slaves.

Or, we can resist. 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.

We stand at a precipice of extinction. 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?

*The above is excerpted from Vandana Shiva's book **Oneness vs. the 1%: Shattering Illusions, Seeding Freedom** (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2020) and is reprinted with permission from the publisher. See also www.vandanashivathemovie.com and www.navdanya.org for more details on Vandana and her work and also the recording of our June webinar, *Regenerating Soil, Regenerating Health*.*



Out of the body in Bali

Lawrence Blair

We Bali expats have long known that local hospitals, specially the modern shiny ones, are more hat than cattle. If serious medical attention is needed, the procedure is to fly out of the country either to mainland Asia or Australia, but with the Covid travel lockdown this has been all but impossible for over a year.

When I slipped and fell, there wasn't much time for researching orthopedic specialists, but a 'well recommended' surgeon was quickly located, his hospital was contacted, and an ambulance dispatched. When there was still no sign of the ambulance after 45 minutes I was shoved into the back of a car for the 20 minute ride to the Emergency Entrance.

I was x-rayed and given a Covid test, a proper one up the snout, and then transferred to a private room. I soon received confirmation that my Covid test was negative, and was then visited by 3 nurses in full PPE gear who roughly asked me why I wasn't wearing my mask. I told them they'd just tested me negative ten minutes earlier, and that either their test was wrong, or perhaps it was they who had Covid behind their regalia. It was an irritable reaction which resulted in notably offhand nursing treatment all the way up to the operating theatre the following day.

The x-ray revealed that I'd snapped the neck of my femur, leaving my left leg connected to my body only by soft tissue. As our femurs attach to our pelvic bone, which is the bowl from which the spine arises, with all its hanging fruit of the rest of us, the damage feels as if it's to the very foundation of one's being. It felt as if I had been bitten in half by a crocodile.

I received confirmation that my operation would take place at midday the following day. So it was an interesting night with no food, child-strength painkillers and

distinctly unsympathetic nurses. At least Aly, my wife, had moved in to the adjacent bed, as is customary here, to take up the slack – a lot of it. I talked deliriously and made constant demands. Even the slightest change of position, at the speed of an oyster, was accompanied by involuntary yelps and nonsense talk. At about 3 a.m. Aly got up to go to the bathroom, and I was convinced she'd had enough of me and was going home for a good night's sleep. I completely accepted this, but was irrationally happy to learn that she wasn't planning on going anywhere.

I had an appointment for the operation at noon the following day. Midday came and went, and I was finally picked up at 1.30. I was wondering, rather priggishly it transpired, that if punctuality is the sign of a tidy mind then what did this augur for my surgeon's? On the way to the operating room I heard the forward gurney puller discussing with the aft gurney pusher how long my operation might take. Since the surgeon had already told me it would be about an hour, I chimed in with that information, and was bumped against a wall. The one hour pre-occupied me, as I'd read somewhere that extending a general anaesthetic beyond one hour is ill-advised for the over-seventies.

I had been anaesthetized for the knife on four previous occasions in my life. On the first, aged nearly five, I'd returned to consciousness knowing I'd seen everything, and more, of my life ahead, but couldn't remember a single detail. So on each subsequent occasion, before the lights went out, I'd made a special effort to return from this 'all seeing' place with some shred of memory. On the second occasion, aged 11, I was disappointed. I could still remember nothing, though I did vividly experience being guided back from darkness by the shining circle of a tunnel's entrance which expanded into light and bodily awareness, although my eyes were still closed. This was before I knew anything of

the long literature of the converse experience, in near death events, when the bright tunnel entrance leads up into the light, rather than down into the flesh made conscious.

But on this occasion I was being pushed into the operating theatre feeling rushed and ill at ease. I was aware that my mother, father and brother had all died of simple broken bones - my brother in a Balinese hospital. I was aware of how long, with my expat friends, we had advised others to avoid local hospitals at all costs, even for a hangnail, let alone for a general anesthetic and invasive surgery. And I was aware that the surgeon had only just come to my attention, through recommendation, the previous day. So instead of composing myself for a deep flight, I barely had time to toss a coin into the fountain with the hope that I'd come back at all, let alone with a shred of memory from the other world.

The next I knew was that I was awake, out of my body, hearing all that was going on in the operating theatre. I was surprised to discover my surgeon had a large and motley team, and they were loudly talking, laughing and carrying on as painters might who shared a Renaissance Venetian artist's studio. I was floating amongst magnificent paintings in just such a studio, yet there in the operating theatre. Some paintings were very large, but I could float up and examine their minutest detail of line and hue, which gave me enormous pleasure. I knew I was being operated on, or that body down there was, and it was going well. Yet my experiencing self was still sufficiently neurotic, or controlling to want to know how long it had been so far. Ah, but no watch on wrist. Indeed no wrist. But no sooner had I remembered that I must have an inner clock, as I could wake myself at any time if necessary, I got the clear answer: 'one hour in'.

The voices, speaking in both Indonesian and Balinese, included those of teenagers as well as a child. And it was all very convivial and informal. Then I heard my surgeon announce 'this guy's an anthropologist. He's been all over Indonesia'. Well I've done a bit more than that, I thought, though I wasn't in the least bit indignant. I was merely the observer. And I turned to observe my own condition, and was floating again amongst these wonderful paintings.

I was aware of having a sick headache, like a bit of liver poisoning on the right side of my field of vision. I could examine it, and it would expand to fill my awareness, or I could simply ignore and look beyond it and be entranced by the psychedelic optics. I thought, even then, of how the last time I'd been operated on, to remove my eye 23 years earlier, I had awakened to the feeling of almost drowning in the pain and vomiting of liver toxicity caused by the anesthetic. There were no intimations of the great 'oversight' to be had there.

Then I felt myself being painlessly bashed around, as if by an earthquake, and realized it was my surgeon hammering my new titanium shaft, with attached hip ball, into the marrow of my left femur. He was doing this with great confidence and precision, but with the violence of a boot maker or a road worker. So operations are not just genteel affairs, I thought, and this was clearly a man who hammered nails without fear of hitting a finger.

I decided to slightly open my eye, discretely of course. I saw the legs of my anesthetist, sitting on a chair, very alert, occasionally getting up and adjusting something, but not alert enough to notice I was peeking.

I closed my eye again and went for another psychedelic float amongst the most beautiful paintings, more real than reality. More real than any acid trips, more detailed than my usual waking experience. This was like a lucid dream, which I could partially direct, in the sense that I could focus my will on portions of what was actually there. One of the paintings was a large canvas similar in style to the exquisite miniatures of the village of Batuan in the 1960's and 70's. Hundreds of tiny scenes, each detail a painting in themselves. The particular shade of blue was delicious enough to absorb, not through my pores, as I didn't have any, but through my self. In my 'optical field' I was aware of a slight tear, a rent in the fabric, through which a blinding golden light was shining. It was too bright to look at directly.

Then I knew my body was being lifted into the air, naked, and suspended sideways above the operating table while my left

leg was bandaged from the ankle to the crotch. An unusual way to do it, I thought, certainly by western standards, but very effective, even though I was a bit heavy for them and I heard them puffing and panting.

Then I was fully conscious, in no pain at all, and being wheeled out of the operating theatre in a state of talkative euphoria. First I announced to the surgeon how brilliant he and his team were, and that 'now I understood!' and that I'd had the most fantastic experience. He was a little taken aback, but indulgent. I asked him how long I had been under for, and we both said at exactly the same time, 'two hours'.

Aly, waiting anxiously outside for me, said she heard me before seeing me, laughing and loudly exclaiming 'Amazing. Amazing!' I was grinning from ear to ear, in an extremely good mood and announcing that we'd better get a cat, as a dog would need too much walking.

Once in the ICU we were shown a menu, and we ravenously ordered several courses. When the ICU orderly came in an hour later and asked the nurse how I was doing, she told him we'd turned the place into a damn restaurant. When I called a friend to announce that all was well he said I sounded as if I'd just left a really good party. I had 9 attachments, both to and within my body. The pain began again later that evening, though for several days afterwards whenever I half closed my eye I could still see the colors and textures which had brought me such pleasure in the operating theatre. I could also occasionally still see, even with my eye fully open, the slight rent in my waking field of vision, revealing a vivid golden light beyond.

That evening the surgeon came to see me, and we had much to say to each other. I told him of what I'd experienced during the operation, and of how I'd observed how skillful he was and how his large team worked as a single unit. He cross examined me closely about my 'wandering' experience, and described how he came from a long line of Balinese healers, since way before the arrival of western medicine on the island, and he had suspected I was a bit fey from the outset.

Was it really 2 hours? I asked him. Yes, exactly, he replied. I explained that I remembered the last hour. I asked him if there had been any children present. He looked a bit sheepish and admitted that his 19 and 17 year-old children had been there, but they were both going to be surgeons. No. Children? I insisted. After some hesitation he said yes, his 12 year-old son had been present too, but he was

also going to be a surgeon. So this was a very communal, tribal event, and exactly revealed the difference between the Eastern and Western way of doing things.

When I say that after being operated on as a child I could remember nothing, except for a sense of having seen everything, that's not quite true. I didn't at the time, but in subsequent meditative moments, specially as a teenager practicing Subud in Mexico, I'd been visited by stark 'freeze frames', which out of context meant nothing, but which were later experienced at key moments in my life as vivid *déjà vu*. Nearly getting wrecked in a small boat in a storm off Bimini. My first sight of the architectural pillars of Lancaster University, where I was to write my doctoral thesis. My first glimpse of roadway into my Los Angeles home, where I was to spend 4 years making sacred geometry, before burning the house down. And there are some 'freeze frames' which I can still clearly see, of events which have not yet happened, at least in clock time.

So from early childhood a part of me knew that I had indeed travelled above it all, seen it all from a great height. It was an intimation that influenced the main interests and subsequent course of my life.

But this hip accident was a different experience. It was a more neuro-psychological event of wandering at the edge of consciousness, and of knowing we are not our bodies, but that we merely inhabit them. It also revealed how joy or misery can be a default setting, and that I had forgotten what irrational joy really felt like. And then there was that rent in the fabric of consciousness, which persisted for weeks after the operation - a small tear, which revealed a blinding effulgence beyond our everyday seeing.

Now its all just a bit of a slog again, guiding my dear old horse of a body back into the remaining few decades of my life, with a strong memory of joy.

*Dr. Lawrence Blair is an explorer, film maker, author and public speaker on the peoples and creatures of Indonesia. A resident of Bali he has assisted and led marine expeditions throughout the archipelago since the Lindblad Explorer - the first genuinely exploratory tourist ship - broached the Spice Islands in 1978. Readers may be familiar with his ground-breaking book *Rhythms of Vision - Changing Patterns of Belief*.*



The Second Galileo Commission Summit April 9-10, 2021

Dr Thomas Daffern

There are all different kinds of pleasures and pains, it must be said, but among the greatest pleasures known to mankind surely has to be gathering with like-minded people in earnest discourse about matters of great importance. Such was the setting of this recent Summit conference of the Galileo Commission (in association with several other organisations) whose remit was simple but profound: to discover and share recent advances in the evolving science of postmaterialism.

The occasion was the second Galileo Commission Summit and it comprised a series of roundtables with many prominent researchers who are involved in new paradigm research to challenge prevailing materialist mechanist scientific worldviews. Many had also contributed essays to the second volume of the AAPS book series *Advances in Postmaterialist Sciences*, intended to educate scientists, students, and science-minded readers about postmaterialist consciousness research and its applications. The purpose of the two-day Summit on April 9-10 2021 was therefore to go into these topics in as much detail as time and circumstances permitted. This report is less of an official comprehensive summary of the event, and rather a personal memoir of having taken part as an observer, celebrating some of the key moments of insight that were shared, and highlighting some of the main contributions.

On day one, April 9, we had a heavy-weight presentation by some of the pioneers of this whole field, under the title 'The Coming Post-Materialist Revolution – the Case for a New Scientific Paradigm' which featured Mario Beauregard, Dean Radin and Rupert Sheldrake. The session was ably chaired by Prof Marjorie Woollacott.

The second session on Friday included presentations on the theme of 'Cosmic Connections: towards a Post-Materialist Science of Self' and included talks by

Marjorie Woollacott, Lorne Schussel and Alexander Moreira-Almeida (chaired by Diane Hennacy Powell). Manifesto for a Post-Materialist Science - Prof Alexander Moreira-Almeida MD, PhD. is a well-known Associate Professor of Psychiatry in the School of Medicine (Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora) and Founder and Director of the Research Center in Spirituality and Health, Brazil. He is also Chair of the WPA (World Psychiatric Association) Section on *Religion, Spirituality and Psychiatry* and Coordinator of the Section on Spirituality of the Brazilian Psychiatric Association. He is the editor of 'Exploring Frontiers of the Mind-Brain Relationship', and is also a co-founder of the Campaign for Open Sciences to promote the movement toward a Postmaterialist Science.

His commitment to teasing open the cracks in the materialistic paradigm was infectious and well argued. He has long said that the problem is not science, but in fact the lack of it; that to confuse scientific method with materialism is to commit a category error, since true science requires openness rather than dogmatism if it to proceed effectively. He is also well aware of the fragility of a purely materialistic method when it comes to medicine and psychiatry, since the lived experience of human subjectivity is hardly something that can be simplified to a purely mechanistic materialism. Let us allow some mysterious aspects exist in the realms of

human psychology, such as paranormal experiences, telepathy, mediumistic downloads, and so on, and that sometimes when they become chaotic they can lead to mental illness. They should therefore be studied properly and rigorously, suspending judgment of what the basic “stuff of existence is – matter, energy, mind, spirit or whatever.

True science proceeds by way of questions and experimental observations, not by positing its conclusions at the outset. Marjorie Woollacott, Ph.D. then spoke (she is a Professor Emerita of Human Physiology and Neuroscience at the University of Oregon) and who has done research as a neuroscientist on rehabilitation medicine and alternative forms of therapy including tai chi and meditation. She is serving as president of the *Academy for the Advancement of Postmaterialist Sciences (AAPS)*, as well as the Research Director of the *International Association of Near Death Studies (IANDS)*. So far, she has written more than 200 peer-reviewed research articles—which have examined topics such as spiritual awakening and meditation. Her latest book, partly autobiographical, is *‘Infinite Awareness: The Awakening of a Scientific Mind’*. Dr Woolacott has long been questioning why we have to associate “scientific medicine” with a narrow materialism that denies all possibility of altered states of consciousness. She argues that near death experiences convincingly provide empirical evidence that questions the materialistic explanations for human consciousness and spiritual experiences. It was powerful to hear her contribution at the Summit.

The next day, Saturday April 10, we were treated to a marvelous session on “Science, Soul and Death – A New Understanding”, chaired and introduced by Dr Peter Fenwick, who has long been a pioneer in this whole field. If there is such a thing as “sainthood” that can be awarded to new paradigm explorers, then Peter probably qualifies. The first to speak was Pim van Lommel, who is a doyenne of this whole field. He worked as a cardiologist for over 30 years, and due to encountering many interesting cases through his job, he became very interested in studying near-death experiences (NDEs) and compiled many case studies and detailed statistical research looking at hundreds of cases. In 2001 which brought the topic to international attention as it was the first scientifically rigorous study of this phenomenon. He has also published the important work *‘Consciousness Beyond Life: The Science of the Near-Death Experience’*. He gave us a few

examples from his own files. Out of 562 survivor’s interviews, following a cardiac arrest, between 10-20% reported an NDE.

One had the feeling listening to Pim, as with all the other speakers in fact, that we were just seeing the tip of an iceberg of accumulated knowledge to which he had devoted many decades of rigorous scientific.

Next, we heard from Marilyn J. Schlitz, Ph.D. who is a social anthropologist, researcher, writer, and currently serves as President Emerita and Senior Fellow at the Institute of Noetic Sciences. A leader in the field of consciousness studies, she has focused on personal and social transformation, cultural pluralism, extended human capacities, and mind body medicine. She is also Dean of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology at Sofia University in Palo Alto, Ca. her talk was focused on how the accumulated evidence of NDE’s transforms the way we look at the phenomenology of Selfhood. Then we heard from entertaining speaker Gary E. Schwartz Ph.D. who is a professor of psychology, medicine, neurology, psychiatry, and surgery at the University of Arizona and directs its Laboratory for Advances in Consciousness and Health. He has also served as the Founding President of the Academy for the Advancement of Postmaterialist Sciences. His numerous books include *‘The Afterlife Experiments’*, *‘The Sacred Promise’*, and *‘Super Synchronicity’*. Again, one had the feeling what Gary’s talk was barely scratching the surface of his knowledge fields; or to use another metaphor, it was like peering into a deep well from which only a few buckets were brought up to the surface. For example neither he nor any other speaker at this event mentioned synchronicity, which certainly has some interesting implications for how we view the self and consciousness, but he has after all written an entire book about it!

Gary did however re-define the word GOD for us (which many of us have long been wondering about): apparently it stands for G (Guiding) – O (Organising) and D (Designing). Presumably Gary is familiar with the 99 names of God in Sufism? Perhaps Allah stands for A (Astounding) – L (Loving) – L (Living) – A (Amazing) – H (Healing)! He also teased us with the idea that “*photons carry information*”, but didn’t explain exactly how. After a short break, we returned to listen to a further discussion on ‘Waves of Awakening: towards a Post-Materialist Society’. This featured a talk (in

absentia) by one of the pioneers of this whole field, Larry Dossey. It was as ever profound and far reaching. Then we heard from Natalie L. Dyer Ph.D. who is a Research Scientist with the Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health and the Connor Integrative Health Network. Her PhD in Neuroscience was at Queen’s University and her Postdoctoral Fellowships in Psychology at Harvard University and at Harvard Medical School. She has published multiple scientific papers and presented her research to diverse audiences throughout North America and Europe.

Natalie is also an energy medicine practitioner and teacher, incorporating Japanese Usui Reiki and North American, European, and Tibetan shamanism into her practice. Natalie wore her learning lightly and came across like a friendly local healing expert with a good sense of humour and a suitably humble account of her own knowledge: this can only come with much experience from seeing how high the mountains of knowledge are that we all still have left to climb, both individually and collectively. Finally, as if right on cue, a philosopher turned up, smiling with Socratic energy, to remind us indeed, that our only hope for true wisdom is to realise that compared to what is still out there to discover, we might as well all just admit we know very little indeed. Neal Grossman served as professor of philosophy at the University of Illinois at Chicago and has spent a lifetime researching the Philosophy of Science, especially quantum mechanics, as well as Spinoza, Plato, religious mysticism, and more recently scientific survival research. He has published on Spinoza and also more recently *‘Conversations With Socrates and Plato: How a Postmaterialist Social Order Can Solve the Challenges of Modern Life and Insure Our Survival’*. Grossman treated us to an absolute feast of ideas, ranging from Plato on divine consciousness, the nature of unconditional love, what actually happens when people “channel” and many other mysterious topics. What Grossman reminded us all was that asking profound questions about the nature of consciousness, the inner architecture of the soul, the relationship of spirit to matter, has been going on for a very long time in human civilisation, including in Western culture. So we might as well stand on the shoulders of giants if we can, since after all they might give us a head start to the stars.

To conclude: this was a marvelous event for all who had the good fortune to attend. It gave a glimpse of

some of the profound mysteries that scholars associated with the Galileo Commission are currently exploring and it introduced to a wider audience some leading-edge thinkers operating at the frontiers of this evolving field. A few questions: as a linguistic philosopher (inter alia), I think we need a detailed study of words for consciousness in all different sacred (and scientific) languages. In French the word is “La Conscience”, which in English however means “conscience”. When modern new paradigm researchers talk of consciousness studies they very seldom however mention conscience. But in fact the experience of having a conscience, and being conscious are very closely related. Conscience brings with it a sense of right and wrong, good and evil, and ethical accountability. When consciousness grapples with ethical decisions, it becomes activated as “conscience”. Why does this seem to be absent or minimized in some people, whereas other people become hypersensitive empaths?

Finally, to end with a question: is the Galileo Commission in talking about a “*post materialist*” paradigm necessarily always using the right language? Are we saying that matter qua matter is bad, or evil? Are we saying we should all seek to become disembodied spirits as soon as possible? Probably only a few extreme pseudo-Gnostics would say that. Should we not perhaps be differentiating between **nuances** in the concepts of “materialism”? There is obviously *reductionist materialism* (nothing except matter exists), then there is *mechanistic materialism* (matter organizes its internal workings all by itself with purely mechanistic procedures), but there is also *dialectical materialism* (matter is highly complex, and shows degrees of scale, processes of transformation, and an internal degree of refinement that seems to point beyond itself in ways that are hard to explain), to *integral materialism* (matter exists at varying degrees of refinement and subtlety, each level exhibiting emergent properties that nevertheless recapitulate other scales of manifestation), and possibly my own preferred phrase, “*transpersonal materialism*” (matter exists as the vehicle for physical incarnation and manifestation but itself is generated by, or sustained by, a trans-material reality that we are only just beginning to study scientifically but which has for millennia been the focus of spiritual pioneers).

There is of course another non-technical usage of the term “materialism” which simply meant a denigratory label for how some people indulge in sensory pleasures or wealth pursuits at the

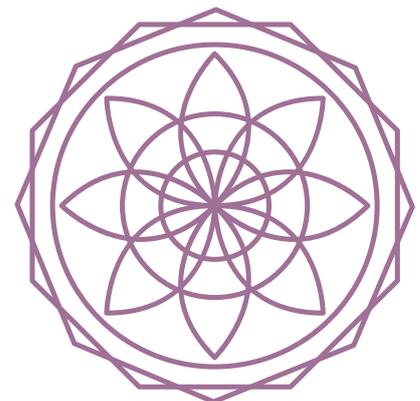
expense of others. When I went to the Institute of Philosophy in Moscow in the 1990’s to talk peace, I learned they used “dialectical materialism” in a positive way, to mean the sophisticated scientific analysis of advanced earth scientists like Vernadsky, who was every bit as sophisticated as James Lovelock. Rather than simply talking about *post materialism*, perhaps we should use more subtle language? After all there are some things that materials science and philosophical materialism have in fact brought us that are worth preserving, surely? (Medicine, engineering, architecture, computers, aeroplanes, cars, trains, telephones, televisions, fridges, hip-transplants...)

In my own field as a historian, I know that historical materialism in fact has helped advance historical research in many directions, since it encouraged historians to take account of all classes and types of humanity, to be concerned with the social and economic conditions of people as well as just focusing on elites and great dynasties. Crude though it might have become in some hands, historical materialism was in fact a highly sophisticated tool in the hands of many pioneers of the underside of history. In my own PhD on the *Intellectual history of the Cold War from 1945-2001* I proposed that historical science should develop a new genre which I called “transpersonal history” which is a way of doing historical research that does not deny or minimise the importance of material events, but rather also factors in the more subtle wavelengths of causation and consequence.

One thing is certain, which is that if the materialist assumptions of hard science are indeed going to be replaced by new paradigms, then it will indeed have huge implications for both historians, historiography and for history itself. If we are going to be talking in depth about *Visions of a Postmaterialist Paradigm* my only concern is that we should frame this discourse in a positive direction and ensure it helps advance peace and order, rather than chaos, war and social breakdown. Let’s be more specific: if it turns out that “matter” as such doesn’t really exist but rather energy exists, and energy itself doesn’t really exist, but rather information exists.. (or we could say that matter-information-energy are in a kind of Triskilion spiral of mutual inter-relationships) for us humans the question of access to information (and ultimately to truth) becomes a life and death struggle, as during the ongoing Covid pandemic: what is its real origin, how can we find out, etc.?

As Gramsci pointed out from his prison cell, who *controls access to information* in any given culture, is going to control access to power, wealth privilege & meaning. So saying that matter doesn’t exist and information does is rather begging the question: who is going to control access to the information which really underlies reality? Prophets? Churches? Scientists? Philosophers? How about all of us... ? As Bacon said, knowledge is power – the question is, who controls access to knowledge? So there’s rather a lot at stake here, after all, and therefore as a historian I am rather keen to see the detailed nuances of the different types of “materialism” analysed and studied in sympathetic depth, before we just attempt to leap beyond them into the unknown. For example, we shouldn’t deny the social progress, egalitarianism and concepts of universal human rights that certain forms of scientific materialism have brought to world history. Having said all of which, this Galileo Commission Summit was a splendid occasion and a real intellectual pleasure to sit in on as an observer.

Dr Thomas Daffern is a philosopher, historian, peace studies expert, poet and religious studies specialist. He was awarded his PhD from the University of London for a thesis which explores the history of the search for peace, and which proposes a new field of historiography, Transpersonal History





Re-enchanting the World

Mystics and Scientists 43

Eve Hicks

David Lorimer opened the conference on consciously connecting with the deep wisdom of nature by explaining the meaning of these words and reminding us of the main focus and hope for the conference, namely how to renew, restore, regenerate, and reconnect giving us all new renaissance into a more regenerate economy and agriculture so that we can all thrive rather than merely survive.

Dr Rupert Sheldrake began by stating that although animals are similar in some ways, they also have some very superior abilities. Recognising animal connections, including with our pets he pointed out that learning from them would connect us to a wider world. Sadly, the ethos of materialist science leads humanity to use animals for pure monetary advantage. He then considered possible explanations underpinning these superiorities including pigeons homing instincts, oddities of termites' nest building and various telepathic signals observed.

Animals having unconditional love and no mind to distort intuitive intentions perhaps underpins the reasons behind their success when working in various therapeutic situations. Animal telepathic powers are also finally beginning to be taken seriously and investigated. Research based on animals' abilities with respect to the reliable prediction of earthquakes leading to an animal-focused warning system would certainly enhance human predictive power. Finally, Rupert discussed higher forms of human bliss and

noted ways that animals also experience this. Indeed, a blissful ultimate consciousness dovetails with the pantheistic view underpinning all life. An interesting discussion then wound the session up with questions and a wide sharing of relevant experiences.

Personally, I missed the personal connections with other attendees during the break, but also accept the wider audience advantage from a Zoom delivery. After the break, **Pea Horsley** 'took the stage' and shared her insights into communication with animals and the wider world. Starting with a meditation, Pea then discussed her work, the retreats she runs and explained how she came into the field. Pointing out that this ability is innate in all of us she strongly promoted the fact that we need to make our communication with animals more conscious so that it becomes an *essential* part of a new emerging ECO rather than EGO system.

Pea emphasised that animal communication is actually an exchange of transmissions of energetic information with a focus on the animal and their needs. It was important to recognise the illusion of separation with *pure intention*. She made her points beautifully, sharing memories and using examples of her own encounters with animals to clarify how the process inevitably turns into something of a spiritual journey towards remembering exactly who we are. Using online chat, Rupert and Pea then held a plenary session with us all sharing thoughts. SMN Chairman **Paul Filmore** then spoke briefly about the network, what it does, its improved online capabilities and all the benefits of becoming a member, taking us happily into lunch.

Marilyn Monk chaired the afternoon sessions and handed over to Pea Horsley for our experiential workshop. Allowing 15 minutes, we all went outside and worked in silence to heighten each of our senses by subsequently sharing details of observations. We then imagined a full connection with an animal and focused in silence. Essentially, we were learning how to surrender to the flow

particularly noting the import of being careful not to intrude or force the animal in any way.

Speaking from her garden, **Heidi Hermann** then talked to us about bees in relation to the emergency situation we are all now facing particularly regarding conservation. Heidi, who has some 25 colonies in her home environment, explained how bees offer wise healing communications. She fully communicates with them all on a regular basis and also uses ancient monks' medieval bee charms and other powerful inspirations from around the world. In the chat, many participants made the point that they were hugely enjoying watching the many bees buzzing around in the background of the terrace from which Heidi was speaking. To close off, she gave us a tour of some of her hives.

After a short tea break, Marilyn welcomed **Dr Judith Prager** who took the penultimate Saturday session giving us the mystical and eternal message of the dolphins. She gave us a whistle stop tour around the amazing powers and higher intelligence of dolphins. Although venerated in history and revered by philosophers and poets, more recently we have lost our understanding and awe of them. Judith clearly elucidated evidence of their superior intelligence, language, mental processing capabilities, emotional reading abilities and their sensory powers.

She pointed out the need for us to learn how to listen to them and pointed out that the preconceived notions based entirely on humanity's previous experiences limit the possibilities. Judith outlined a new model based on a more ambassadorial scientific model with possibilities for mutual respect. She also discussed dolphin assistance and showed us evidence that they actually do want to help and clearly have access to consciousness, empathy and compassion. Questions and sharing after her lecture gave some magic moments in realising we really are at a turning point in terms of global warming and that we are all in this together!

The final lecture on Saturday, given by **Fred Hageneder**, was focused on trees, their ancient wisdom and what we can learn from them today. Fred gave us an extremely well researched lecture on the full spectrum of possibilities: their communication possibilities, photosynthesis and how they process water into food, their interconnectedness as well as how they respond to the moon and indeed the wider cosmos. He also took us through a supremely well researched and impressive list of specifics about a few individual species.

Fred then spoke variously supported by pictures, poetry, and knowledgeable research from different cultures and religious views including the World Tree described by some in ancient times as growing from the centre of the Earth and being the soul's way to heaven. He finished with a fascinating and detailed discussion of the yew tree, which remains a conundrum for Fred and in some cultures remains a symbol of the renewal aspects of life. After a few questions and much well-deserved praise and gratitude to Fred for his illuminating talk, we departed happy, exhausted and full of new knowledge and understanding.

Dr Peter Fenwick was in the chair for Sunday morning and introduced our first speaker **Shakti Caterina Maggi** who spoke about her life and work as a mystic and how she helps others reach feelings of the interconnectedness and consciousness of life. With a variation of meditation Shakti helped us experience an awareness of the essential timelessness and what the concept of being a person on Earth means. She gave us insight into how we are all a transcendental oneness, living in the experience of being person. She explained how we are creating our state of awareness and life is a *step into our being*.

We then explored the topic together through Shakti answering questions from participants and if I have understood correctly, her main point was that we are sometimes aware of being human along with all our human attributes and hence living in duality and at others we are simply being in oneness. As we progress, the illusion of time and space diminishes and we live in total awareness. It must be understood that awakening is just the beginning and we then have the opportunity to go beyond to discover our true self.

Peter then introduced **Anna Breitenbach**, a professional animal communicator. Anna shared with us her experiences interacting with animals. After a psychology degree Anna started work tracking animals and on an early outing, she received a clear pre-cognitive real time picture of exactly where the animal they had been tracking was located. Recognising the telepathic communication, she then devoted her time to learning and studying to progress this ability.

Working with animals, she was particularly impressed by both indigenous understandings and their physical transformations.

She explained that life is all about our relationship with our environment and animals and indigenous cultures' different perspective of learning by osmosis and working intuitively together was something we could all profitably emulate. Anna then shared a few heart-warming stories and explained the first step is for us to make space inside ourselves to listen to and hear what is being said by the animal. and briefly described an experiment demonstrating animal cognition of self-awareness and expressed sadness that humans generally use their own standards and measures.

After a brief and somewhat arresting forecast of humanity's near-term extinction arising from the dominant style of thinking, using examples and stories she then went on to explain what telepathy, empathy and compassion is in animal terms. If we can drop our "humanness" and illusions of separations, and recognise it is *feeling* without the need to *sort* and to simply allow the *connection* come. At the end of the day, it's not about facial expressions or body language but rather the sending becomes automatic and it is the energy behind the concepts and being in the position of heart based unconditional love.

Anna and Shakti's presentations dovetailed so beautifully together that it was not a surprise to see them similarly connect in the immediately following plenary session and the beautiful dialogue between participants rounded up the morning nicely into lunch.

Once again back in the chair, David Lorimer introduced **Professor Paco Calvo** scheduled to talk to us on the ecological basis of plant intelligence. Paco delivered an amazing, fast, and fun fact-filled lecture. He was passionately open to non-materialist scientific experiments recognising the distinctive sentience of plants and their specific ways of being. His view was that sentience is a fundamental property of cellular life since aspects such as movement are metabolically expensive for them.

After describing one of his own research projects, Paco explained that we need to make more effort to think about plants in *their* terms rather than our own and also stop treating them as mere resources. He then showed us a range on facts and research of how plants are integrating the environment into their lives, which is where their sentience comes into play. Plant information processing systems are vascular between their roots and their leaves - hence, to understand their sentience, we need to remove human based metaphors and words.

Paco closed by speculating on other potential processing systems in plants that are subject to current research directed at uniting us all into a more harmonious way of existence together. Discussions and questions from participants pushed the topic to its limits and even so far as quantifying the level of sentience! And with heads bursting from all the beautifully expressed and particularly well informed and hugely enjoyable research we all had a short but much-needed break.

I thought I was too exhausted at this stage to take in any more information, but I hadn't counted on the interesting and knowledgeable eloquence from the final lecture, given by Fred Hageneder! Starting with Gaia theory, Fred explained the various cycles and interdependence of all planetary life on Earth is organised. He showed us the tiny spec humans represent. He then turned attention to explain the self-regulation system between oxygen, temperature, water, salinity, redox potential and acidity that holds it all in balance. However, just two weeks ago it was revealed that the Amazon rainforest is now emitting more CO₂ than it is absorbing and indeed every single one the indicators of climate change indicate that the rate of decay is accelerating. The destruction has many faces including climate, biodiversity/habitat destruction, plastics, soil destruction and water availability.

Finally, as Fred sadly pointed out many of the so-called green solutions are in truth far from being green. Surprisingly the possibilities for what we can do are local and small and could include: bladeless turbines, systemic change encouraging leaders to take responsibility as well as mutually supportive organisations such as "Stop Ecocide". We can also actually face the pain head on and show radical compassion through empathy, hope, faith and reason. And as per his yesterday's lecture, we need to hear what trees are trying to teach us. And the final plenary session with Fred, Paco, David, accompanied by questions and thoughts from the floor joining in the focus was on potential solutions including the possibility of the SMN setting up a sub-group to work on this.

David closed the conference by summarising again the key points, which was to help and enhance the regenerative healing effects with the emphasis on the power of love and light for a systemic understanding and change. I believe all participants from around the world agreed we had jointly felt and enjoyed a truly vintage time together.

Eve Hicks is a retired academic but still an active avid supporter of the SMN in every way, Eve now works part time with her black Labrador in pet therapy.



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A FOUR-WEEK COURSE WITH
· Prof Ravi Ravindra ·

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· Dr Erica Elliott, MD ·

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WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF YOUR MIND?

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THE ENERGY EQUATION: FROM NAKED APE TO KNACKERED APE

WHY ARE SO MANY OF US SO TIRED?

· Dr Sarah Myhill ·

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PRESENTS

TRANSFORMING CONSCIOUSNESS FOR HEALING

HOW CAN WE ACCESS THE HEALING POWER OF LIGHT?

· Dr Susan Jamieson ·

SATURDAY, 3 JULY • 10:00 AM-12:00 PM (BST)
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Network News

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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 or update by signing in and clicking on 'Membership' on your own profile page.
- include your SMN username or SMN account email address 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 username or SMN account email address 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 (<https://scientificandmedical.net/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.



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.



Friday Evenings – Journeys to other Realities - Paul Kieniewicz

Our Friday evenings are informal gatherings around a particular topic. Though someone is chosen to introduce the subject, these are evenings for sharing insights and experiences, rather than listening to a lecture. During the past quarter, many of our Friday evening discussions were like journeys to other realities, from the explorations of Chris Bache using LSD, to gnostic creation myths, the message of the Kabbalah, of dreams and the enigmatic phenomena of UFOs.

Chris Bache described his journey exploring altered states of consciousness with the help of LSD. Whereas expanded consciousness can also be accessed through meditation and other techniques, one brings back more material and can penetrate deeper using a LSD protocol such as Chris used. He described both beautiful and transcendent places, as well as painful and terrifying experiences. Is Chris optimistic about humanity's future? Optimistic, yes. However, after a prolonged period of cleansing that may be painful.

We explored Gnostic creation myths. Interestingly several members pointed out similarities with a modern view, that we are living in a simulation created by an AI entity. Both views regard the outer world as a fabrication by a less than perfect deity. The Gnostic view also emphasizes the role of the Divine Feminine in the Creation and as redeemer. In many ways this provides a counterbalance to the prevailing masculine orientation of the Abrahamic religions.

David Lorimer led a discussion on the Cathars, medieval Gnostics who lived in Southern France. Though exterminated in the Albigensian Crusade and later by the Inquisition, a prophecy was made that after 700 years "the laurel will return." Though today we don't see a burgeoning Cathar assembly, many spiritual

movements today draw inspiration from them. We heard about the “Gospel of the Beloved Companion”, a sacred text that recently surfaced in an esoteric community that continued the tradition of Mary Magdalene.

Tuvi Orbach related how the world arose according to the Kabbalah, not only the outer world but specifically our inner world, our consciousness. The Kabbalah offers a glimpse into its structure and how consciousness develops during our life. We discussed in some detail the will as described in the Kabbalah. The ten Sephiroth and 32 paths can be arranged in five dimensions, the fifth being the dimension of will and intuition.

Amalia Carli introduced dreams and dreaming as described by James Hillman in his book *‘The Dream and the Underworld’*. Amalia showed how dreams have been taken much more seriously in other cultures than the modern West and quoted Rabbi Hisda as saying that ‘an un-interpreted dream is like an unopened letter.’ Robert Johnson, the eminent Jungian scholar and analyst once said, “Dreams tell you what you need to know, but you don’t know.” Several members shared dreams that showed the truth behind that statement. We also heard dreams that were of a particular significance in the dreamer’s life, what Jung would call, “Big Dreams”.

Towards the end of his life, Jung took an interest in the phenomenon of Flying Saucers, of which he wrote, *These rumours, or the possible physical existence of such objects, seem to me so significant that I feel myself compelled, as once before when events of fateful consequence were brewing for Europe, to sound a note of warning. I know that, just as before, my voice is much too weak to reach the ear of the multitude. It is not presumption that drives me, but my conscience as a psychiatrist that bids me fulfil my duty and prepare those few who will hear me for coming events which are in accord with the end of an era.*

Anne Baring introduced the subject first from the direction of depth psychology. According to her sources, the US government has kept a conspiracy of silence on the subject. We also looked at the work of John E. Mack on alien abductions. The encounters he studied have a dominant psychological component, to where one wonders whether they resemble more experiences documented by shamans when they respond to a vocation. Abductions also share certain characteristics with Near Death Experiences, notable that they are often transformative.

Tuvi Orbach led a session on free will, asking, why reductionist scientists assume that we don’t have free will, and that the appearance of free will is just an illusion. He argued that free will not only exists, but that it does not contradict the existing science. We discussed the importance of will and intention, not just of humans, but also of Consciousness, to influence the evolution through “randomness”.

Leila Yazigi introduced the topic of empathy, how we develop the empathic sense? From her experience as a psychologist, empathy must be developed in children from an early age. Empathy begins with a sense of compassion for all living things. During the discussion, questions arose, such as whether empathy can be cultivated, or does it appear as a result of insight? Many people expressed the view that basic human nature is wired for empathy. Golding’s view of human nature in *Lord of the Flies* is wrong. However, in today’s world, empathy is difficult to express. In what sense can we regard a person who is conditioned by society and his/her upbringing as having free will? Krishnamurti said that his only aim was to set man totally and unconditionally free. He was mostly concerned about the limits that psychological conditioning places on our freedom. He felt that the brain could change, and a person be freed of their conditioning through insight.

Gerri MacManus led a dialog on living an authentic life, the core message of Nietzsche’s philosophy. However, it involves more than not conforming to society or the expectations of others. Living an authentic life means to live dangerously, to obey only yourself, but what is the self that one listens to? Is it real? It is important to know one’s self in totality, and be intimate with it.

Lynn Brodie introduced the topic, Gratitude. An attitude of gratitude is shown to affect the brain in many positive ways, reducing fear and anxiety. It opens the door in us to a greater consciousness, to bringing energy to one’s inner life. During our discussion, many asked how one finds gratitude when things go wrong. What role does gratitude play when we are faced with the suffering of others, with whom we are in relationship? Gratitude is closely related to grace. As Rupert Sheldrake and Matthew Fox pointed out in their book, “Natural Grace”, grace does not exist within the material paradigm. Grace represents a form of energy that does not originate within matter, sustaining us when we are in need, protecting us when we are embattled. We experience grace as a bolt out of the blue. Often, we recognise it through synchronicities that pop up in our lives.



Sunday Meditations - Dr Peter Fenwick

The Sunday meditation continues to be enjoyed by many members. We have between 75 and 85 each week. Over the last few weeks, we have been looking at the Chakra system and this week, in view of the sadness

we all feel about Afghanistan, we revisited the 4th Chakra, the Heart Chakra. We have conducted a number of polls over the weeks about the functioning of the group, which showed continuing interest. Everyone is welcome, and we look forward very much to seeing you



New Episodes of Imaginal Inspirations Podcast

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>

Federico Faggin on Silicon and Consciousness

Dr Rosy Daniel on Love and Health

Dr Yvonne Kason on Spiritual Awakening

Dr Steve Taylor on Panspiritism



Prof David Cadman – Narratives of Love

In 2020, David Cadman published a book called *Love and the Divine Feminine*. At the end of the book, he asked a number of questions about who we are and where we might be going. By way of an answer, he is now issuing a

series of discussion papers - to be published monthly from now until the end of 2021 - titled *The Recovery of Love*, and these are available on the Narrative of Love website: narrative-of-love.com. The papers begin with exploring the ways in which our language is often shaped for us by others, and what this means for understanding Love, suggesting that Silence, especially gathered silence is a way of discovering Love, the Ultimate Reality. The second main theme of the papers is the need to listen to the voices of women, not least because for at least two thousand years, these voices have been set aside, not heard.

In order to find a balance between feminine and masculine qualities, to find what David calls ‘an ungendered discourse’, we have, he says, first to listen to women, especially those not shaped and damaged by the voices of men. From here, the papers explore what David refers to as ‘other languages’, the language of partnership and relationship, including some brief comments on the teachings of the I Ching and the Tao. A set of papers on Love at Work provide practical examples of what some people are doing to integrate principles of Harmony and Love into their working lives. And the series will end in December with Reflections and Questions in which David will draw on what he thinks has been offered by the papers and then suggest the questions that remain.



Dr Cheryl Hunt – Critical Reflection, Spirituality and Professional Practice

This new book explores the concept and facilitation of critical reflection and its implications for professional practice. It draws on the author’s own extensive experience to demonstrate how reflective processes involving metaphor and imagery, as well as critique, can be used not only to understand and articulate key values underpinning professional practice and to generate new theoretical models, but to explore one’s own worldview, including the ultimate question: ‘Who am I?’. The author incorporates practical examples of reflection-through-writing and other reflective techniques which illustrate how ideas about critical reflection, transformative learning, authenticity and spirituality are intricately entwined within theories and practices of adult learning and professional development. The book highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between personal worldviews, values and professional practice. It draws on the concepts of vocation and professional psychological wellbeing to consider what it means to act authentically as a professional within an audit culture. The book will be invaluable for practitioners, academics and students interested in critical reflection, educational inquiry, autoethnography and the use of the self in and as research, the nature and use of metaphor, and the development of worldviews.

Towards the Establishment of a New Transpersonal Research Centre in the UK

Joe Bartholomew director of Radical Culture and Natalie Tobert director of Aethos Training are inviting likeminded colleagues and friends to form a Transpersonal research group, for example, backgrounds in anthropology, psychology or psychotherapy. We are currently an affiliate with the Emergent Phenomenological Research Consortium (EPRC). The EPRC are currently an affiliate with the establishment of a new Australian-based consciousness studies research centre led by Kylie Harris and Brian Spittles. Our ambition is to replicate their vision of establishing a Transpersonal research centre in our own way based in the UK.

Our short-term aim is to form a board of directors, alongside a network of fellow researchers and aspiring researchers within a research group. Once this short-term aim has been achieved the long-term aim is to develop the structure, objectives and agenda setting that can be discussed collaboratively as a group. These collaborative discussions will lead to action planning towards the establishment of a UK based Transpersonal research centre. Another related initiative is the development of an Indigenous and Transpersonal Alliance. If you are interested, email nataliet@aol.com



LOCAL GROUP NEWS

LONDON GROUP

CLAUDIA NIELSEN
claudia@pnielsen.uk

Meetings of the SMN LONDON GROUP alternate monthly between online and physical.

Recordings of the online meetings are now available free for members of the SMN.

To read reports of previous meetings, go to the Reports link 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 contact us and we will add your email address to the circulation list.

CLAUDIA NIELSEN – ONLINE MEETINGS

■ MAY



This month we had the pleasure of hosting **ROBERT ROMANYSHYN**, Jungian psychotherapist and author of eight books including *The Frankenstein Prophecies*, the title of this evening's presentation. Robert was the first non-analyst elected as an Affiliate Member of The Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts based upon

his scholarly contributions to Jungian psychology. As a Fellow of the Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, he co-founded in 1972 an interdisciplinary program in existential-phenomenological psychology and literature at the University of Dallas. In 1991 he moved to Pacifica Graduate Institute to create a research approach for their innovative doctoral program in clinical psychology with its emphasis on Jungian and Archetypal Psychology. On his retirement in 2015, he was elected an Emeritus Professor in that program.

In the 1980s Robert became increasingly concerned with the crisis around the question of nuclear war. How did we get to the point in which we had wired the planet for destruction? He started to research the steps that got us here in order to explore alternative possibilities that would avert the ultimate catastrophe. He published a book (*Technology as Symptom & Dream*) on the origin of the modern scientific technological worldview. The book went through six reprints, which shows that it touched a nerve in many people. The book *The Frankenstein Prophecies* is a further step in the direction of alerting us to the unconscious impulses driving our uncontrolled and irresponsible development of technology.

The title of Mary Shelley's book, *Frankenstein; or the Modern Prometheus* clearly points to the two statements on either side of the semi-colon as being equal in her intent. We need to understand the myth of Prometheus

in order to make sense of the message. By stealing fire and offering it to man, Prometheus transgressed boundaries and in a way *created* the human being.

The Prometheus myth belongs to a sacred cosmos where the gods are real. Victor Frankenstein as modern Prometheus lives in a secular cosmos, where the boundaries between man and gods have become erased. His promethean dream is to become a god himself. Prometheus is the power of the imagination, the drive forward. His brother Epimetheus is the reflective hindsight looking back to where we came from. It carries memories and acknowledges consequences. Victor Frankenstein wanted to create life, the prerogative of a god. He is a symbol of solar consciousness acting without the reflective power of memory of Epimetheus.

Whereas the myth of Prometheus is embedded in a sacred context, Victor Frankenstein's perspective and attitude is wholly secular, concerned with effectiveness and efficiency. He was fascinated with alchemy and then throws it away as irrelevant and turns to study anatomy and chemistry. Death for him is a biological event not a human loss.

In Mary Shelley's story, Frankenstein's mother had just died but he did not grieve. Instead, he threw himself into the work of defeating death. His attitude carries no ethical considerations. He went to graveyards – traditionally a sacred ground – and robbed graves to build his creature. Yet, when the creature came to life he is horrified and terrified and takes no responsibility for his action. He tries to destroy it but the story turns and the monster becomes the avenging angel.

Robert writes his book from the point of view of the monster, as he perceives him on the margins of Mary Shelley's work. He notes that in order to create his monster, Frankenstein sacrificed the feminine, the receptive, reflective and its influence. His ambition is to overturn the laws of nature, dismissing the sacred in favour of the secular, and his creative achievements exist without the required responsibility. Frankenstein wishes to destroy death, yet his failure is highlighted as his creature kills his fiancée, his brother, his friend, and his housekeeper is hanged for a murder she did not commit (which he failed to voice) while his father dies of a broken heart.

Robert shows Frankenstein's legacy lingering today as a result of our idolising the Promethean dream without the input of the Epimethean warnings: our prowess in the field of technology. Examples mentioned are climate change, terrorism, the swelling population of refugees, genetic and computer technology etc. He mentioned Ray Kurzweil, a Google futurist, a genius of a man whom he called a 'Promethean dream on steroids'. Kurzweil wants to dispense with human biology in this century and upload all human information and achievements of consciousness in the Cloud. This is an example as near as we can imagine of humans wishing to become gods.

The talk was rich in insights, too many to include in this short report. I recommend watching the recording. And see also David Lorimer's review from PE 134, p. 42.

You can also consult the 16 reflections of Covid 19 which Robert mentioned in his talk. - <https://jungplatform.com/article/sixteen-psychological-reflections-on-covid-19>

■ JUNE



Prof TIMOTHY DESMOND gave the June talk entitled *Psyche and Singularity: Jungian Psychology and Holographic String Theory* which is also the title of his book. Timothy teaches philosophy, religion and ethics as an Adjunct Professor at The College of Southern Maryland. He is also Director of Administration at the Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR) Foundation.

In this talk, Timothy addressed the relationship between psyche and singularity to explain his findings that psyche is singularity. This conclusion comes out of principles of string theory and Carl Jung's description of his near-death experience in 1944.

From physics we heard that Stephen Hawking's argument - that everything that falls into a black hole is erased from the universe - violates the principle of the conservation of information. The counter argument comes from Leonard Susskind, an American physicist who together with Nobel prize-winning colleague Gerard 't Hooft argued that if Hawking's proposition is true, the entire field of physics is groundless because the conservation of information is a fundamental principle. They suggested that although we don't know what happens to the object once it falls into the black hole, from the perspective of an observer in this universe, one would see the fundamental strings of the object slowly slowing down in their vibration and being smeared out along the event horizon as the object falls into the black hole. Then little by little those strings leak back into this universe by means of Hawking radiation, thus saving the principle of conservation of information. Consequently, as seen from someone inside this universe, the information is not erased but radiated back into the observable universe.

Because the universe is an inside out black hole exploding from a singularity instead of contracting into one, cosmic microwave background radiation is therefore the echo of the Big Bang, the inverted Hawking radiation. The past, present and future of the universe - everything that has ever happened and will ever happen - is recorded as if on a holographic two-dimensional film covering the spherical border of the universe and is radiated back in as these fundamental one-dimensional string threads of energy. Which means that the 3-dimensional objects we experience are holographic projections from the horizon of the cosmos like a holographic movie.

The other part that makes up Timothy's theory comes from Carl Jung's near-death experience following a heart attack in 1944 as related in his autobiography. He tells us that he experienced his consciousness rise above his body above the hospital, above Planet Earth some 1000 miles. There he saw an enormous black boulder floating in space and realised it was a hallowed temple. As he approached the temple, he saw a Hindu person sitting in a lotus position who communicated that he knew he was coming. At the back of the temple was a brightly-lit room where he felt that people whom he knew in life were waiting for him. They knew all about him, his past and future lives. He reflected that if he could get into that temple himself, he himself would know everything about his own lives. As he approached the temple, he felt his entire biography ripped painfully from him and he experienced his life flashing before his eyes. He was about to enter into the

temple when he saw floating above Europe his Swiss doctor in his astral form who told him that the earth did not agree with his decision to leave. So Jung had to stay and at that moment he woke up in his hospital bed. He learned from this experience that past, present and his future were interwoven at the horizon of the cosmos and each of us exists as if in a little box tethered to the horizon by a thread. At the cosmic horizon, the past, present and future co-exist. This image of each of us being a box tethered to the horizon by a thread is parallel to what Susskind is proposing with his principle of conservation of information at the cosmic horizon.

Pauli - the physicist who worked with Jung - provided the final touch to the theory by highlighting the symmetries in the laws of psychology and the laws of physics. This leads directly to the principle that mind and matter both emerge from a more fundamental source which the alchemist Gerhard Dorn called the Unus Mundus, the God archetype and the One. The principle states that because mind and matter emerged from the same source, we should expect laws of physics to parallel laws of psychology.

■ AUGUST



Dr. OLIVER ROBINSON gave the presentation this month, which he entitled *Towards the Transmodern: science, spirituality and the transition out of modernity*. Oliver is Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Greenwich. Alongside his academic research, he writes about the relationship between science, philosophy, history and spirituality, and has written a book on this topic entitled *Paths Between Head and Heart: Exploring the harmonies of science and spirituality*.

In this talk Oliver gave us an overview of the paradigms prevailing during the pre-modern period, the modern and the post-modern to show us how some societies are transiting out of modernity into the transmodern. In pre-modern times, we heard, the focus was on religion as a unifying framework for lifestyle, knowledge, belief, purpose even health, government etc. This was a time in which the life span was 40-45 years, pandemics raged and religion imposed a worldview in a coercive way. It was a highly censorious environment, and punishments were meted out to those who promoted different worldviews, e.g. Galileo. The transition to modernity started around 1650, 60's, 80s, at a time of the great plague and the Fire of London. Printing facilitated an explosion of knowledge and ideas and the belief emerged that the future could be better than the past - in opposition to the nostalgia of the 'golden past'. Authorities started to be seen as fallible and the idea that people should be free to experiment started gaining currency. This was a time of specialisation, and academia became more diversified into more subjects. This paradigm gave way to post-modernism when deconstruction became the order of the day. The quest for foundations and finding none highlights the reliance on assumptions as part of our lived reality. And this takes us to the transmodern.

In this paradigm, interconnection is key. This is evident in the reality of the internet and globalisation. We have become part of one body which resembles a nervous system. The greatest challenge which reveals the interconnectedness of humanity is climate change, in which we are all implicated.

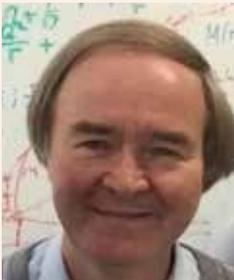
The Covid experience has highlighted an interesting aspect of the transmodern. Pandemics are the inevitable challenges of the interconnected globalised world we now live in. Whether it is computer or physical viruses, in the globalised world which is now our environment, these are part and parcel of our reality. However, the response by governments to the Covid pandemic took us back to the pre-modern: coercive and punitively imposed lockdowns of whole populations for long periods, without consideration of the damaging effect on large sections of the economy and health of the population. Quarantine and social distancing were used in the Middle Ages during the plague to fight the Black Death. These are transactions of parent/child and not adult to adult. It infantilises people. A transmodern response to Covid would engage with the population at a level of trust and responsibility, giving clear information and guidance for action. The focus would be the health of the general population using technology to test-and-trace and also develop effective vaccines and anti-viral treatments. An example coming close to this is the way Norway has treated the pandemic, and how the UK is doing it now.

Oliver expanded on MODI, his healthy model for human existence, showing that science and spirituality are two overlapping parts of one whole, with neither taking precedence over the other. The model is composed of pairs of opposites sitting in balance. They are outer/inner, impersonal/personal, mechanical (how)/purposive (why), verbal/ineffable, explanation/contemplation, empirical/transcendental and thinking/feeling. The SMN, Oliver said, is an example of an organisation modelling such a paradigm.

LONDON GROUP PHYSICAL MEETING 19 JULY 2021

■ Can an Extended Science Bridge the Worlds of Matter, Mind and Spirit?

Edi Bilimoria writes: July 19 2021 could aptly be titled 'Freedom Day'. It was a historic occasion on three counts: the first physical meeting of the SMN for over a year; a meeting on the very day that all pandemic-related restrictions were lifted; above all, a graphically illustrated talk by our own President, **PROFESSOR BERNARD CARR**, *Can an Extended Science Bridge the Worlds of Matter, Mind and Spirit?*



It was fascinating to hear Bernard disclose his own journey. It started around age 15 when he was at school and – as a result of being confined to his room for some minor transgression – chose to read three books that laid the pattern for his abiding interest in the three worlds of matter, mind and spirit. All of us inhabit these three worlds but clearly the emphasis we give to each of them varies widely. Moreover, the three worlds pertain to different contexts depending on how we explore the 'geography of reality'. Thus, under the overarching trio of spirit, mind, and matter, there are three modes of knowing, three modes of being, three academic disciplines, three types of embodiment, and even three kinds of SMN meetings (physical, virtual, meditational). Bernard explained how the worlds of mind and matter are bridged by psychical research, those of spirit and matter by the anthropic principle, and those of mind and spirit by transpersonal psychology. However, this

just reflects his personal interests and there are many other possible bridges. Bridge-building between the three worlds was a recurrent theme, powerfully articulated. Importantly, however, bridges link the worlds but do not merge them. In this way, one can maintain the distinctiveness of the worlds whilst still promoting dialogue and overlap between them.

En route, we were treated to an erudite course in physics, concentrating on how extra dimensions arise in conventional physics and how they may be extended as in superstring theory towards an understanding of higher dimensions of space that could also accommodate mental experiences. These range from the normal to the paranormal to the transpersonal and involve their own space (or hierarchy of spaces). Obvious examples are 'dream space', 'apparition space', 'OBE space' and 'NDE space', all of these being different from normal waking space.

Whereas Bernard did not underplay the differences between his perspective and that of Marilyn Monk, who regards the three worlds as non-overlapping magisteria, in my own view, such differences are to be *celebrated* since they underscore the 'plurality of viewpoints', a key Network aim which promotes dialogue, not dissension, and advances learning and mutual tolerance of different viewpoints. Bernard stressed that their different perspectives were complementary, and essentially corresponded to different interpretations of the term 'science'.

The resounding message was the need for an extension of science which explicitly involves consciousness, since the latter underlies and links the normal, paranormal and transpersonal worlds of matter, mind, and spirit, respectively. Ironically, the present triumph of physics in understanding the different levels of material structure and the associated links between the microphysical and macrophysical domains represents the triumph of *mindlessness*. But if mind is fundamental, not incidental, to the universe, this requires an extension of physics to what Bernard termed 'hyperphysics'. In this case, there is no reason to assume that consciousness and mental experience will always lie outside the domain of physics—and every reason to believe that this may point the way to the triumph of *mindfulness* in physics. This richer and expanded science necessarily demands an updated paradigm, regarding which the post-materialist science movements and the Galileo Commission initiative are instrumental.

The enthusiasm generated by Bernard's presentation was palpable, given the ensuing lively discussion on a central theme of the crucial role of higher dimensions of space and time (i.e. an extended space and time) in linking matter and mind, science and spirituality, and individual mind and Universal Mind.

We are immensely grateful to Sue Van Colle and Clive Jenkins for hosting this inaugural meeting in their Hampstead home and look forward to many more such convivial and informative gatherings.



MEMBERS' ARTICLES AND ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Available through links or from dl@scimednet.org

SCIENCE

Nick Greaves

- *Dark Matter, Gravitation, Black Holes, the Expansion of the Universe and the Nature of Time*

Robert K. Logan

- *Understanding Humans: The Extensions of Digital Media*

Kazuo Ishiguro and Sir Venki Ramakrishnan PRS

- *Imagining a New Humanity – a dialogue*

PHILOSOPHY-SPIRITUALITY

Ravi Ravindra

- *In the Beginning s the Dance of Love*

Giacomo Mauro D'Ariano and Federico Faggin

- *Hard Problem and Free Will: an information-theoretical approach*

Clement Jewitt

- *Where Is Our 'Civilization' Heading?*
- *Natural Theology in the 21st Century – Ian Ramsey Centre Conference Handbook*

Alexander Laszlo & Ervin Laszlo

- *Understanding Oneness: How Science and Spirituality See the World*

PSYCHOLOGY-
CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

Jessica Corneille and David Luke

- *Spontaneous Spiritual Awakenings – Phenomenology, Altered States, Individual Differences, and Well-Being – from Frontiers in Psychology*

Adrian Parker

- *Thought-Forms Gone Rogue: A Theory for Psi-Critics and Parapsychologists – from JSE, 2021*

Emmanuel Ransford

- *Can we Crack the Mind-Body Problem? Part 2*

Stephan A. Schwartz

- *Nonlocality And Exceptional Experiences: A Study of Genius, Religious Epiphany, and the Psychic – From Explore*

- *Intention as a Variable in Nonlocal Consciousness Research – from Explore*

Art Funkhouser

- *The Effects of Near Death Experiences on Dreaming: A pilot study*

Chris A. Roe

- *A Representative Survey of Paranormal Beliefs and Experiences – SPR powerpoint*

Austin C. Archer

- *"I Don't See It That Way Anymore": A Qualitative Study of Significant Changes of Mind*

Prof Ed Kelly

- *A Brief History of the Sursem Project*

GENERAL

Ministry of Defence and Bundeswehr, 2021

- *Human Augmentation – Dawn of a New Paradigm (110 pp. Report on strategic implications – driven by the fear of being left behind!) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-augmentation-the-dawn-of-a-new-paradigm>*

Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, 2018

- *Technologies to Address Global Catastrophic Biological Risks (71 pp. Report, chillingly prescient) <https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/our-work/publications/technologies-to-address-global-catastrophic-biological-risks>*

Peter Reason

- *Down by River*

ONLINE ARTICLES BY ANTHONY JUDGE

- *Systemic Coherence of the UN's 17 SDGs as a Global Dream*

Rather than merely an arbitrary outcome of political horse-trading <https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/uncosys.php>

- *Comparability of "Vaxxing Saves" with "Jesus Saves" as Misinformation?*

<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/musings/vaxxing.php>

- *Authoritative science or Authoritarian science?*

<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/musings/vaxxing.php#auth>

- *Governance of Pandemic Response by Artificial Intelligence*

Control of human agents unconscious of AI-elaboration of communication scripts? <https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/aigovpan.php>

- *Towards a Science of Misinformation and Deception*

the challenge of an information pandemic -- a COVID-19 infodemic

<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/covilies.php>

- *Interrelating Multiple Ways of Looking at a Crisis*

Beyond the pandemic discipline of the one right way <https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/lookways.php>

- *Misleading Modelling of Global Crises*

Unquestioned bias in authoritative representations of reality by science? <https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/modeling.php>

book reviews

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SCIENCE-PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

SILENT SPRING 2.0

David Lorimer

■ TOXIC LEGACY

Stephanie Seneff PhD

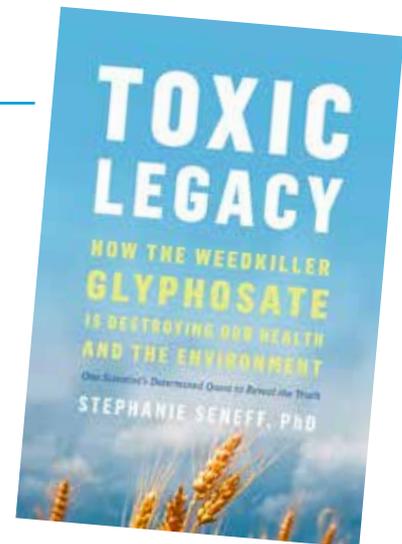
Chelsea Green, 2021, 272 pp., £20, p/b – ISBN 978-1-60358-929-1

In 1940 after spending his research career in India, Sir Albert Howard published his book *An Agricultural Testament* and later, in 1945, his final book *Farming and Gardening for Health or Disease*. Note the word ‘or’ here. Howard’s legacy built on many centuries of sustainable practice in India, which Vandana Shiva has continued to this day. He wrote that

1. The birthright of all living things is health.
2. This law is true for soil, plant, animal, and man: the health of these four is one connected chain.’
3. Any weakness or defect in the health of any earlier link is carried on to the next and succeeding links, until it reaches the last, namely man.

Howard argued that the undernourishment of the soil is the root of the whole process, and maintained that the NPK mentality will not ultimately prove sustainable as it profiteers at the expense of posterity and has a long-term degenerative effect on the soil (see pp. 88-95 of my book *Radical Prince*.) In our event with Vandana Shiva in June, she reinforced the systemic point that “regenerative agriculture provides answers to the soil crisis, the food crisis, the climate crisis and the crisis of democracy.”

Stephanie Senett is a senior research scientist at MIT in Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, who has for the last decade specialised in the effects of glyphosate – the active ingredient in Roundup – on health and the environment. Her quest began with a lecture by Dr Don Huber questioning the Monsanto/Bayer contention that glyphosate is safe because ‘its main mechanism of toxicity affects a



metabolic (shikimate) pathway in plant cells that human cells don’t possess.’ Unfortunately, although it is correct to say that human cells do not possess this pathway, our gut microbes do, which means that glyphosate can adversely affect the human microbiome, causing pathogens to thrive and disrupting our health. Through chelation, glyphosate also affects mineral uptake in the plant and disrupts its symbiotic relationship with soil bacteria, making plants more susceptible to fungal diseases.

The overall argument of the book is that ‘there is a growing body of scientific evidence that shows that glyphosate is a major factor in several debilitating neurological, metabolic, autoimmune, reproductive and oncological diseases, all of which originates in ‘the seemingly simple substitution of glyphosate for the amino acid glycine during protein synthesis.’ (see p. 71) Since Howard’s day, farming methods and food have led to chronic ill health and obesity, which the same companies then treat with drugs. Interestingly, glyphosate was originally patented to strip mineral deposits off pipes and boilers, and it is also patented as an oral antibiotic. Today, the US uses 20% of world supply, amounting to nearly 150,000 tons sprayed onto the American crops every year. Significantly, the amount of glyphosate used on GMO crops has increased dramatically over the last two decades, along with its use as a desiccant before harvest. A growing body of research shows that no amount of glyphosate is safe and the WHO declared it carcinogenic in 2017, since

which time \$10 billion was announced as settlement of 100,000 lawsuits. However, cancer is only the end point of a more complex process.

The contents of the book are wide ranging, beginning with evidence of harm, then failing ecosystems, the relationship between glyphosate the microbiome, the role of phosphate and sulfate, reproductive issues, neurological disorders and autoimmunity. The underlying agrochemical model entails suppression of biodiversity by monocultures involving pesticides, herbicides, insecticides and arguably ultimately ecocide in the war against life. The soil is affected, as is water, butterflies, insect populations generally, worms, and life in marshes such as tadpoles. The book is solidly based on scientific studies, which makes the text pretty technical at times while filling in the details of the argument. In its role as an antibiotic, glyphosate disrupts gut function and enables yeast overgrowth. Using CRISPR, companies are now engaged in creating patent glyphosate-resistant seeds and that will not be considered GMO crops.

By suppressing several enzymes, glyphosate damages mitochondria, the organelles supplying energy to the cell. It also produces oxidative stress, erodes our ability to maintain adequate sulfate and impairs liver-function along with the immune system – throughout it is key to remember that nothing works in isolation in biological systems. Seneff explains the antioxidant and detoxification properties of glutathione. Her chapter on reproduction suggests that some effects may emerge over generations, while that on neurological disorders emphasises the role of multiple toxin exposure and criticises the exclusive research focus on genetic underpinnings. Autoimmune status is also relevant to susceptibility to Covid-19, and the author gives a very good summary of the role of the immune system. She makes a similar connection between glyphosate and Covid-19 to be found in the eco-medical work of Dr Zach Bush, highlighting the way in which the adaptive immune system may create a cytokine storm in antibody disease enhancement (ADE).

Her answer in the final chapter is to reboot today for a healthy tomorrow instead of perpetuating a disease treatment system ‘where there is little incentive to identify and correct root causes of chronic disease or empower people to keep from getting sick in the first place when there is so much profit to be made.’ (p. 161) This takes us back to the agenda of regenerating soil in order to regenerate health. This would entail a complete overhaul of current agricultural, food and health systems based on the profit motive – given the power and money involved,

there is of course huge resistance to such a proposal for a regenerative revolution *even if it is the only ultimately sustainable option*. This is a hugely important contribution that deserves to be widely read and urgently acted upon: glyphosate needs to be banned in the same way as DDT.

A VOICE OF SANITY

David Lorimer

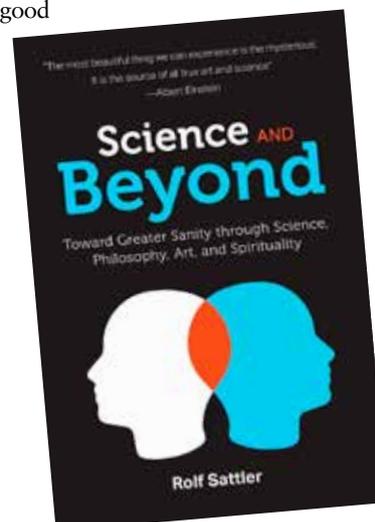
■ SCIENCE AND BEYOND

Rolf Sattler (SMN)

Friesen Press, 2021, 157 pp., \$16.49, p/b – ISBN 978-1-03910-297-2

Rolf Sattler is Emeritus Professor of Biology at McGill University, where he taught courses on plant biology, history and philosophy of biology, science and spirituality, and biology and the human condition. He is a Fellow of the Linnean Society as well as the Royal Society of Canada. Significantly, the book is dedicated to Alfred Korzybski, the plant morphologist Agnes Arber, Ravi Ravindra, Elisabet Sahtouris and the Dalai Lama – which gives an insight into its orientation. The title is carefully chosen to emphasise the place of science within a larger cultural context.

The book is wide-ranging and incisive in its analysis of the limitations of science, uncertainty, replicability, the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity, logic and the indescribable, language and the unnameable, empiricism, mechanistic and holistic science, the relationship between science, society and culture as well as with the arts and spirituality. The main focus is on widespread misconceptions about the nature and limitations of science that can have disastrous consequences when individuals and society are correspondingly misled. This can give us a saner outlook where we are in tune with life and reality - enjoying good health, happiness and peace. Each chapter contains explanatory text, a contemplation and conclusions, occasionally interspersed with rather good



jokes and stories.

Drawing on his extensive knowledge of philosophy of science, Rolf discusses the nature of proof where ‘facts are theory-laden because they are observed in terms of a theoretical framework’ dominated by mechanistic materialism. He reminds us that the observer or experimenter is part of the context of an experiment and that uniqueness transcends replication. He points out that objectivity is limited by the expectancy effect, the experimenter and observer effect, selection bias, confirmation bias consensus bias, reiteration bias and publication bias – all of which is easy to forget. Western thought has been dominated by Aristotelian logic, which now needs to be enhanced by other forms including yin-yan thinking, Buddhist, Jain and Fuzzy logic, and complementarity. A similar situation arises with respect to language and concepts, as brilliantly highlighted by the work of Korzybski, who famously stated that the map is not the territory – as also illustrated in many paintings by Magritte. Korzybski’s Structural Differential indicates how we abstract and select features from reality and commit what Whitehead calls the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Whitehead and Bohm both emphasised the fact that ‘reality appears profoundly dynamic, but this dynamic is obscured by the noun-verb structure of most languages.’ (p. 35) Nature is a continuum of ‘undivided wholeness’, where process is primary. In an appendix, Rolf also applies this approach to plant morphology.

He proposes a wider basis of empiricism drawing on William James, Wilber and Goethe while also emphasising the original Greek conceptions of *theoria* as direct non-dual experience of *gnosis*. A very important theme in our current context is Foucault’s concept of power-knowledge where ‘what is presented as objective truth appears contingent on historically conditioned forces that involve power’ both in terms of prominent scientists and institutions as well as the dominance of a materialist worldview. Rolf points out that the powerful pharmaceutically dominated medical political establishment espouses the same materialism at the expense of natural health and integrative medicine. This is particularly evident in the current Covid crisis where non-mainstream views are censored and removed as ‘misinformation, disinformation or conspiracy theory’. Rolf points out that susceptibility to viral disease depends on many factors including lifestyle, nutrition and, overall exposure to toxicity and the status of the immune system. ‘Science’ presented in this context has been ‘the one-sided power-knowledge of WHO, chief medical officers in powerful positions, and the powerful pharmaceutical industry and governments.’

The chapter on science and spirituality is complemented by appendices on cultivating health and on the human condition and its transcendence in recognising mystery beyond the distinction of matter and spirit where spiritual practice is central. Here we can experience silence beyond the language through deep personal insight leading to inner freedom. There are many imbalances to be rectified (pp. 107-8) and we need to find ways of moving beyond our cultural and genetic conditioning, part of which entails ways of handling power and conflict. A basic misconception is our sense of separation, reinforced by tribalism, language, ideas and belief systems embedded in our identity through logic and language. The influence of Plato and Aristotle is still felt today, and we now need to free ourselves from modern myths such as materialism, scientism, economic growth and, imminently, techno-humanism and 'dataism'. Rolf suggests that 'if we remain anchored in infinity in which thoughts, emotions and feelings arise and vanish, we gain freedom.' (p. 130) Key to our future is the overall direction taken by science and technology and the relative emphasis on transcendence or on transhumanism potentially leading to digital dictatorship. We have a narrow navigational window, and the distilled wisdom of this book can provide much reliable guidance in this respect.

A LONG AND WINDY ROAD

Gunnel Minett

■ 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).

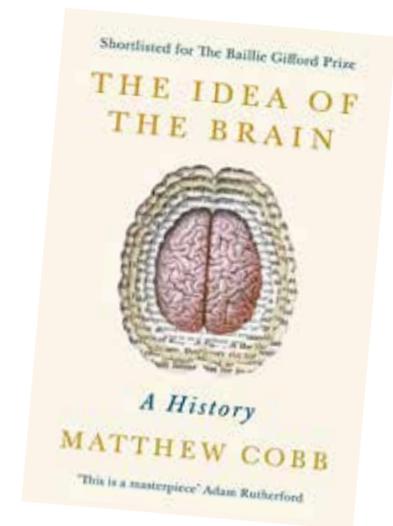
Another major milestone in this quest was when religion started to permit dissection of the human body. That, together with advances in technology, made brain studies more accurate. The various stages of this journey can be illustrated by technological metaphors: for example, the brain was compared to 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 those 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

AN INFORMATION WAR

David Lorimer

■ THE TRUTH ABOUT COVID-19

Dr Joseph Mercola and Ronnie Cummins

Chelsea Green, 2020, 209 pp., £19.99, h/b – ISBN 978-1-64502-086-2

A feature on Israel's fourth wave in *The Week* of August 21 describes how, despite 78% of adults having been double jabbed, 90% of the new infections are in largely vaccinated over 50s, and nearly 60% of gravely ill patients are fully jabbed, mainly with the Pfizer mRNA shot. The article offers no real analysis beyond a statement of waning immunity and the need for a third shot. However, the real implication is that these vaccines are designed to suppress symptoms but not to prevent transmission; and a business model based on the need for boosters is great news for Pharma investors. Moreover, there is an agreement among mainstream 'trusted media' sources to repeat the mantra that the vaccines are 'safe and effective' in the interests of combating 'vaccine hesitancy' and to ignore reports of deaths and adverse reactions even though these are designed as a red flag system for safety issues.

The latest EU European Medicines Agency figures to August 28 record 23,252 reports of deaths and 2,189,537 injuries (1,076,917 serious) following the Covid shots, the majority of which

occur in the first three days. CDC figures to August 30 record 13,627 deaths (plus 1,429 foetal deaths in pregnant women who took a Covid shot) and 2,826,646 injuries. These figures represent double the total number of other reports of deaths, mainly in infants - 6,098 between 1 Jan 1991 and Nov 30 2020, over a period of nearly 30 years. To put this in perspective, the swine flu shot in the US was shut down after just over 50 deaths, and 190 million annual shots resulted in only around 150 reported deaths. Now we have a situation where governments are turning up the social pressure for vaccination while these safety issues are being marginalised despite research showing that fewer than 10% of cases are actually reported, which means multiplying the above figures by at least 10. Moreover, there is no system of government compensation and the companies involved are immune from prosecution.

This new book by Joseph Mercola and Ronnie Cummins with a foreword by Robert F Kennedy Jr will come as a shocking revelation to readers who have only been exposed to the mainstream Covid narrative. They may identify Mercola as the leading member of the Disinformation Dozen called out by the Centre for Country Digital Hate and publicised worldwide even though Facebook has now repudiated its claims. Such is the level of hit-piece pressure and personal threats that have been exerted on Mercola that he has removed his 25-year archive of 15,000 articles from his website, and takes down any new content after 48 hours. He sees this as a gesture of appeasement, but in reality his enemies would like to see him crushed – and the overall context here is a continuing paradigm war between natural and pharmaceutical approaches to agriculture, food and health in which the current battleground is the Covid narrative; this is what Manuel Castells calls communication power. The co-author Ronnie Cummins is the activist founder-director of the Organic Consumers Association, a US-based network of more than 2 million consumers dedicated to safeguarding organic standards and promoting healthy, just and regenerative systems, farming and commerce.

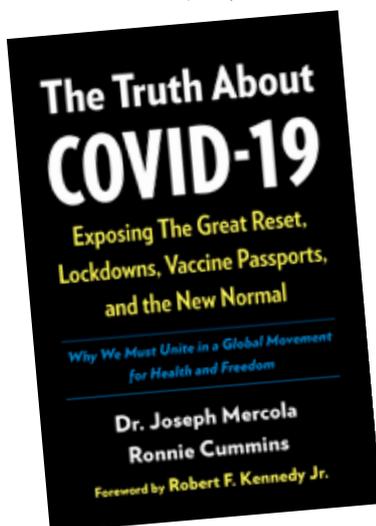
Within this overall context lie the realities of money, power and influence in economic, political and institutional terms. The WHO, GAVI, the FDA, the CDC and NIH are effectively beholden to and/or funded by Big Pharma, and it dominates the medical system as a whole, including universities, research institutions, medical schools, journals and education; all this gives rise to often undeclared systemic conflicts of interest – Britain's Chief Scientist Sir Patrick Vallance formerly held the same role at GSK, while the parent company of Google has extensive

pharmaceutical interests. The CDC has over 50 patents on vaccines, on which it receives royalties. Bill Gates is the major private funder of the WHO and GAVI and, along with partners such as the World Economic Forum and the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, staged Event 201 as scenario planning for a pandemic in October 2019 only two months before it actually broke out. The communications plan rehearsed at this meeting has been carried out to the letter in terms of controlling the narrative and censoring anything else as misinformation, disinformation or conspiracy theory.

In 2018, the Johns Hopkins Center published a scenario document on the 'SPARS' pandemic 2025 to 2028 available for download on its website. The point here is not to equate foresight with deliberate planning but rather to note the role of vaccines in these scenarios and also that Bill Gates, the world's leading investor in vaccines, said at the outset that the whole planet would need to be vaccinated before we could get back to normal. As readers may be aware, the censorship of non-mainstream opinions has been unprecedented and scientific debate stifled by the mainstream scientific consensus. Physicians who have stood against these received opinions have not only been censored worldwide but often lost their positions, while Dr Robert Malone, the inventor of the mRNA technology, was deplatformed and any reference to his role in this respect removed from Wikipedia when he expressed growing safety concerns about the vaccines.

Prof Didier Raoult, the world's leading virologist, has been removed from his post by the French government for his views on vaccines and early treatment. The suppression of early treatment in the relentless drive for vaccinations has been one of the great scandals of the pandemic and it is well covered in this book. Tens of thousands of people could have been saved by such early interventions (see for instance the downloadable protocol on the website of the American Association for Physicians and Surgeons and article on the success of ivermectin in India the desert review website) – I recommend the scientifically-grounded lectures of Dr Peter McCullough in this respect – he was the leading author of peer-reviewed papers and the protocol itself while treating many patients of his own. His reward for a stand of heroic integrity has been professional vilification – but for every physician who has stood up, there are at least 30 who agree but do not dare to do so. All these themes are thoroughly covered in this highly informative book.

Among the key issues are manipulation of PCR test figures and death certificates to reinforce public panic. A September



2020 study in *Clinical Infectious Diseases* found that the accuracy of a PCR test at 35 cycles or higher produces a 97% false positive rate in usually asymptomatic people due to picking up residual viral sequences – yet the WHO recommended 45 cycles and the CDC 40 – a figure now lowered to 28 when testing vaccinated subjects, while this very test used as the driver of the narrative is scheduled to be removed at the end of the year. The CDC website (p. 54) states that ‘when Covid-19 is reported as a cause of death on the death certificate, it is coded and counted as death *due to* Covid-19.’ In other words, such a directive conflates deaths *from* Covid with deaths *with* Covid, producing a highly inflated figure also used to drive vaccination. CDC’s own figures found that in only 6% of cases was Covid listed as the sole cause of death, and that in the other 94%, there was an average of 2.6 comorbidities. This leads the authors to observe that Covid-19 seems to act as a trigger ‘for pre-existing conditions of an ageing and increasingly chronically ill population’ with a high prevalence of obesity, inflammation and diabetes.

There are two more significant themes worth highlighting here: the debate about lab origins, and the use of the pandemic to bring in the Great Reset. In early 2020, anyone questioning the animal origin of the virus was dismissed as a conspiracy theorist, and the chairman of the Eco-Health Alliance, Dr Peter Daszak arranged for a letter from himself and other prominent scientists to be published in *The Lancet* strongly condemning ‘conspiracy theories suggesting that Covid-19 does not have a natural origin (*The Lancet* also published a widely reported flawed paper on hydroxychloroquine based in false data – it was later retracted but the damage was done). The back story here is that the US military, NIH and Dr Anthony Fauci’s NIAID have been funding Daszak, Ralph Beric at North Carolina and Fort Detrick and Dr Shi Zhengli at Wuhan in gain-of-function research at dual use biowarfare/biodefence labs as a way of getting round the Biological Weapons Treaty. Through DARPA, the military also contributed \$25m to Pfizer and Moderna for initial research into mRNA technology, which until the 2020 vaccines was called in gene therapy

This research involves weaponising viruses through genetic manipulation to optimise their infectiousness to humans by means of the spike protein binding to human ACE-2 receptors – thus becoming a transmissible bioweapon by any other name, even if one of the intentions was to develop a corresponding vaccine. Daszak himself stated in February 2016 - “We need to increase public understanding for the need for medical countermeasures such

as a pan coronavirus vaccine. A key driver is the media and the economics will follow the hype. We need to use that hype to our advantage to get to the real issues. Investors will respond if they see profit at the end of the process.” You can draw your own conclusion in the light of recent events. Politically, both the US and China find themselves in a compromised and embarrassing position, although Mercola in a recent post noted that the House Foreign Affairs Committee’s recent report entitled, “The Origins of COVID-19: An Investigation of the Wuhan Institute of Virology,” presents solid evidence that many of the “conspiracy theories” about the virus were in fact true. For example, using some intelligence reports and other public documents, the committee found that:

“... we now believe it’s time to completely dismiss the wet market as the source of the outbreak. We also believe the preponderance of the evidence proves the virus did leak from the WIV and that it did so sometime before September 12, 2019.”

They also presented evidence of genetic modification:

“This report also lays out ample evidence that researchers at the WIV, in conjunction with U.S. scientists and funded by both the PRC [People’s Republic of China] government and the U.S. government, were conducting gain-of-function research on coronaviruses at the WIV ... In many instances, the scientists were successful in creating ‘chimeric viruses’ — or viruses created from the pieces of other viruses — that could infect human immune systems. With dangerous research like this conducted at safety levels similar to a dentist’s office, a natural or genetically modified virus could have easily escaped the lab and infected the community.”

The clear upshot of this is that the public should demand that such research be immediately banned under international law, and that China should suspend its plans to create a further 25 Level 4 biosafety labs. As Russell and Einstein said in relation to nuclear weapons in the 1950s, “Remember your humanity and forget the rest.”

In an article last December, Rob Verkerk of the Alliance for Natural Health International explained how the pandemic is being used to bring in Klaus Schwab’s WEF Great Reset and a technocratic Fourth Industrial Revolution – in the meantime, his YouTube channel has been removed ‘for violating community guidelines.’ Other elements besides vaccine passports already planned by the EU in March 2019 include more extensive digital biometric ID (see ID2020 also supported by Gates and the WEF), an Internet of Things and Bodies linked to the Cloud

and enabling 24/7 surveillance and social control, and digital currency linked to digital ID (see Catherine Austin Fitts). The WEF expression ‘build back better’ has been used rhetorically by leaders around the world, but behind the feelgood language of sustainability, social justice and climate smart agriculture (smart = technocratic) lies a dystopic and dehumanised vision merging health and national security (a new HARPA modelled on DARPA has just been launched, along with the Wellcome Leap headed up by former DARPA Director Regina Dugan). Now is the time to demand truth and transparency, to promote regenerative food and agriculture systems along with an integrated approach to health and a harmonious relationship with the Earth – this courageous book provides detailed and vital information for us to unite in a global movement for health and freedom that truly respects human dignity and participatory democracy rather than coercing us through fear and panic into a Chinese-style digital dictatorship.

NUDGING ETHICS

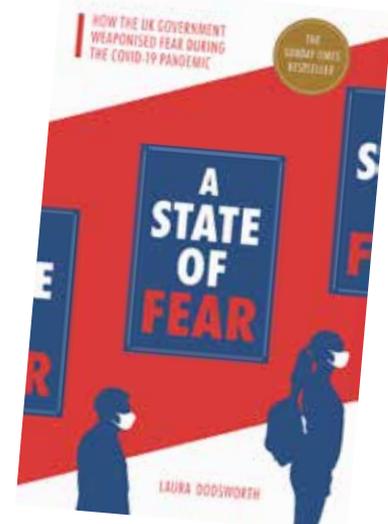
David Lorimer

■ A STATE OF FEAR

Laura Dodsworth

Pinter and Martin, 2021,
312 pp., £9.99, p/b – ISBN
978-1-78066-720-1

Napoleon Hill was one of Franklin Roosevelt’s advisers in preparing his speech with the famous lines ‘there is nothing to fear but fear itself’, a remark that resonates only too strongly in our own time with the ‘politics of nightmares’, the war on terror and now the new invisible viral enemy. The term ‘nudge’ was invented by Harvard Law Professor Cass Sunstein, whose book I reviewed in these pages: ‘by knowing how people think, we can make it easier for them to choose what is best



to them, their families and society.' It is the experts who decide what is best for people, so there is at least an inbuilt paternalism that was partly a response to criticisms of the Nanny State. The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) – the Nudge Unit – was set up in 2010 and has since wrong more than 750 projects as well as being present in 10 government departments. The unit really came into its own with the Covid crisis.

The central question raised by this highly readable and informative book is the relationship between the weaponisation of fear through behavioural psychology techniques in the context of ethics and democracy. People were not consulted, nor did any even realise that they were being covertly manipulated by what the author calls psychocrats in a technocratic command and control system. The UK Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Behaviour (SPI-B) recorded in March 2020 that the perceived level of personal threat needed to be increased using hard-hitting emotional messaging, which has also been reflected in media headlines as fear sells well as news. One member of the team said that propaganda is all about behavioural psychology manipulation to ensure compliance, and while 'not all persuasion is propaganda, propaganda is manipulation and it is not democratic.

This comes directly out of totalitarian playbooks and the original work by Freud's nephew, Edward Bernays, also the originator of PR. Bernays wrote in 1928 that 'the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organised habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power in our country... it is they who pull the wires which control the public mind.' In the current situation, the author notes that 'the suppressed fear of death is supremely powerful combined with the rationally imposed ideas of solidarity and conformity and protecting others.' (p. 244) In a recent essay on mob morality (<https://charleseisenstein.substack.com/p/mob-morality-and-the-unvaxxed>), Charles Eisenstein brilliantly dissects the powerful dehumanising psychology of scapegoating, showing how this has been strongly activated: 'Scapegoats needn't be guilty, but they must be marginal, outcasts, heretics, taboo-breakers, or infidels of one kind or another. If they are too alien, they will be unsuitable as transfer objects of in-group aggression. Neither can they be full members of society, lest cycles of vengeance ensue. If they are not already marginal, they must be made so.' This is what has transpired with the 'anti-vaxxer' label where such people are also 'anti-science', anti-social and totally uncaring and irresponsible (the in-group is caring and responsible).

Eisenstein observes that unconsciously, the public recognises and conforms to the age-old program of investing a pariah subclass [Untermensch] with the symbology of pollution. When asked "What is the word that comes to mind to describe unvaccinated people?" The responses were things like "filth," "assholes," and "death-eaters." This is precisely the dehumanisation necessary to prepare a class of people for cleansing.' He continues: 'the pro-vaccine camp has a powerful nonscientific ally in the collective id, expressed through various mechanisms of ostracism, shaming, and other social and economic pressure. It takes courage to defy a mob. Doctors and scientists who express anti-vaccine views risk losing funding, jobs, and licenses, just as ordinary citizens face censorship on social media.' Indeed, Eisenstein himself has for the first time been deplatformed and accused of antisemitism as a result of this article!

Jung called this phenomenon a psychic epidemic in the 1930s, and it is one that threatens to destroy hard-won enlightenment values in the name of risk aversion and safety while at the same time producing a divided and intolerant society. Censorship of deviant views has been unprecedented, and open scientific debate stifled in the name of 'settled science' when the essence of science is to challenge, debate and criticise on the basis of evidence. The author notes how high cycle positive PCR tests were classified as cases regardless of symptoms, and deaths from Covid were conflated with deaths with Covid (average age 82.3) featuring two or more comorbidities in over 90% of cases. The book also contains many insights into the experiences of ordinary people.

At the end, the author asks if this is a prequel of things to come. Recent polls show a huge residue of fearful attitudes, with over 50% supporting a policy whereby unvaccinated people would not be allowed to fly. Coercive and exclusionary measures against the unvaccinated are being strengthened almost worldwide while the FDA has just given full authorisation to the Pfizer vaccine with no public consultation or mention of the thousands of reported deaths and serious injuries – dismissed by 'fact-checkers' as unproven when the function of such reports has always been as a cautionary red flag.

The EU was already planning vaccine passports in March 2019, so the 2021 digital health passes are right on schedule, and can potentially contain all kinds of other personal records linked to the Cloud through the 5/6G Internet of Things and Bodies. The technocratic direction of travel is in my view towards a Chinese social credit system enabled by pervasive surveillance technology. The WEF ('build back better') is explicitly

transhumanist in outlook, advocating biodigital identity convergence; and the US has just launched its new Health Advanced Research Projects Agency (HARPA rather than DARPA) to merge health security with national security, arguably a step towards digital dictatorship. It is up to us to prove that The Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov* was wrong when he told the returning Christ that people do not want freedom but the security of being told what to do. Complete security and certainty are both unattainable in an open, creative and uncertain world.

PHILOSOPHY- SPIRITUALITY

KNOWING AND BEING

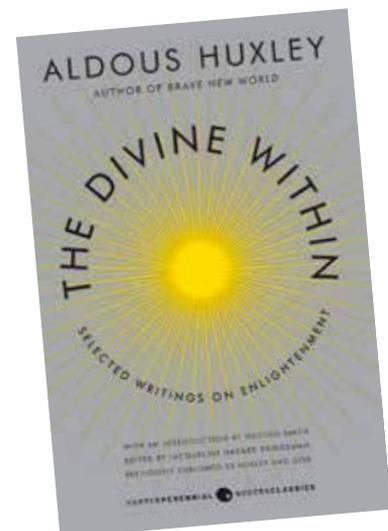
David Lorimer

■ THE DIVINE WITHIN

Aldous Huxley

Harper Perennial, 1992,
305 pp., \$16.99, p/b – ISBN
978-0-06-223681-4

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) was one of the great minds of the 20th century. His grandfather was Darwin's bulldog, T.H. Huxley, and his brother the evolutionary biologist Sir Julian Huxley who was the first director-general of UNESCO. Many readers will be familiar with Huxley's volume *The Perennial Philosophy*, and will find that this book of 26 essays published in the magazine *Vedanta and the West* covers this ground but much more. There are brilliant essays on time, Shakespeare, progress, liberation, distractions, idolatry, action and contemplation, Zen and symbolism. Some readers may remember that I reviewed his Santa Barbara lectures a couple of years ago under the title *The Human Situation*. His famous work, *Brave New World* has come to the fore during the pandemic – and while this dystopian vision is based on



enslavement, nearly his last book was *Island*, where he envisages a new system based on freedom. I read this book more than 30 years ago with my pupils at Winchester.

The introduction by Huston Smith is illuminating in revealing Huxley's personality and wit. He remarked on meeting Alan Watts that he was a curious man, 'Half monk, half racetrack operator.' Smith describes Huxley's evolution as a writer and mystic, which makes good prelude to the first essay on 'the minimum working hypothesis', with which I have to say I agree – see what you think:

There is a Godhead, Ground, Brahman, Clear Light of the Void, which is the unmanifested principle of all manifestations.

The Ground is at once transcendent and immanent.

It is possible for human beings to love, know and, from virtually, to become actually identical with the divine Ground.

To achieve this union with the Godhead is the final end and purpose of human existence.

There is a Law or Dharma which must be obeyed, a Tao or Way which must be followed, if men are to achieve their final end.

The more there is of self, the less there is of the Godhead; the Tao is a way of humility and love, the Dharma a living Law of mortification and self-transcending awareness.

He goes on to say that most people prefer their egos and do not wish to mortify them. They may have a good time, 'but also and inevitably they get wars and syphilis, tyranny and alcoholism, revolution, and in default of an adequate religious hypothesis the choice between some lunatic idolatry, such as nationalism, and a sense of complete futility and despair... throughout recorded history the great majority of men and women have preferred the risk – no, the positive certainty – of such disasters to the tiresome whole-time job of seeking first the kingdom of God. In the long run, we get exactly what we ask for.' (p. 16) My own life experience and the current world situation seem to me to confirm Huxley's diagnosis.

Despite this pessimistic realism, there are many inspiring and instructive passages, and Huxley himself maintained a position of idealistic realism in relation to human prospects. The following chapter consists of seven profound meditations on being, beauty, love, peace, holiness, grace and joy. He shows how different temperaments correspond to religious orientations, although in

each case the danger of dogma and idolatry lurks, especially if we prioritise ideas over experience. This leads into a discussion of the predominantly verbal nature of education and the lack of training of the mind-body where the art is to combine relaxation with activity. His guidance on the spiritual life is drawn from the great saints and sages where 'knowledge is a function of being. When there is a change in the being of the knower, there is a corresponding change in the nature and amount of knowing.' (p. 66)

He delves more deeply into this issue in a chapter on knowledge and understanding where he characterises knowledge as conceptual, meaning that it can be passed on by means of words or other symbols. Understanding, however, is not conceptual and cannot therefore be passed on. It is an immediate experience, which can only be talked about rather than shared. In this sense, understanding corresponds to insight and has the potential to take us beyond cultural conditioning as well as 'over-simplification, over-generalisation, and over-abstractness.' Beliefs can become propositional, removed from the core of direct spiritual experience. We can also learn about human nature from great literature – Greek tragedies and great novels like those of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. The process, however, involves first acquiring cultural knowledge (and an ego) before going beyond it.

Another interesting essay discusses substitutes for liberation, in which he himself indulged in the 1920s. Real transcendence arises in this way: 'when the phenomenal ego transcends itself, the essential Self is free to realise, in terms of finite consciousness, the fact of its own eternity, together with the correlative fact that every particular in the world of experience partakes of the timeless and infinite.' (p. 127) Being anchored in the timeless enables a fullness of life. Huxley notes that we all feel the radical inadequacy of our personal existence and ordinary quality of consciousness, so we may go for what he calls (a neutral) horizontal self-transcendence in identifying with art, science, law – without which there would be no civilisation. Then there is 'downward self-transcendence' represented by hedonistic overindulgence, for instance in sex, intoxicants or even crowd behaviour. These are only temporary escapes that bring one right back to the ego and the need for the horizontal to be transmuted into the vertical.

Action and contemplation are ideally rhythmical and complementary, but for Huxley our primary allegiance belongs to the timeless, eternity, which in Christian terms means seeking first the Kingdom of God to which all things can then be added. Secular utopias are

ultimately illusory, and Jesus himself maintained that his kingdom was not of this world: radical transformation can only be spiritual and not exclusively political, and in this respect poetry and music can play an important role in giving form to the essentially formless by spatialising time and representing space 'as a symbol of that timeless state, towards which, through all the impediments of ignorance, the human spirit consciously or unconsciously aspires.' (p. 85) There is much food for reflection as well as spiritual nourishment in these essays.

WHAT HAS DEATH GOT TO DO WITH LIFE?

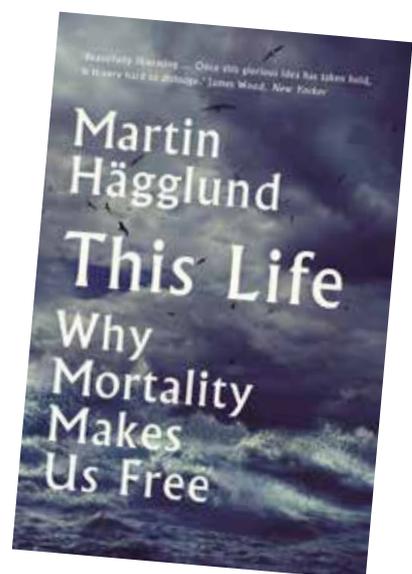
Gunnel Minnett

■ THIS LIFE, WHY MORTALITY MAKES US FREE

Martin Hägglund

Profile Books Ltd, 2020,
450 pp., £10.99, p/b - ISBN
978-1-788163-019

At first glance this seems to be a book of two halves. The first half deals with our basic understanding of life in terms of a religious versus a secular outlook. The second half of the book discusses capitalism and in particular how to reinterpret Karl Marx's views on the subject. Initially, it seems as if Hägglund is over-stretching in trying to cover the entirety of human life. However, at the end of the book, the motive for this wide-ranging approach becomes clear. As human beings we are facing a massive challenge in the form of climate change, which threatens the survival of our planet. To deal with a problem on this scale, we need to rethink our whole existence, from the very beginning of biological evolution.



As the current COVID pandemic has taught us, we are extremely vulnerable as a species, although previously insufficiently aware of this. We are used to think of threats as mainly coming from other human beings. Every country in the world spends money on military defences in order to protect themselves, but, as we all learnt in March 2020, a far greater threat to the whole world was rapidly emerging. We did not see it coming. Despite the fact that this is not the first time in human history that a pandemic has had a devastating effect on the world's population, we seemed to have been totally unprepared for it. We had to move quickly to drastically change the way we live. Fortunately, in this case our knowledge of the human body seems to have been sufficient for scientists to develop 'a weapon' against this new threat, in the form of a vaccine. Still, many argue that the pandemic is just a 'rehearsal' for the much bigger problem of changing how we manage the environment in order to sustain a habitable planet.

This explains why Hägglund starts his book by going back to the origin of life on our planet and describing how it differs from the dead matter. According to Hägglund all life requires activity to sustain it. Unlike dead matter, all living creatures have a beginning, a middle and an end to their lifespan. For humans, this drive to sustain life, is linked to our understanding of life and death. Knowing that we will not live forever matters to us. However, this knowledge is not necessarily a bad thing since it provides a certain level of urgency: it drives us to be pursue life actively, to make sure we utilise the time we have before it's too late. (This can be compared with Jaak Panksepp's SEEKING system, which Panksepp explains is the driving force for both humans and animals. This driving force is behind our motivations and curiosity. To understand the SEEKING system helps us understand the nature of human feelings.*)

Hägglund turns to thinkers such as St. Augustine, Proust, Kierkegaard, Hegel and Knausgård to analyse the relationship between human motivation and our awareness of the inevitability of death. For instance, he looks at Knausgård's autobiographical writings to highlight the importance of being aware of every moment as something precious that will not last forever and therefore needs our full attention. However, as Hägglund argues, we are simultaneously driven by religious beliefs, which, more or less, invariably promote the notion of eternal life. This focus on eternity, however, diminishes the drive to be active. If urgency ceases to matter, so does meaning in our lives. So instead of religious faith, Hägglund suggests secular faith. He argues that: "The object of secular faith is always a

spiritual cause, which moves us to act and determines what is important to us." As examples of spiritual causes he suggests: "the parental love that focuses our attention, the artistic vocation that gives direction to our aspirations,... or the political cause for the sake of which we are willing risk our lives" (p.172). He continues: "When we own our secular faith, we acknowledge that the object of our faith - our spiritual cause - is *dependent* on our practice of faith." (p.173)

Understanding the difference between religious and secular faith requires the insight that religious belief is insufficient to give our lives a satisfactory direction. We need to co-create the world we live in, and to a much larger degree than we are familiar with in today's society. To explain this Hägglund turns to Karl Marx in particular, to explain capitalism. According to Hägglund, Marx's views are much misunderstood in both socialist and capitalist countries. These misunderstandings have also produced negative impacts on both types of society. Hägglund suggests that 'Democratic Socialism' is a better solution. This involves shared ownership of our resources, and a better understanding of the difference between 'price' and 'value'. As an example, he discusses Martin Luther King's work to help the poor in America. Although King was a Christian minister, Hägglund argues that he was preaching a secular faith when he told people that it wasn't enough to talk about "long white robes over yonder": people also need clothes to wear when they are still on earth.

One of the features of Hägglund's Democratic Socialism is some form of universal salary which would enable people to pursue their interests in life. Many such interests are not normally recognised in a capitalist system and consequently don't pay enough to live on. This is, of course, an interesting thought in these COVID times when governments around the world have been forced to pay people to stay at home doing nothing. But it is not only pandemics that may force governments to change in this respect: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is taking over large areas of employment. Previously, the backbone of the capitalist system depended on generating income for the mass of the population, which they then spend on consumption, thus generating further income for others. AI's disruption of these processes poses another major problem for modern societies. In other words, capitalism requires people to work in order to earn the money which they then spend on the goods and services that capitalism produces. If their work is taken over by machines, then new ways of generating incomes for the people must be found. A universal salary is Hägglund's solution.

Interestingly this book has become popular around the world. This is not to say that all reviews have been positive. It seems to have created a bit of a 'marmite effect' - you either love it or hate it. It has been praised by some as giving "fresh philosophical and political vitality to a longstanding question". At the same time others have talked about, "... a hair-raising utopia ..." which is both "wrong and dangerous". But whether you love or hate it, the book offers a lot of food for thought at a time when we desperately need to think fast in order to avoid existential risks for the survival of our planet.

*Panksepp, J., and Biven, L. (2012). *The Archaeology of Mind: Neuroevolutionary Origins of Human Emotion*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. W W Norton

SILENT BEING

David Lorimer

■ JOHN MAIN – A BIOGRAPHY IN TEXTS AND PHOTOS

Edited by Paul Harris

Medio Media, 2001, 63 pp., £6.50, p/b – ISBN 0-9666941-6-3

■ THE GETHSEMANI TALKS

John Main OSB

Medio Media, 1977, 52 pp., \$8, p/b – ISBN 978-1-981-11-5877-3

■ WORD INTO SILENCE

John Main OSB

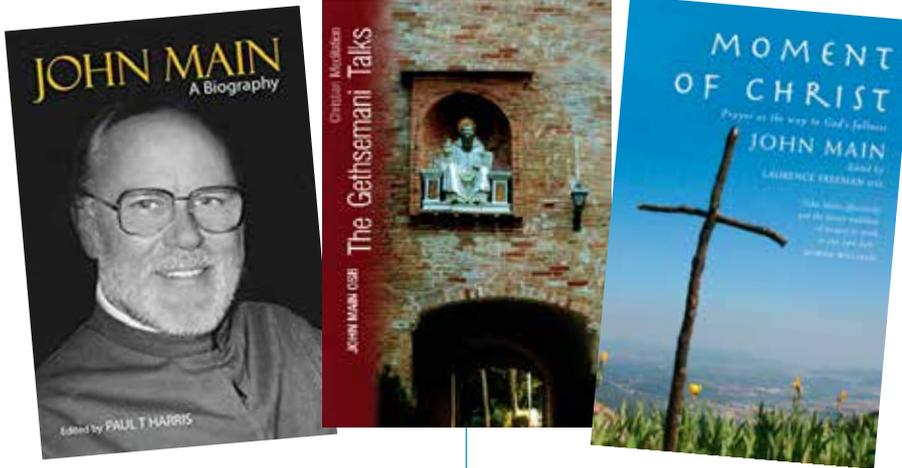
Canterbury Press, 2006, 82 pp., £8.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-85311-754-1

■ MOMENT OF CHRIST

John Main OSB

Canterbury Press, 1984/2010, 118 pp., \$9.50, p/b – ISBN 978-1-84825-020-8

Earlier in the summer, we visited Laurence Freeman at the beautiful Abbaye de Bonnevaux, the headquarters of the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM – www.wccm.org) founded by his teacher John Main (1926-1982). I expressed the wish to read some of his writings, and he kindly gave me the above four books. John Main (born as Douglas Victor) became a monk after a career as a soldier, diplomat in the Far East where he first learned meditation, and teaching law at Trinity College, Dublin. The first book provides an informative background of his early life in Ireland resonating with Celtic Christianity. He met Swami Satyananda and learned that 'the aim of meditation was the coming to awareness of the spirit that



dwells in our hearts... who enfolds the whole universe, and in silence is loving to all.' He was given a mantra (the WCCM mantra is *maranatha*) and just told to become silent and concentrated. In a complex world, the essence of meditation is simple: 'choose this word and then repeat it, faithfully, lovingly and continually. That is all there is to meditation. I really have nothing else to tell you.' Father John continuously emphasises this simplicity and the need to meditate twice a day for half an hour in the course of which 'we begin to experience the deep unity we all possess in our own being. And then the harmonic begins to build up a resonance between you and all creatures of all creation and the unity between you and your Creator.'

In the early nineteen seventies, Father John discovered a book about the writings of the fourth century desert monk, John Cassian, who outlines the repetition of the short verse 'to lead one to interior silence in the indwelling presence of Christ.' This is how Christian meditation originated in its current form. The books contain quite a bit of detail on the simple mechanics of meditation, all of which leads to the centre, the root, the ground, the heart – depending on which metaphor you use. As for Julian of Norwich, 'God is the still point at my centre.' The centre is also love and fullness, and a point of listening and attending as Simone Weil would say.

The three Gethsemani Talks were given in November 1976 at the abbey where Thomas Merton had lived. Father John speaks as a monk among fellow monks about the foundations of meditation and the distractions of busyness by way of contrast to poverty of spirit and purity of heart, often quoting St Paul. He notes that dogmas have become narrowly rational and propositional, when the essence of Christianity lies in the experience of Christ within. This rationalism reflects 'this culture's excessive regard for cerebral activity' over the silence of being and the difficulty - quoting John Cassian – of 'restricting the activity of our mind

to the poverty of a single verse' and involving the discipline of 'unflinching self-surrender': 'becoming nothing, we can become the All.' The third lecture consists of questions and answers – meditation is simple but demanding, and the mantra can gradually take root so that you end up listening to it. It is 'like a plough that goes through your mind pushing everything else aside.'

Word into Silence is a manual for Christian meditation, a path towards union and communion that restores us to ourselves and can lead to inner peace beyond the monkey mind. It opens our hearts to light and life, cultivating attention to the presence within: in deeply knowing ourselves, we come to know God as the ground of our being. There are 12 steps for meditators, drawing on insights from the great mystics as the mantra becomes more deeply rooted so that the Kingdom of God can be established in our hearts as we become aligned to our centre while cultivating 'a recognition of and deep reverence for the other' as the essence of community.

The final book – *Moment of Christ* – was Father John's last work when he knew he was dying – he was letting go rather than hanging on. This series of talks was given prior to sitting together in meditation to 'create a space within ourselves that will allow this higher consciousness... to envelop us in this powerful mystery.' You just need to repeat Ma-ra-na-tha slowly and rhythmically, sitting one-pointedly in silent being, remembering that the axis of Christian life is death and resurrection, moving from the limited to an anchoring in the unlimited and infinite. It is a path of liberation from fear, of freedom and fullness of life, trust, transparency and openness. The practice of silence, stillness and meditation seems to me more and more essential in the chaotic turbulence of outer circumstances - making time for being as well as doing, and for reconnecting on a daily basis with the still centre within us all. John Main is one of the great 20th-century spiritual guides in this respect.

DEATH AND HEALING ON A MEDITERRANEAN ISLE

Nicholas Colloff

■ THE DREAM HUNTERS OF CORSICA

Dorothy Carrington

Orion Books, 1996, 224 pp., €31, p/b - ISBN 978-1-85799-424-7

■ THE GRANITE ISLAND

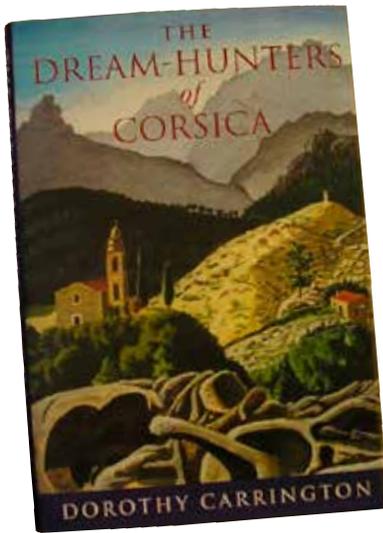
Dorothy Carrington

Penguin Books, 2008, 384 pp., €9.95 p/b - ISBN 978-0-14144-227-3

When Dorothy Carrington first visited Corsica in the aftermath of the Second World War a stranger she met in her first days told her to, "Get away from here before you are completely bewitched and enslaved." It is our great fortune that she ignored the warning, refused to flee, and in her sober yet highly engaged way fell under the alluring spell of 'The Granite Island'.

This was the title of her now classic book – an evocative blend of travel writing, history and cultural exploration. Subsequently, however, at the encouragement of the poet and Blake scholar, Kathleen Raine, Carrington wrote a focused book, 'The Dream Hunters of Corsica' on the more 'esoteric' or 'occult' aspects of that culture, still in evidence when Carrington arrived, if being increasingly occluded by the island's modernization.

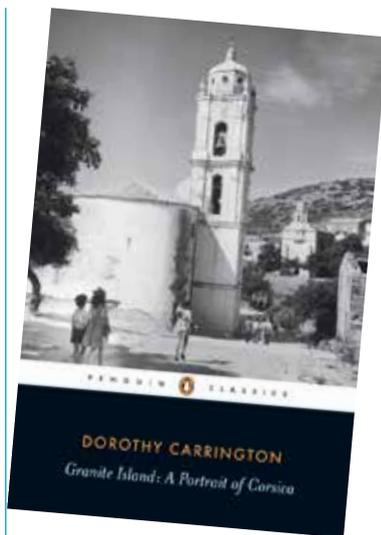
The 'Dream Hunters' of the title are the 'mazzeri'. These are both men and women who are chosen (or mentally infected) usually by a relation to go, in their dreams, on a hunt. Equipped with various weapons - usual and unusual - they track down a wild boar, say, and killing it suddenly see in its face or hear in its death squeal the signature of a familiar person. That person will die within the year. It is not that the hunt is the cause of death simply its precognition but needless to say such a 'gift' is ambiguous. Mazzeri had a complex place in Corsican life - respected yet feared, tolerated but not embraced. Yet within the mazzeri themselves, there was an equalitarian acceptance and social freedom that women especially found attractive in a very patriarchal and hidebound social structure. Most mazzeri embraced their lot, some tolerated it, a few, pursued by the guilt of being fate's messenger, sought escape in an exorcism that often included being rebaptized. Carrington, herself, met two: a woman and a man, and both struck her as impressive people in their own right handling their fate as best they could. Neither thought of it as anything other than a simple,



empirical reality; and, Carrington's sober assessment of the tradition does nothing to suggest otherwise.

Carrington deftly further explores this tradition speculating as to its roots – ancient seemingly by its characteristics before the island acquired settled agriculture – its relationship to engrained attitudes to fate or destiny and the attitude towards it of the Church – ambivalently tolerant and mazzeri were never subject to the Inquisition unlike those accused of the active manipulation of the world in magic or witchcraft. She, also, looks at it most relevant comparator in other cultures, namely shamanism. In this she recognizes similarities – the importance of travel in the imagined, yet real, landscapes of dream or trance and a service, if a dark one, to the wider community. But also, she sees very real differences – though both are often traditions that flow through specific families, mazzeri are simply infected by proximity to a family member who is a mazzeri whereas shamans go through rigorous patterns of initiation following an initial crisis and an extensive training to serve their communities in a wider manner of ways, especially healing.

In Corsica, healing was the prerogative, not of mazzeri, but of a signadori though they sometimes, if rarely, coincided in the same person. This would usually be a woman, less often a man, who had this gift of healing. Sometimes this was simply the knowledge of herbal remedies but often it concerned protecting against the evil eye. For this, you would be diagnosed by olive oil (or similar) dropped in water, the less the oil coalesced, the deeper the problem. The cure would be provided by first holding the water/oil combination above your head or in your hands (in a suitable container) and blessings offered in time-honored prayers/incantations, kept secret by the signadori, and learned by them by heart on Christmas Eve when the Lord's coming keeps all evil



at bay. The oil/water would then be disposed of (as sometimes would be the container depending on the depth of contamination).

Here Carrington notes a common cultural cross-reference for the evil eye, sometimes generated through the envy of the known, sometimes a more diffuse fated miasma – that is widespread. I encountered a notable example when I lived in Macedonia when a friend's sister discovered that her sister-in law was casting 'it' towards her new born baby. It was addressed by going to the Macedonian equivalent of 'signadori' who used melted metal, rather than oil, as their tool of diagnosis. The ailing baby flourished. I have often wondered since how, given the power and ubiquity of envy, do we go unprotected against its (un)conscious ministrations in our 'modern' world – and does it make a difference that such protection is not, or rarely, available?

This brings us to the great unasked question of the book – but a truly important one – if we grant that the experience of both 'mazzeri' and 'signadori' are, more often than not, what they say they were or are – precognition in one case, healing protection in the other – why did the former essentially die out in Carrington's lifetime and the other retreat? Is this simply a question of an occlusion by the change of custom – the modernization of Corsica by which a practiced tradition simply dies out – like that other well-known Corsican habit of vendetta? Or is it that for the practice(s) actually to be possible, we need to live in a world that grants them the possibility? At one cultural nexus, magic is possible, at another it is not (or is more difficult to practice) because our cultural epistemological expectations can actually change what is possible. In a way it would explain much – the past would not be populated by the deluded, attendant to miracles that could not have happened but simply populated by

people more epistemologically open to the possibility of their happening, so they do? The laws of nature would be more like habits to be learnt and possibly unlearned again? It opens the fascinating question as to whether the "occult" has it cycles and what would be their determinants?

Be this as it may, Carrington's books are wonderfully made accounts of a culture – its history and complexity - made more strikingly convincing because Carrington's prose is so sober, straightforward, and realistic (as was the woman herself when I met her). She never idealizes but neither does she condescend. She leaves people's actual experience open to review; and, any explanation is always exploratory, an experiment in knowing, cleaving to people's actual experience, including her own. They are masterpieces of inquiry and account, and deeply recognized by the honors paid to her by the culture she inhabited so courteously.

Nicholas Colloff studied religion and philosophy at the universities of London and Oxford. He is the director of the Argidius Foundation.

PSYCHOLOGY- CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

AN EXPANDED EMPIRICISM

David Lorimer

■ CONSCIOUSNESS UNBOUND

Edited by Edward F. Kelly and Paul Marshall

Rowman & Littlefield, 2021,
515 pp., \$60, h/b – ISBN
978-1-5381-3942-4

In his endorsement of this seminal volume, Alan Wallace states that 'the unquestioning allegiance of mainstream science to the materialistic reduction of mind to brain has caused researchers to ignore empirical evidence that challenges this metaphysical belief.' And in connection with Einstein and quantum non-locality, Heisenberg is quoted as saying 'most scientists are willing to accept new empirical data and to recognise new results, provided they fit into their philosophical framework. But in the course of scientific progress it can happen that a new range of empirical data can be completely understood only when the enormous effort is made to enlarge this framework and to change the very structure of the thought processes.' (p. 119)

These will be familiar observations – even laments - to readers of this journal and supporters of the Galileo Commission. This book is the third in

a hugely significant series originating at the Esalen Institute in 1998 and evolving into the Survival Seminar, or Sursem for short. The original intent was to discuss empirical evidence suggestive of post-mortem survival and this evolved into a more systematic reassessment of materialist metaphysics that has become 'the received wisdom of the opinion elites of all today's "advanced" societies.' This led to the appearance of *Irreducible Mind* in 2007 and *Beyond Physicalism* in 2015. These books, along with the present one subtitled 'liberating mind from the tyranny of materialism' should be required reading for all undergraduates in psychology, philosophy and neuroscience, but it is regrettably doubtful that the faculty will ever have heard of them.

The book is structured in three parts: further empirical horizons, covering near-death experiences, cases of the reincarnation type and precognition; the second part lays out five transphysical theoretical perspectives that could account for the evidence of the first part; then the final part considers implications for science, humanities and philosophy. Edward Kelly provides both an introductory overview and an epilogue. In this way, the book combines field research with theory. David Presti sums up a central message when he remarks that 'a variety of metaphysical systems exist that can accommodate such an expanded science – neutral and dual-aspect and reflexive monisms and analytical idealism among them. We need not let our *assumptions* regarding metaphysical frames limit our capacity to expand a science of consciousness.' (p. 327)

The mechanistic and materialistic thinking that underpins transhumanism and the rapid deployment of technocratic systems regards the human as nothing more than a complex biological machine operating in a dead universe devoid of meaning and purpose. It seems self-evident within this worldview that the brain gives rise to consciousness and that survival beyond death is by definition impossible – I call this the central dogma of neuroscience. This view was not shared by the great 19th century pioneers of psychology and psychical research - William James, Frederic Myers, Henri Bergson and, although he is not mentioned here, FCS Schiller. And despite the dominance of third-person perspectives for over 100 years, the evidence supporting their views has grown, and the authors in this volume arrive at similar conclusions for the same reasons, namely the theoretical inadequacy of physicalism in addressing the types and range of evidence considered here.

Bruce Greyson, Jim Tucker and Bob Rosenberg provide scholarly and authoritative accounts of near-

death experiences, cases of the reincarnation type and precognition along with their implications for an expanded metaphysics and science of consciousness, especially with respect to the shortcomings of the mind-brain production theory. Greyson rightly concludes that 'only when we expand models of mind to accommodate extraordinary experiences such as NDEs will we progress in our understanding of the relationship between consciousness and the brain.' (p. 45) Similarly, after a thoroughgoing analysis of representative studies, Tucker concludes that 'none of the conventional interpretations can adequately explain large numbers of cases' which demonstrates 'the need for a post-physicalist conceptual framework that can incorporate the results into a larger understanding of reality.' (p. 83) Similarly, the chapter on precognition obliges us to reconsider conventional ideas of time, space and causality. Rosenberg arrives at a position that he calls determinationism rather than determinism where free will and an accurately foreseen future are not opposites.

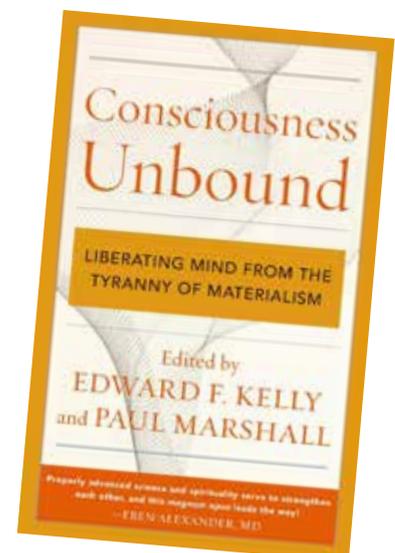
The second part provides a range of different metaphysical perspectives and engages readers in a complex and careful philosophical analysis in arguing for specific positions. In the past decade, as Jeff Kripal notes in his contribution, there has been a move in philosophy towards various forms of panpsychism, which is also reflected here. Roderick Main considers mystical experience and the scope of CG Jung's holism, pivoting round his visionary experience of 1944 and taking into account his discussions of Indian insights into the psyche and the nature of the self in arriving at a formulation of panentheism – this also raises the more general question of the evolution of consciousness in the sense of God coming to know him/herself through human realisation, a theme taken up by Federico Faggin in his chapter entitled *Consciousness Comes First*.

Here he gives a detailed explanation of his theoretical perspectives derived from quantum field theory while reflecting on his own profound experience where he concluded that 'the essence of reality is a substance that knows itself by self-reflection, and its self-knowing feels like an irrepressible and dynamic love.' He notes that this experience contained 'an unprecedented force of truth because it felt true at all the levels of my being' and he has the profound realisation that 'I am a point of view of One.' (p. 285) This changes his world from the inside out. His subsequent discussion is both dense and clear, providing a new conceptual framework of consciousness units with the three fundamental properties of consciousness, identity and agency. The detail provides material for careful study that is impossible to

summarise in a short review. Suffice to say that it advances an exciting new metaphysics that respects interiority, distinguishes between information and symbols, and demonstrates that computers can never be conscious in the sense of understanding.

Max Velmans asks if the universe is conscious in his lucid essay on Reflexive Monism and the Ground of Being. Here he extends his previous work while restating his basic premises in a position that potentially overcomes the challenges of previous formulations of idealism, dualism and reductive materialism, combining first-and third-person perspectives: there is no real separation 'between what we normally think of as the external physical world and what we normally think of as conscious experience.' (p. 185) William James made a similar point in his subtle discussion of rustling trees. Max compares his view with Advaita Vedanta and emerging formulations of cosmopsychism. He steers a careful course between reversion to the ground of being and monadic individualised conscious survival.

Bernardo Kastrup presents his understanding of analytic idealism after reviewing the main problems of mainstream physicalism as well as bottom-up panpsychism, a metaphysics that 'posits spatially unbounded, universal phenomenal consciousness to be nature's sole fundamental ground.' He argues that we and other living beings are 'merely dissociated mental complexes – alters – of this fundamentally unitary universal mind' and that this dissociation unravels at death. From this angle, 'Life – dissociation – may be the way universal consciousness becomes metacognitively aware of itself.' (p. 275) Readers can appreciate some parallels with Federico's views outlined above, and the possibility of consciousness becoming 'unbound'. Glenn Alexander Magee explains in his neo-Hegelian theory of mystical experience that we literally feel



ourselves to be part of the whole and embody a process whereby ‘the whole [Absolute Spirit for Hegel] achieves consciousness of itself.’ (p. 252)

David Presti teaches neurobiology and psychology at UC Berkeley, and in his contribution reviews the back story of contemporary science that excludes the role of mind and consequently blocks the expansion of metaphysical assumptions where there is in fact a mutual enfolding of mind and world and an interconnectivity linking minds across space and time. He suggests five ways forward: adopting a more expansive metaphysical frame, radically expanding empiricism, connecting with fundamental physics, exploring mind-body medicine and placebo effects, and cultivating dialogue with spiritual traditions. Once more, the expansive work of William James comes to the fore, and David wonders if we need a collective spiritual emergency to catalyse the transformation of the physicalist worldview to allow for an expanded science of consciousness.

Jeff Kripal brilliantly summarises and extends the argument of his recent book *The Flip* by taking the kind of paranormal and mystical experiences discussed seriously as relatively reliable access ‘to the actual structure and nature of consciousness and cosmos.’ (p. 359) Such experiences are regarded as impossible within the dominant ethos of the humanities, and yet they lie at the origin of all major spiritual traditions and are now calling us to expand our worldview and reformulate the humanities as ‘the practice of consciousness studying consciousness coded in culture’, a move that brings humanity and human experience back to the centre – and in fact, consciousness also underpins the sciences. In classical Greece, nondual and direct *gnosis* was regarded as a higher form of knowledge, but this is currently relegated into the margins. The overall thrust of this book suggests that it should once again become central, in the process reconnecting ourselves with our metaphysical and cultural roots.

Co-editor Paul Marshall provides a magisterial survey of the metaphysical landscape of mind beyond brain, including a penetrating critical analysis of the philosophical perspectives in the second part while also outlining the importance of CD Broad’s Basic Limiting Principles as limiting restrictions on current ways of thinking. In the context of the quantitative-qualitative property distinction, he raises 14 fundamental theoretical questions for consideration and also advances essential criteria for good theories (pp. 415-420). He then reviews the major philosophical positions, pointing out that they all create their own epistemological and ontological challenges, and showing how

no representations in language can give a complete account of lived experience – a map can never be the territory. He himself recapitulates the arguments of his impressive 2019 book *The Shape of the Soul*, modifying Leibniz’s monadology where ‘each of us is one of these cosmic subjects at a deeper level of self – hence the potential accessibility of these experiences to us.’ (p. 471)

In his epilogue on our emerging vision and why it matters, Ed Kelly argues that physicalism is not only incomplete but also unsound in its anchoring in classical physics – as a philosophical position that is no longer consistent with our deepest physical science (p. 485). We need to move towards ‘some form of evolutionary panentheism’ whereby ‘this universal consciousness or universal self that is the source of the manifest world is in some sense slowly waking to itself.... as evolution of more complex biological forms enables fuller expression of its inherent capacities.’ I agree that this vision is both scientifically defensible and spiritually satisfying while also expanding human possibilities potentials based on deep interconnectedness that entails mutual care and support not only of humans but of the whole of life on our planet. This is undoubtedly one of the most important books of the year and deserves the widest possible readership.

A BRIEF LAP AROUND CONSCIOUSNESS

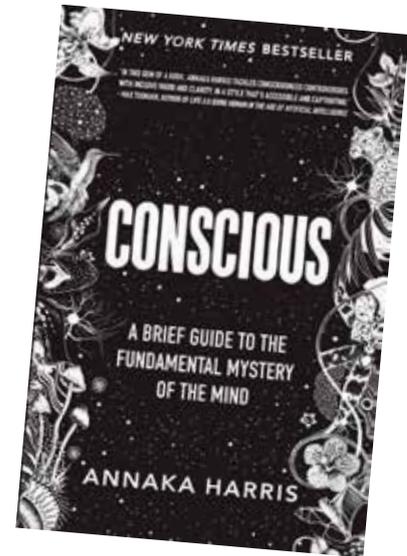
Martin Lockley

■ CONSCIOUS: A BRIEF GUIDE TO THE FUNDAMENTAL MYSTERY OF THE MIND

Annaka Harris

Harper Collins, 2019, 130 pp., \$ 21.99 p/b - ISBN 978-00629-0671-7

The ‘adjectival’ title of this book – *Conscious* – by Annaka Harris is appropriately concise for one of the briefest available books on the subject of ‘consciousness’. Anyone who has written or thought about the subject has in some way been “conscious of consciousness” as “something mysterious” but easily overlooked as ‘tis always hiding in plain sight. What can a student of consciousness say in only 90 short text pages that has not been said before? Something new, or something perennial that bears repeating? Ms. Harris, a New York-based editor, consultant for science writers, and meditator has evidently said enough to put *Conscious*, her first book for an adult audience, on the *NY Times* best seller list (familiar territory for her spouse Sam Harris, a well-known author and neuroscientist). Given this



biographical context on Ms Harris, and the screen saver panorama of the New York skyline that popped up on my laptop, I found myself imagining Ms Harris meditating on the subject of consciousness and using her NY ‘milieu’ to pop out this little book. All credit to her for reminding us of the perennial mystery of consciousness and sharing her thoughts.

Using a blend of background research and interviews, she quotes many of the usual suspects and sources, providing sufficient notes to give the curious reader access to useful literature and ‘general’ sense of familiarity with the field. However, as is often the case in consciousness studies, intractable “hard problem” questions rear up without satisfying answers. While I applaud Harris for asking the perennial questions and giving some interesting, but specific examples, my “mind” (book’s subtitle) drifted to the holistic statement of Emerson that “we lie in the map of immense intelligence.” Implicit in this statement is a rejoinder to “a simple assumption” that Harris claims “most of us make... [that] ... people are conscious; plants are not conscious.” (Her quotes). She admits the simplification, surely only plausible if you define consciousness, intelligence and mind too narrowly. Too many consciousness studies are narrowly human-centric, if not brain centric, and so define ‘conscious’ or consciousness as human self-consciousness or self-awareness.

This excludes the immense intelligence associated with the realms of the subconscious and unconscious, which constitute so much of what makes the biosphere and our own organism tick. Harris recognises the immense intelligence of plants and gives fascinating examples from the work of Daniel Chamovitz and Suzanne Simard, the latter accessible from the TED stage. Given that the biosphere, from microbes to homing pigeons and dogs is shot

through with immense intelligence, are we perhaps asking the wrong questions about the mysteries of mind and consciousness? It is fun to ponder the notion, attributable to Alan Watts and others, that we humans are the universe observing itself, but by definition this is anthropocentric and, overlooks myriad species intelligently observing and symbiotically communicating among themselves and with each other on their own wavelengths. [Don't plants and carbon cycles do their own biosphere observing and reacting?]

Perhaps it is an occupational hazard be anthropocentric, but best to resonate with all other biosphere consciousness of which we are a part, in whose lap we lie. This brings us, logically I hope, to the idea of pansychism and the conscious universe, which Harris appropriately discusses later in the book. But before we go there, we might ponder the assertion by Harris, that the “most basic definition of consciousness” is taken from Thomas Nagel's essay “What is it like to be a bat?” As Harris puts it, what is that experiential “something”? Although this is a question and not a definition, and has not been answered by a human, at least from the perspective of inner bat experience, and I do not quibble with Harris, the question again seems to resonate with the ‘big’ Emersonian intelligent biosphere / intelligent universe perspective.

Experience, whether unconscious, subconscious or conscious is so multifaceted as to boggle the so called ‘mind’ (book's subtitle again) and immense intelligence, on the one hand, and on the other, be daily recognized, consciously and unconsciously by we humans every time we meet another intelligent species. Moreover, as Emerson, intimated the recognition of that of which we are a part is natural and intuitive. So again no quibbles with Harris, just an observation that all human probing and scientific, meditative or experiential investigations of consciousness seem destined to flow, (dare I suggest purposefully?), towards the bigger holistic, universal picture. Regardless of the inspired, illuminating, less-informative, or overly detailed, even ill-conceived studies of consciousness they all contribute dynamically to the big picture, and thanks to Harris for stimulating me to ponder how “my take” resonates with hers.

After asking in Chapter 5 “Who are we? A valid question given the studies that show, as one song lyric suggests, we sometimes “don't even know ourselves” ... babies, infants, illusion-of-self and all that, we come to Chapter 6: “Is consciousness everywhere? Again, I indulge and challenge the “abstract” question: “why is there something to experience rather than nothing?” The answer may

be deceptively simple: one can only experience something, experiencing nothing is surely impossible! Do we only ask such questions to prove there is always “something” and to dispel the ‘silly’ notion that our experience is a delusion? Harris lets British philosopher Galen Strawson answer that it is “silly [to] deny ... conscious experience, the only general thing we know for certain exists.” Jung said the same.

All credit to Harris, and anyone who attempts to plumb consciousness. Such endeavours, one might argue, are among the more important things we humans do. There is hardly a philosopher who has not touched on the subject. In simple terms, human consciousness reaches almost everywhere so we are not just aware of a sentient biosphere: physicists and astronomers see order in the cosmos best labelled as “anthropic” embedding our conscious intelligence deeply the universal lap.

Harris raises the pansychism question of “why we should draw a line” between the consciousness of any entity (from atom to human), and how combining atoms and entities might lead to changes or evolution in consciousness. Good questions, and the global brain and immense intelligence is implied but not mentioned directly. SMN members may be interested to know that Harris considers that despite some detractors, pansychism theories “have been gaining respect.” She cites the famous J.B.S. Haldane that “if consciousness were not present in matter this would imply a theory of strong emergence that is fundamentally anti-scientific” and therefore, in turn, implies at least rudimentary consciousness “all through the universe.” This implies, as Harris suggests, that there are “many more systems that have consciousness,” or as noted above, ‘consciousness’ is not just about human self-consciousness: it includes the whole realm of the subconscious and unconscious.

We have surely known, since Freud and Jung, that these ‘general things’ (*sensu* Strawson) manifest in the human psyche. Put another way, as Harris does in citing Adam Frank's book *Minding Matter*, why “the reluctance of scientists to propose theories ... beyond viewing consciousness as a result of processing in the brain?” Harris suggests proposing otherwise may be “a risk to one's reputation.” Amusingly she cites Frank asking “why does an infinity of parallel universes in the many-worlds interpretation get associated with the sober, hard-nosed position, while including the perceiving subject [consciousness] gets condemned as crossing over to the shores of anti-science at best, or mysticism at worst?” [At least some challenge the tired ‘science good, mysticism bad’ routine!]

Reviewing a book about consciousness helps focus on being “conscious of consciousness,” and it reminds one of the limitations and ambiguities of science, despite the myriad studies that attempt to plumb the mysteries of the field in microscopic, particle by particle detail. It also reminds us of Emerson's memorable characterisation of the pansychic milieu of which we are all part, including Harris and anyone reading her book. With a brief on, and a brief lap around, consciousness Harris helps remind us of the mysterious milieu of immense intelligence.

A HEALING MISSION

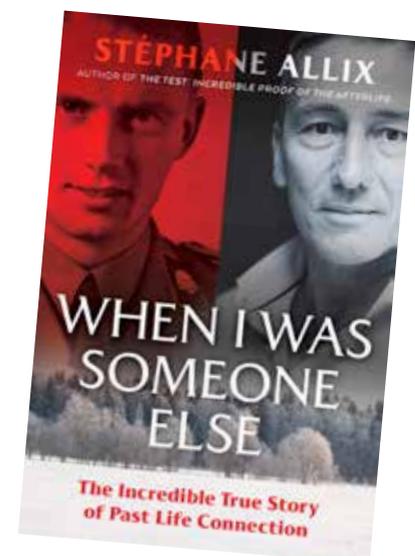
David Lorimer

■ WHEN I WAS SOMEONE ELSE

Stephane Allix

Park Street Press, 2021, 358 pp., \$24.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-080-5

Stephane Allix is a prominent French journalist who is also founder of the Research Institute on Extraordinary Experiences (INREES) which has a magazine, conferences and a TV channel. This book is a brilliantly riveting and intensely moving narrative that sheds new light on the nature of identity and links between human lives. It begins with his waking vision in Peru where he relives scenes of the life of/ as SS officer Alexander Hermann (he immediately knows his name) including a desolate snow scene, fondness for a little girl, lying next to another familiar man by a lake, a scene from Paris, and finally Alexander's violent death with blood spurting from his throat: “He is dead. He is me. His body is my body.” The book is an epic inner and outer journey that ultimately reveals the stunning accuracy of his vision sequence while at the same time vividly depicting the horrors of the SS in Germany and



the Russian campaign. He discovers that Alexander really existed, uncovering a detailed 80-page dossier of his life and subsequently undertaking extensive historical and geographical research.

Through his investigations, journeys and interviews with family members that he tracks down, Stephane discovers that every detail of his vision is true: there was an Obersturmführer Alexander Herrmann, and he recognises from photos he is shown the girl as Alexander's niece and the other man as his brother Alfred; Alexander did spend time in Paris, and his death exactly as experienced took place on October 20, 1941 during the Russian campaign with snow already on the ground. Stephane vividly conjures up the history of the time, and is helped by his own intuitive hunches when on the ground, where synchronicities involving researchers and archivists abound – the writing is vivid and intense, reconstructing critical conversations and expounding historical circumstances in the search for leads. He remarks that 'in posing questions, you run the risk of getting answers. And the responses are capable of having us put our way of living into question' – a situation that applies to himself, although he is in a minority in seriously studying our common existential enigmas. The confrontation with Alexander's presence in Dachau brings him face-to-face with the brutality of death and suffering that calls out for healing.

Stephane consults a number of mediums, all of whom give him evidential information. A sensitive Marie-Pierre Dillenseger suggests that Alexander is part of him, a redirected warrior energy (from dark to light) that is coming back in/to him (Stephane was drawn to spend time as a war correspondent in Afghanistan as a young man) to move forward on the unresolved issue of going beyond violence. Another medium Henry picks up many significant elements from Alexander and sees the connection with Stephane as vibrational, 'the continuation of the mind energy of this person...'. This resonates with Stephane who writes: "I feel at one and the same time that Alexander is part of me and is an entity external to me." There are occasions when Stephane feels that Alexander is intuitively guiding him as an external being but others such as revisiting a childhood haunt when he feels that Alexander is in him. Stephane concludes that 'Stephane and I are not the same man, but emanations of the same consciousness. We are linked by a breath of life that moves through us both and is impregnated by the character and emotions of our two lives; and no doubt many more besides. It was given to me to measure during these months of inquiry that our lives are individual and unique, even though what animates them is eternal. *I am not Alexander*

who returns, but an individual carried by an immortal breeze that passes from eternity into mortal bodies.' (p. 337)

In his book on memory, *The Presence of the Past*, Rupert Sheldrake explains such connections through self-similarity of morphic resonance. And in a personal communication with a friend and former intelligence officer Diana Fynn, Diana explained that her fiancé had been killed in the Battle of Britain and that she had ostensibly communicated with him on many occasions after his death. When he was about three, one of her grandsons began to speak about and draw fighter aircraft, which prompted Diana on her next session to ask if there was any connection between them. The reply was 'a part of me went forward into your grandson.' This intriguing answer suggests both survival and a form/energy of reincarnation consistent with what Stephane describes. This paints a more complex picture whereby, as Ramana Maharshi suggested when questioned about reincarnation, that it is only and always the One Self that incarnates, as Stephane himself proposes, but seemingly with resonances through time.

The chapters around Alexander's death are of searing intensity, exhibiting Stephane's deep humanity and moral courage in relentlessly pursuing his investigations, which many would have abandoned. These SS officers all obeyed orders and thought they were doing the right thing – this kind of unthinking obedience is terrifying and is fuelled by fear, then as now. The conscience is ground down, and Stephane even relives a pitiless memory of gunning down a whole family in a farm building: 'No one resists, no one fights back. Just a mother who holds her infant up so I can take better aim and finish it off on the first shot. Then I finish off the woman.' (p. 226)

In June 1941, Alexander's final and fateful campaign begins. Hundreds of thousands of troops die on both sides as autumn turns to winter and conditions become appalling. The records describe these last days of unimaginable fatigue and hardship, which Stephane vividly recreates by drawing on contemporary journals. He also experiences accurate intuitions in relation to where Alexander's body is buried. He visits the area on the same day that Alexander was killed in similar conditions, experiencing himself as both the dead man and the man who is alive. The final outcome of this existential odyssey is healing, even redemption, a recovery of conscience and humanity. Collectively, this process is far from complete, but I can't recommend this book too highly as an alchemical emergence of forgiveness from guilt, sensitivity from callousness and light from darkness.

SPIRITUALLY TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES

David Lorimer

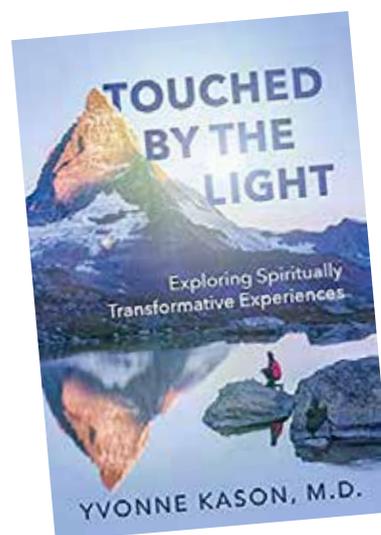
■ TOUCHED BY THE LIGHT

Yvonne Kason MD (SMN)

Dundurn, 2019, 464 pp., £17.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-459745-51-3

Yvonne Kason MD is President and Co-Founder of Spiritual Awakenings International, and Past-President of IANDS, the International Association for Near-Death Studies. In 1990, she was the first Canadian medical doctor to specialise her medical practice in the research and counselling of patients with diverse types of STEs. She is a retired family physician and transpersonal MD-psychologist, previously on faculty at the University of Toronto, with 40 years of experience counselling STE Experiencers. She co-founded the Kundalini Research Network in 1990, and later co-founded the Spirituality in Health-Care Network in 2000. She herself has had five Near-Death Experiences (NDEs), two in her childhood and three in her adult life, as well as multiple Spiritually Transformative Experiences (STEs – a term she herself coined in 1994). Yvonne is therefore uniquely placed to write this ground-breaking book as experiencer, clinician and researcher.

As Ken Ring remarks echoing William James in his endorsement, the book might have been entitled 'The Varieties of Spiritually Transformative Experiences' and is equally ambitious in its scope. The three parts explore definitions of Spiritually Transformative Experiences, a yogic model of consciousness, kundalini and STEs, and the after effects of STEs in terms of spiritual transformation. She herself had a kundalini awakening in 1976



while still a medical student as a time when such experiences were poorly understood, especially in terms of what William James called medical materialism. She could not find a satisfactory explanation for this and other experiences, and so began her research quest not only through study of experiences, but also reading the mystical literature - especially the work of Yogananda and Gopi Krishna.

The first chapter describes her extraordinary brush with death in 1979, when a small plane in which she was travelling as a doctor crash landed and sank in a snow storm into a semi-frozen lake. An inner voice said "Be still and know that I am God" and she was immediately flooded with peace. A part of her awareness remained with her body struggling to swim ashore, but 95% of her focus was expanded and looking down from above, then slipped into a white-light realm and mystical experience - the voice told her to swim to shore, which she just managed to do, and they were lucky enough to be rescued and taken to hospital. This powerful experience that she is in fact a soul living in a physical body results in a psychic awakening. Yvonne then looks in detail at a variety of STEs: mystical experiences, spiritual energy/ kundalini episodes, near death experiences, death watch experiences, after death communications, psychic experiences, and inspired creativity and genius.

She describes the characteristics and phenomenology with many illustrative case histories and people's personal conviction concerning the reality of the divine universal intelligence. Here again, she draws on her own experiences and their powerful aftermath. The most serious was a death NDE in 2003 resulting in a traumatic brain injury and a challenging 12-year process culminating in a miraculous brain healing in early 2016 and a resumption of her former writing and speaking activity. Death watch experiences refer to a number of well documented phenomena around the end of life and death transition - some of these provide highly evidential information, for instance a mother who asked for forgiveness from her daughter, who only subsequently discovered that the mother had been swindled and she had lost her inheritance. The chapter on genius contains fascinating accounts of musical inspiration from Brahms and Wagner.

The second part explains the yogic model of consciousness and kundalini derived from Gopi Krishna and Yogananda, which also involves prana as life energy. Yvonne sees the mystical light as a transformative upper chakra experience, drawing the conclusion that we are 'fundamentally spiritual beings, existing in a multidimensional universe' and here to learn and grow, ultimately

realising and experiencing our oneness with the Spirit/Higher Power, becoming clear vessels for the Divine as exemplified by the great spiritual Masters. This leads into the consideration of long-term spiritual transformation that makes up about half of the book.

The coverage here is comprehensive, looking at patterns of physical, psychological, spiritual and paranormal STE after-effect symptoms and moving on to spiritual emergencies and psychoses while also asking who has spiritual emergencies and why, and giving strategies for living with spiritual transformation and for psychospiritual housecleaning. Many different patterns are differentiated and extensively described, so that readers can home in on parts relevant to their own experience. Physical symptoms may include energy movements, pain, metabolic, sexual and sleep pattern changes, and often result in increased sensitivity. Psychological effects can be positive or distressing, and can lead to tensions and conflicts in relationships, sometimes with apparent past life reverberations. The same applies to spiritual and paranormal after-effect symptoms, with some remarkable experiences and corresponding sound guidance on relevant coping strategies. One extraordinary case involved a 'walk-in' taking over the body of Bill after cardiac arrests during serious heart surgery who exhibited a completely different personality and abruptly walked out on their marriage. Only later does it become apparent what had transpired.

As a clinician, Yvonne was able to guide people through spiritual emergencies, and provides a helpful table distinguishing these from psychosis. She lists predisposing factors, including out of balance lifestyle, over intensive spiritual practice, inadequate psychological housecleaning, excessive greed and ambition, and unresolved conflicts with the God concept or spiritual guilt. She gives helpful strategies for living with spiritual transformation, recommending that we take care of our physical, psychological and spiritual health. Again, she provides detailed practical advice, which will also be useful to fellow practitioners. She regards meditation as the key to spiritual deepening and awakening, devoting a separate hands-on chapter to the topic. The book as a whole is powerful affirmation of a moderate rather than extreme transformative spiritual evolutionary path with a vision of an emerging harmonious planet 'blossoming in mystical consciousness.' For me, at any rate, this is undoubtedly the direction of travel even if the process of emergence proves to be slower and more agonising than we would like.

ECOLOGY-FUTURES STUDIES

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

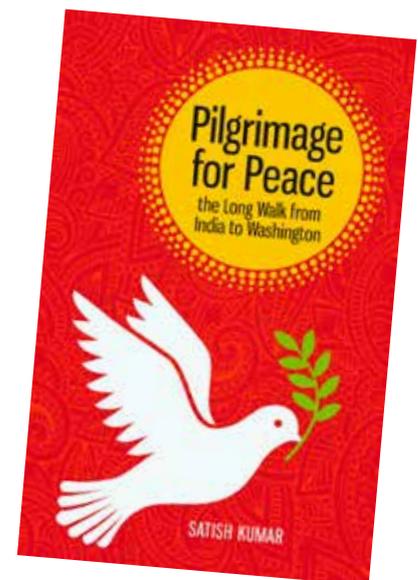
David Lorimer

■ PILGRIMAGE FOR PEACE

Satish Kumar (SMN)

Green Books, 2021, 194 pp., £9.99, p/b - ISBN 978-0-85784-529-0

'Si vis pacem, para bellum' - if you want peace, prepare for war is a Latin adage characteristic not only of the Roman Empire, but of every great power since that time up to present day US and China. Its premise is that humans are not to be trusted and the world is a dangerous place ruled by force and violence, so security is to be achieved through arms and the generation of fear in your enemy. This view is diametrically opposed to the nonviolent philosophy espoused in this remarkable book and captured in a quote from Mahatma Gandhi: 'There is no way to peace, peace is the way.'



The year is 1962. 25-year-old Satish and his friend EP Menon are discussing the fact that 90 year-old philosopher Bertrand Russell has spent a week in prison for taking part in a CND demonstration and refusing to sign a document that he would not do so again. What could they do? They came up with the ambitious idea of a walking peace pilgrimage from Delhi to Washington - 8,000 miles. The first person they consult is Vinoba Bhave, who tells them that the real problem is fear in people's hearts, fear of the other, and that peace must emerge out of love. He advises them to travel without money as peace begins with trust, and their vulnerability will open people's

hearts in terms of generosity and care – which indeed, for the most part, proves to be the case. This will enable them to develop their soul power. 60 years on, the world is still run by force, so the message of nonviolence and peace is as imperative as ever. Moreover, the military has unlimited research funds to channel into science and technology with their mentality of foresight and control in the service of national security – all of which is kept in place by propaganda and fear.

Obtaining visas proved to be a problem on a number of occasions, including when setting out from India, but also in the USSR and the US. Satish and Menon are equipped with four Ms: a Message of peace, a Mission, a Method and finally the Media which generated considerable publicity on a number of occasions. The route takes them through Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, the Soviet Union, East and West Germany, Belgium, France, England, the USA and finally Japan on the way back to India. The walk takes from May 1962 to September 1964, and they wear out eight pairs of shoes in the process. They experience many special places and events, receiving warm hospitality from peace groups along the way. However, they also encounter ordeals that test their resolve and resilience: sandstorms, blizzards, blisters, imprisonment in Paris, and nearly been shot by the manager of a segregated café in the US while trying to have a cup of coffee with our late mutual friend John Papworth. In Georgia, they are given four packets of 'Peace Tea' to deliver to the nuclear capitals. A priest in Smolensk tells them not to judge Christianity by the acts of Christians, but Christians by the touchstone of Christianity: 'It is Christians who have failed, not Christianity.' Ironically, only a few days later, a priest with the Bible in his hand shuts the door on them and refuses to give them shelter: 'I have no room for strangers.'

Along the way, they have many remarkable meetings. In Afghanistan, they meet the legendary Badshah Khan, who tells them that peace and nonviolence are the only way to establish harmony in the world, and that the seed of violence and war is fear and the desire to rule over others (I reviewed a book about his remarkable life quite recently). They have to spruce themselves up for the Shah of Persia, and make special trips to meet Lanza del Vasto and Bertrand Russell in Wales. Vasto reminds them that governments promote greed and exploitation, while the conversation with Russell focuses on war and patriotism. Both Russell and Einstein were supporters of world government, but John Papworth proposes a decentralised reduction in the size of nation states so as to reduce the access to expensive resources for weapons. They hear about the assassination of JFK on

the boat from Southampton to New York, and have their most memorable encounter with Martin Luther King, who was assassinated by the same intelligence forces five years later. King tells them that action must emerge out of our being and that he is an extremist only in his commitment to love and nonviolence as complete philosophy, 'a process, not a product, a journey, not a destination.'

Out of these many conversations and encounters emerges a powerful philosophy of peace: inner peace, social peace, and peace with nature. This is a worthy human calling for us all, and to which Satish has devoted his inspiring and energetic life. I urge you to read this book and make your own inner pilgrimage as you do so, re-committing yourself to the same human, social and ecological ideals, especially since our relationship with nature is now at the forefront in a way that was not the case 60 years ago. However, as Mikhail Gorbachev argued in his recent book reviewed in these pages, we are still under threat from nuclear weapons, and will be shortly from space weapons as the US and China vie for full spectrum dominance. Let us be mindful of the advice of the Russell – Einstein manifesto, also supported by Albert Schweitzer: "Remember your humanity, and forget the rest."

A MOONSHOT GUIDE TO CHANGING CAPITALISM

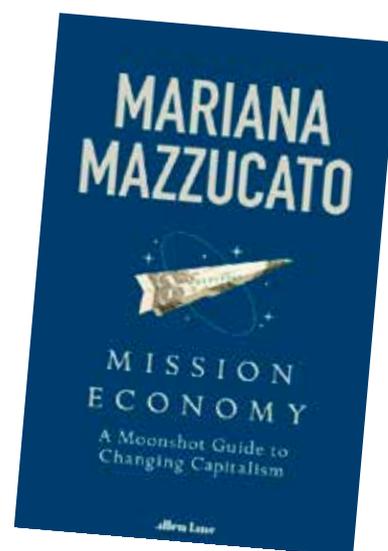
Chris Todhunter

MISSION ECONOMY

Mariana Mazzucato
(www.marianamazucato.com)

Allen Lane, 2021, 245 pp., £ 20, p/b
- ISBN: 978-0-241-41974-8

What I find most encouraging in this book is the firm conviction that when we work together, amazing things are possible. The author calls it Cathedral thinking. At the time the cathedrals were built, although they had many fewer resources than we have and lived in a far more primitive way, they were prepared to put down the foundations for these huge stone buildings without having a programme, a cost plan or even knowing that it would stand up. This requires leadership, long-term thinking, patience and commitment. She links this with Greta Thunberg's superb speech to the EU parliament days after the Notre Dame fire. (<https://youtu.be/BzgOaFspjU>) The main new element in the context of moonshot projects is that new projects have to be bottom up as well as top down; so leadership and ability to listen and participate are essential. Aside from this, the book spells out the nuts and bolts needed to develop public-private projects at scale.



Although Mazzucato was once described by Bloomberg as a Marxist, Mazzucato is very far from that, and what she is most interested in is "how to govern the relationships between the public and the private sectors and how to structure rules, relationships and investments so that all people can flourish and planetary boundaries are respected". Those people who think that everything can be governed by self-regulating markets, like a gigantic machine are simply wrong. 'Markets need to be embedded in culture, not culture in markets' to quote Karl Polanyi.

As always with any writings which touch on the economics sphere, Mazzucato begins with an account of current bad theory and bad practice. Many readers will join with me in a concern about inequality of race, gender and wealth; exploitation of the planet, excessive greed, pollution, species extinction and all the other ills we are all too aware of. The sense is, though, that these ills have come about due to faulty thinking, faulty attitudes and faulty assumptions. Faulty thinking not just by a few individuals, but throughout our Government, academia, business, finance and – yes you have to admit it – among ourselves. We are all economists.

As the author puts it, the wrong question is: how much money is there and what can we do with it? This is the common mind set. The right question is: what needs doing and how can we structure budgets to meet these goals?

She goes on to spread out the lessons from the Apollo moonshot programme.

In thinking about the key attributes of the Apollo programme, six stand out: (1) vision infused with a strong sense of purpose; (2) risk - taking and innovation; (3) organisational dynamism; (4) collaboration and spillovers across multiple sectors; (5) long - term horizons and budgeting

that focused on outcomes; and (6) a dynamic partnership between the public and private sectors.

Of course, the Apollo programme was driven by cold war competition with the USSR, without which it would never have happened, but the thrust of the book is to look at how these lessons can be applied to the grand challenges of today; the seventeen UN Sustainable Development Goals. Usually, this type of flexibility and concentrated purpose only arises in wartime conditions, when military organisations are given autonomy from Government bureaucracy. So the question is how current industrial strategy and linear production models can be reformed to enable collaborative, purposeful action at scale?

Here the question of the interplay of competition and co-operation is important. Public discourses around free markets are based entirely on competition; the survival of the fittest, creative destruction and so on. I am reminded here that Darwin published, among others, two seminal books: “On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection . . . in the struggle for life”, which is mostly about natural selection by competition, and “The Descent of Man, and selection in relation to sex” which takes a different and much neglected approach of selection by female preference. Naturally enough, Mariano Mazzucato would prefer the latter which includes the emotional intelligence of the feminine - a preference for harmony and beauty.

Part 4 of the book contains the meat of how capitalism needs to be reformed through encouraging the collective creation of value by partnerships. Also spreading a notion of money which recognises that it is created as a tool to oil the wheels of production and trade, not as a tyrant. The misuse of ‘economic rent’ (land rents, monopoly rents etc.) as a means to extract value from the overall economy is rightly condemned, although rent seeking is so ingrained in the thinking of financial professionals that one might despair of change in this sphere. The author calls out the way that laws around patents, (intellectual property) have been co-opted by the interests of large corporations so that the original purpose of patents, the encouragement of invention, has been subverted and they now act to restrict innovation instead. Knowledge needs to flow.

Most important, in Mariana Mazzucato’s view, more attention has to be paid to relationships. Her ‘mission’ approach always starts by finding and listening to key people and questioning how the relationships between actors can be made to work better and how their capabilities can be used. There is

real experience behind these assertions. She has established a team at University College London called the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose. It appears that in several parts of the globe they are succeeding in bringing about change, in redesigning institutions and disturbing the composure of the neoliberal economics profession, who are so set on scarcity.

In her concluding pages, she pays tribute to the women scholars who put life at the centre of the economy, not the economy at the centre of life. Hannah Arendt’s work on the public life, Elinor Ostrom on creating community via the ‘commons’, Kate Raworth and Ellen MacArthur on the circular economy, Stephanie Kelton on Monetary Theory and Carlota Perez on the possibility of a golden age.

Is it that the power of the feminine, emotional intelligence, will save the world? I hope so.

Chris Todhunter is a retired architect now teaching and learning economics at the School of Economic Science

FACING ADVERSITY

David Lorimer

■ CHOOSING EARTH

Duane Elgin (SMN)

www.duaneelgin.com

Self-published, 2020, 210

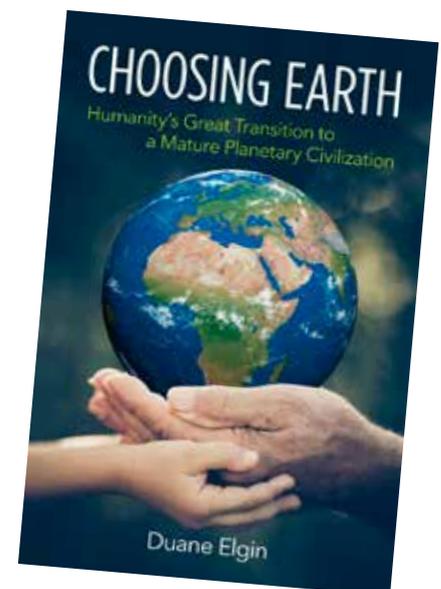
pp., \$12.99, p/b – ISBN

978-1-7348121-2-1

The title of my review comes from the film corresponding to the book and which reflects our collective evolutionary challenge on which Duane has been working since the 1970s when he was a senior staff member of the Presidential Commission on the American Future. Already at that time, he thought that the 2020s would represent the beginning of the crunch point, and here indeed we are facing the implications of systems and trends that we ourselves have co-created as a planetary emergency: ‘we have reached the limits of the Earth’s capacity to sustain our current trajectory of growth’ and are confronted with an ecological and evolutionary wall that demands a conscious choice for regenerative living on the Earth. This book provides both a vision of a possible Great Transition towards a mature planetary civilisation as well as a warning of what is highly likely to happen if we fail to choose this in a timely manner by developing a new sense of species identity. For this, we need to go long, wide and deep, looking squarely at prospects for breakdown and collapse due to ecological overshoot and the relentless momentum of business as usual devoted to further consumption and economic growth.

I think Duane is right when he envisages three possible scenarios: 1) chaos, crash and collapse; 2) authoritarian control with artificial intelligence (the WEF Great Reset); and 3) great transition and transformation. Clearly, the third scenario is the most desirable and corresponds to the more decentralised vision of the World Social Forum. The next part analyses probable stages for the Great Transition based on eight drivers: global warming and climate disruption, water scarcity, food scarcity, climate refugees, species extinction, world population, economic growth/breakdown, and economic inequities. He sees the 2020s as the recognition of crisis involving a great unravelling, the 2030s as collapsing civilisations, the 2040s as a fire of initiation involving extinction and upheaval that create the necessary pressure to foster a great awakening during the 2050s and beyond – this all makes for grim but realistic reading that extrapolates existing trends and demands radical collective action, perhaps coordinated by extensive electronic town meetings. The reality is that the sustainable carrying capacity of the Earth is between 2 and 4 billion people with European lifestyles. I felt an anticipatory grief at these prospects and a residual hope that we can change from inspiration rather than desperation. One technology held out for the 2060s is large-scale geo-engineering to limit global warming, but this kind of weather modification is already illicitly in place – see www.geoengineeringwatch.org and their new film *The Great Dimming*.

These scenarios closely match the visions of Chris Bache in his *LSD and the Cosmic Mind* where the evolutionary pressure has to ramp up before we achieve a breakthrough involving healing, reconciliation, restoration and creative adaptation.



This is in fact what we need to do now, as Vandana Shiva and others have been arguing for decades. Duane presents seven foundations of the great transition: turning towards aliveness and drawing on indigenous wisdom, waking up, growing up, reconciling, communicating, building community, and choosing simplicity. This begins with a radical overhaul of the idea that we are separate beings living in a dead and meaningless universe towards 'a relational world infused with aliveness' and realised in immediate experience. Quantum physics and holistic science are filling out this picture of an interconnected universe becoming conscious of itself as a learning system. This gives rise to kinship, empathy and compassion with a wider and deeper understanding of mutual responsibility rather than passive acquiescence in relation to the status quo. Reconciliation and community will be important at every level within a circular economics based on aliveness and well-being rather than consumption and growth. Duane makes specific suggestions for individual action based on the question: 'what can we do to bring our collective lives into alignment with the regenerative needs of the Earth?' An important component is to hold our institutions accountable in also working towards this goal.

As things stand at present, the immediate future seems to be going in the direction of authoritarianism and control as represented by the Great Reset, which see Covid as a huge window of opportunity to accelerate this process involving 5G smart city technocracy and biodigital convergence, as I have written elsewhere. Huge financial power and resources are driving this agenda, and our profound challenge is to reimagine and implement the great transition envisaged here. The same AI technology is being applied by the military to warfare, while there remains the ever-present danger of nuclear weapons. This book along with many others shows that analytical diagnosis is easier than formulating the specifics of a collective way forward, especially when current world institutions are not taking on these existential challenges as a planetary emergency, dominated as they are by vested national interests and outdated ways of thinking. Another key element, in my view, is a re-orientation of the agricultural and food systems towards health and regeneration, biodiversity rather than monoculture. Being fully informed is a crucial first step, and you can go to www.choosingearth.org to download a PDF copy and become part of this essential creative process of reimagining and implementing a truly humane and sustainable future.

GENERAL

HIDDEN HISTORIES

David Lorimer

■ THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE WEST

Nicholas Hagger (SMN)

O Books, 2005, 600 pp., £16.99, p/b – ISBN 1-905047-04-5

■ THE SYNDICATE

Nicholas Hagger (SMN)

O Books, 2004, 446 pp., £11.99, p/b – ISBN 1-903816-85-8

■ THE SECRET FOUNDING OF AMERICA

Nicholas Hagger (SMN)

O Books, 2007, 334 pp., £14.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-79028-952-6

■ THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE WORLD

Jonathan Black

Quercus Books, 2010, 603 p., £12.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-85738-097-5

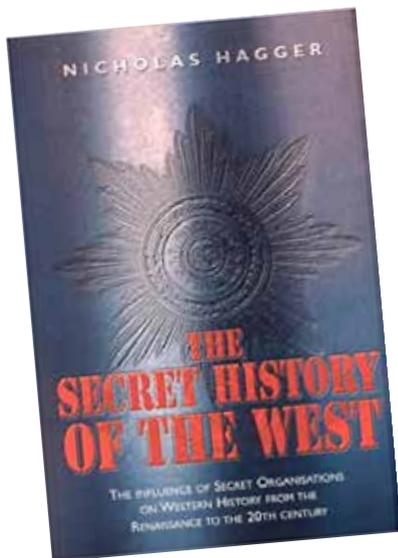
Nicholas Hagger is largely unacknowledged as one of the great writers and thinkers of our time. His prodigious literary output of nearly 60 books is based on his vision of the fundamental unity of the universe and of humankind, which he calls Universalism. This impacts on seven disciplines: literature, mysticism, history, comparative religion, philosophy, international relations/statecraft and culture, and his writings also extend to epic poetry and drama as well as autobiography. The last books of his reviewed in these pages were connected to a world constitution and a form of democratic world government. Jonathan Black works in publishing and this particular book has sold over half a million copies and has been followed by a *Sacred History of the World*, which I have just ordered. His focus is on imagination, esotericism and the evolution of consciousness. The reason for reviewing these books at this time is to gain a historical perspective on groups orchestrating or at least helping to steer current world events. The combined length of these books is over 2,000 pages, which only enables me to highlight some key spiritual and political themes related to the mission of the Network at the interface between science, spirituality, mysticism and esotericism.

Some of Nicholas's work covers the rise and fall of civilisations in relation to the laws of history as they mirror our

moral, spiritual and social development originating in experiences of the Light and going through cyclical stages of 'genesis, growth, arrest of growth, breakdown, renewal, decline, decay and demise' through progressive secularisation. Since the appearance of Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* in 1917, major work has been conducted in cultural history by Arnold Toynbee, Pitirim Sorokin, Fernand Braudel and others, and the question now facing us is where we are in this process and what choices we have before us. In addition to Nicholas's books reviewed here, he has also written *The Secret American Dream* (2011) *The Secret American Destiny* (2016), and is currently working on another volume to bring the story up to date. The first book tells the story of the influence of secret organisations on Western history and especially on the genesis of revolutions, from the 13th to the mid 20th century. The second volume focuses on powerful groups and families forming what he calls the Syndicate, arguing that it is money and oil – along with technology and globalisation – that have driven events towards a New World Order and 'Great Reset'.

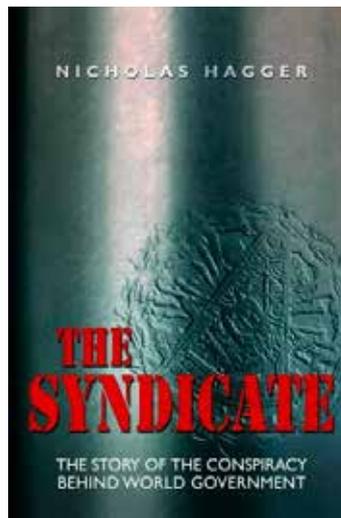
The scope of these books is sweeping and I think their overall arguments and analysis compelling in the light of the extensive historical evidence presented. The Protestant revolution as a whole was a (heretically driven) response to the hegemony of mediaeval Catholicism, and provides the first case study of Nicholas's revolutionary dynamic that requires a heretical occult inspiration with corresponding intellectual and political expressions followed by physical consolidation. The Puritan Revolution includes the Rosicrucian revolution, Oliver Cromwell, the rise of science and a further Rosicrucian revolution under William of Orange. The second part – Towards a Universal Republic – tracks Masonic influences on the American, French, Imperialist and Russian revolutions, which constitutes a real historical eye-opener. The sobering process is the corruption of early idealism when stepped down to political expression, whereby the driving process towards a better society tends to end in massacres due to violent means, as has been the case from the French Revolution onwards, where head is divorced from heart, and reason from compassion. The ideals of universal brotherhood, love and liberty run the risk of degeneration towards totalitarianism, subordinating the individual to a tyranny (p. 293) – more on this below.

For both authors, Francis Bacon plays a pivotal role. As early as 1579, he inaugurated a Rosicrucian fraternity based on the Knights Templar with a 9 degree ceremonial. This was based on



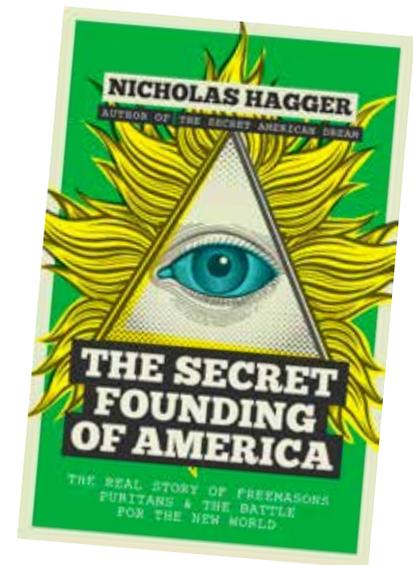
the Advancement of Learning (also the title of one of his books), ethics instead of creeds, philanthropic goodness instead of credulous belief, brotherly love in place of hatred – he coined the term *philanthropia*, which was also expressed in his hugely influential *New Atlantis*. For fear of persecution by dogmatic Christianity, this ‘invisible college’ agreed in 1617 to maintain total secrecy for 100 years until 1717, when Freemasonry was officially launched – and one of its expressions was the founding of the Royal Society in 1660. Key figures were also grandmasters of the Priory of Sion: Robert Fludd, 1595–1637, J Valentin Andreae (Author of the 1614 Rosicrucian manifesto), 1637–1654, Robert Boyle 1654-1691, and Sir Isaac Newton 1691-1727. The point is that these men were all occultists and alchemists as well as scientists, with an interest in both spiritual experience and scientific experimentation. This Rosicrucian fraternity had three aims: abolition of monarchy and substitution by rulership of the philosophic elect (cf Plato), reformation of science, philosophy and ethics, and the alchemical discovery of universal medicine, all leading to ‘the great instauration’ where human mastery over nature is recovered.

Jonathan Black discusses magic in terms of the capacity to manipulate matter, a dynamic taken over by science and technology and including the refinement of intelligence through access to altered states by means of initiation. If esotericism represents imagination as the great creative force and mind before matter, scientific materialism inverts this perspective to insist on the priority of matter as reality. These two inner and outer/subjective and objective facets are represented by Shakespeare and Bacon, who Peter Dawkins strongly argues were the same person (*The Enigma of Shakespeare*). Significantly, Jonathan observes that the world of Shakespeare



is the world of human values, while the world of Bacon is one where human values have been stripped out and gives rise to very different patterns that ultimately need to be harmonised as complementary aspects of the whole, one focusing on the structure of experience, and the other on the structure of the world.

As explained by both Nicholas and Jonathan, a central figure influencing both the French and American revolutions was Adam Weishaupt (my dictation system put ‘vice heart’!) who founded the Illuminati in 1776 and, in the same year with Mayer Amshel Rothschild, The Order of the Perfectibilists. He was also initiated into French Grand Orient Freemasonry in 1777, which he subsequently infiltrated with his own members. His aims were subversive and revolutionary: abolition of government, private property, inheritance, patriotism, religion and family, all in the service of world government and the achievement of wealth and power. The hierarchical cell structure involved surrendering individual judgement and will, as well as spying on each other. Lucifer becomes the revolutionary archetype, the light bringer represented by the Enlightenment embodied in freedom, reason and a deism that rejects a personal God. *The Secret Founding of America* – also as the ‘New Atlantis’ - shows the influence of Weishaupt via Benjamin Franklin, especially in relation to the design of the Great Seal with its unfinished pyramid, all-seeing eye and inscription *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, the ancestor of the New World Order. Nearly all the founding fathers, including Washington, Jefferson and Adams, were Enlightenment Deists and advanced degree Freemasons (as were the French philosophes), while Freemasonic principles were applied to the federal political structure and the design of Washington – Franklin Roosevelt, a 33rd



degree Mason (see List of Freemason Presidents p. 188) used the same design on the dollar bill.

Freemasonry continued to play a revolutionary and often divisive role through the 19th and 20th centuries, intertwined with the corresponding finance that included not only central banks but also philanthrocapitalist offshoots such as the Rockefellers and more recently Bill Gates, who alchemically transform money into power. Communism as the realisation of Weishaupt’s agenda was instigated by 32nd degree Freemason (and Satanist) Karl Marx and Fellow Templar Grand Orient Mason Friedrich Engels, while Bakunin, Mazzini (originator of the Mafia), Garibaldi, Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin were all Masons (mostly 33rd degree). The American Civil War was carefully orchestrated, principally by 33rd degree Mason Albert Pike (p. 382), and the assassination of Lincoln by 33rd degree Mason John Wilkes Booth was carefully plotted. Pike was a Luciferian, where Lucifer is what Jesus called the Prince of this World and acts as the God of Freemasonry – a secret apparently only revealed to those beyond the 30th degree (SFA, pp. 185-6). The hidden hand of all the revolutions discussed is Freemasonic: the ringleaders were able to operate in secrecy with confidence that their fraternity would not betray them – indeed there were and are severe penalties for doing so. (p. 470) If all this sounds quite incredible, the supporting detail is to be found in the books, along with the financial and political intrigue.

The endpoint of all this activity was envisaged as either a revolutionary communist one world empire or a world federation of states, both variants of Baconian utopianism and Freemasonry’s Universal Republic. Nicholas defines a revolution (SHW, p. 355) as ‘a sudden, violent transformation in society when

its civilisation's religion is challenged by secularising progress. Societies can progress at the same time that civilisations decay.... Secularisation is progressive, but actually accelerates the decline and decay of civilisation, while bolstering human conditions... the hope is to bring about change by violent means to bring in a new order by destroying those who stand in the way.' As he emphasises, there is a radical difference between a spiritual and occult vision (SHW, p. 378). In the first, the self opens to the divine, the One, and channels divine energy, representing a force for good. In the occult vision, 'the self psychically contacts and controls the darkness of Luciferian energy that it manipulates to advance its worldly power – as a force to promote self-interest, to harm others', replacing God with Lucifer and imposing rather than surrendering their will, power over rather than power with.

During the 20th century there emerged what Nicholas calls sub-Masonic secret societies, all of which have urged world government: the Round Table dating from 1909, the Royal Institute of International Affairs 1919, the Council on Foreign Relations 1921, the Bilderberg Group 1954, the Club of Rome 1968 and the Trilateral Commission 1972. Almost all of the most politically and economically influential people in the world belong to one or more of these bodies, and their overall vision is one of a top-down world government of self-interested control and all-seeing eye of technological surveillance courtesy of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. On the other hand, global democracy is rooted in political universalism 'that sees all mankind... in terms of the spiritual and metaphysical One, which pervades all religions and unifies the universe. Our current situation presents us with us a stark choice between two New World Orders, 'one in the revolutionary image of Lucifer and one in the spiritual image of Christ.' (TS, p. 283) And while science and the Silicon Valley mindset assume that materialism will remain the dominant philosophy until the end of time (Black, p, 540), for the esoteric perspective, materialism is a stage to be transcended in a wider and deeper worldview that marries cleverness with wisdom, ushering in an ultimately human rather than inhuman future. Steiner warned that Ahimanic mechanistic thinking was bent on the denial and elimination of our spiritual component and moral conscience. By contrast, 'intuition is transformed intellect that perceives the spiritual beings as real.' (p. 543)

Jonathan Black reminds us of another possible direction of travel – Gandhi's force of truth as soul power, integrally

relating inner spiritual principles with political action, as also embodied in our time in the work of Satish Kumar and Vandana Shiva. Gandhi believed that 'soul power could deflect the greatest military power, because the intention behind an action could have a greater and more widespread effects than the action itself.' (p. 536) On the final page of this book, Jonathan reminds us of the 'qualities that great writers, yes, poets but particularly the great novelists who are steeped in esoteric philosophy, have focused on and helped to evolve: empathy, sympathy, intelligence of the heart, intelligent care for others, being slow to judge, tolerance, decency, probity, moral imagination, moral courage.' (p. 577) These are what make us truly human, qualities that we derive from the Light and are required to translate from metaphysics into ethical politics.

A BOLD EXPOSURE

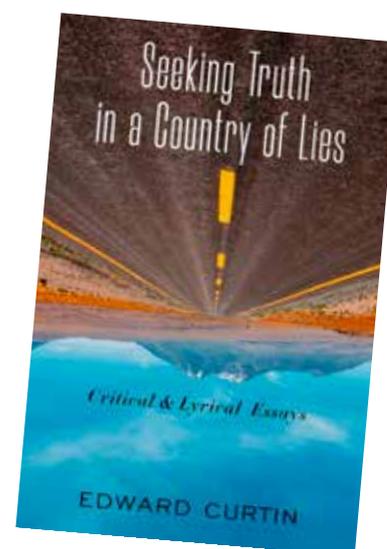
David Lorimer

■ SEEKING TRUTH IN A COUNTRY OF LIES

Edward Curtin

Clarity Press, 2020, 350 pp., \$18, p/b - ISBN 978-1-94976-226-6

Edward Curtin ('from a young age obsessed with truth, death and freedom') is one of a number of courageous writers including Douglas Valentine, Robert F. Kennedy Jr, James Douglass and David Ray Griffin who systematically take the lid off the nefarious, ruthless and manipulative role played in US politics by the CIA. He is also inspired by Albert Camus, who 'tried to fight injustice while extolling life's beauty and the human search for happiness.' This deeply humane volume of over 40 essays and book reviews is beautifully and incisively written, ranging over a wide field, both existential and political. It makes especially significant reading in the run-up to the 20th anniversary of 9/11 in highlighting the lamentable shortcomings of tight-lipped mainstream investigative journalism that refuses to question the integrity of official reports for fear of being labelled conspiracy theorists. By 2004, Curtin was convinced (like David Ray Griffin) that the U.S. government's claims (and *The 9/11 Commission Report*) were fictitious: 'they seemed so blatantly false that I concluded the attacks were a deep-state intelligence operation whose purpose was to initiate a national state of emergency to justify wars of aggression, which came to be known euphemistically as "the war on terror." The sophistication of the attacks, and the lack of any proffered evidence for the government's claims, suggested that a great deal of planning had been involved.' (p. 55) [and see his recent essay *Second Stage Terror Wars at*



<https://off-guardian.org/2021/05/16/second-stage-terror-wars/>

The key political events of the 1960s cascading down to our own time are the CIA-sponsored assassinations (for challenging the interests of the 'military-industrial-financial-media intelligence complex that rules America to this day') of JFK, RFK, MLK and Malcolm X, all of which are meticulously documented and exposed in a number of Curtin's book reviews. He maintains that 'we live in the era of massive fraud where the transnational wealthy elites, led by the American war and propaganda machine, continue to try to convince the gullible that they are saviours of humanity even as they lie and cheat and murder by the millions.' This is a strong claim but it is extensively backed up in what follows. If we turn a blind eye to what Thomas Merton called 'the unspeakable' (Matthew Fox told me that he too was probably assassinated) then we become complicit – the only noble response is to exhibit a redemptive courage. In his 2005 Nobel Literature Acceptance Speech, Harold Pinter (quoted) caustically observed "*It never happened. Nothing ever happened. Even while it was happening it wasn't happening. It didn't matter. It was of no interest. The crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very few people have actually talked about them. You have to hand it to America. It has exercised a quite clinical manipulation of power worldwide while masquerading as a force for universal good.*"

Jacques Ellul observed that propaganda deception and the public's proclivity to believe it and obey are reciprocal. Curtin writes (p. 18) that 'today's propaganda is anchored in the events of the 1960s, specifically the infamous government assassinations of JFK, Malcolm X, MLK, and RFK, the truth of which the CIA has worked so hard to conceal. In the fifty or so years since, a vast

amount of new information has made it explicitly clear that these murders were carried out by elements within the U.S. government, and were done to silence the voices of four charismatic leaders who were opposed to the American war machine and the continuation of the Cold War. To turn away from this truth and to ignore its implications can only be described as an act of bad faith and culpable ignorance, or worse.' Official reports are accepted at face value while 'the power of the oligarchic, permanent warfare state' has only increased and anyone who questions this line is a conspiracy theorist (a weaponised term invented by the CIA in the 1960s). The political system works to prevent change, and every president has been complicit, including Obama, who told CIA Director Panetta that he would 'get everything he wanted' (p. 21): 'since we know that every president since JFK has refused to confront the growth of the national security state and its call for violence, one can logically assume a message was sent and heeded.'

For the peace activist Daniel Berrigan, 'a human being is a child of God, and as such is called to resist the rule of human death-dealing in the world, to resist violence with love and non-violence. A human being is a lover. This means that a human being is necessarily at odds with the powers-that-be, the governments and corporations that, in the name of peace, prepare for and wage war. It is a view of human being that is bound to be unpopular, more likely to be affirmed with pieties than contradicted by actions.' (p. 37) People like him are frequently excoriated in their lifetimes and celebrated after death – the government that assassinated MLK

created a special national holiday in his honour...

On a more lyrical note, Curtin writes about the importance of silence and poetry: 'silence, like so much else in the present world, including human beings, is on the endangered species list' in a society 'suffering from socially induced attention-deficit disorder.' He asks if we shut up long enough to listen to what the silence might reveal? And without poetry, he writes, we are dead: 'Poetry is the search for truth. It marries outer to inner. It probes reality with words. It suggests, states, intimates, inviting the reader to raid what was previously unspeakable. This exploration is composed of ideas, images, and words arranged in ways that engender powerful emotions and thoughts. Like life, a poem swims in mystery.....true poetry startles. It inspires. It enlivens. It is a distillation of the human spirit, as essential as bread. It is composed of a few simple ingredients, as is bread. They are: the real, actually existing, outside world, and us; the outside world that we are in and that is in us, and our emotional thoughts about our condition. Flour, water, and yeast. The bread rises, the poem forms. (p. 83)

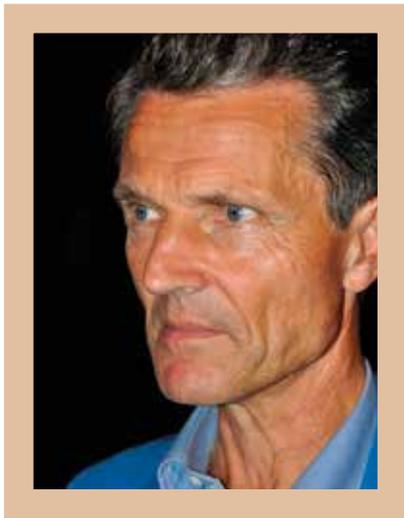
In the interests of space, I will highlight only one further significant theme: our embrace of instrumental logic and technical reason where 'the theology of technological "progress" operates according to the law of can do, will do', an 'innately amoral' position which 'has caused many of the problems we seem unable to remedy. These include environmental catastrophe, high-tech wars, GM foods, drone killings, drug addiction, biological and nuclear

weapons, to name but a few.' (p. 111) Unlike Camus with his knowledge of Greek thought, we are culturally unaware of hubris and limits, always justifying the Promethean crossing of a new frontier. Now, however, we face potentially terminal existential challenges as a result. Curtin invites readers to think the unthinkable beyond consensus reality and linguistic mind-control as promoted by Edward Bernays in his classic book on propaganda: 'It is impossible to overestimate the importance of engineering of consent. The engineering of consent is the very essence of the democratic process. It affects almost every aspect of our daily lives.' Even the engineering metaphor is indicative and we are seeing its daily operation.

We need to wake up from this consensus trance of technical efficiency where, as Ellul put it, 'for every problem caused by technology there is always a technological solution that creates further technological problems, ad infinitum.' We are engaged in a battle for minds and even souls through technological perception management – Curtin's courageous and outspoken voice invites us to think the unthinkable and reminds us of what makes us essentially human: it is a call to escape from the high-tech trap of permanent busyness and speed. Living faster is not living better, so take a moment to slow down – advice I need to heed myself. Here is Curtin's last word: 'Rhythm, melody, and movement: from these, life is born and sustained. They are also integral to art—music, writing, painting, sculpture, dance...they lie at the heart of spiritual experience, as breath is the inspiration that carries us along.' I urge you to read this outstanding book.

Delphi, September 2021 by Athena Potari





David Lorimer

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

BOOKS in BRIEF

SCIENCE- PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

■ Journey to the Edge of Reason – the Life of Kurt Gödel

Stephen Budiansky

Oxford 2021, 255 pp., £20, h/b.

This is the first major biography of the logician and mathematician whose Incompleteness Theorem has had such far-reaching effects whereby certain propositions, although true, are not provable within the axioms of that same system, as earlier thinkers had maintained. The book draws on voluminous unpublished letters and writings, including a shorthand diary, to create a sensitive and penetrating portrait of intellectual brilliance allied to personal insecurity and psychological instability that ultimately led to Gödel's death. He was close to Einstein while they both worked at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. The early part of the book paints a vivid portrait of the leading characters in the influential Vienna Circle at the time of the rise of the Nazis, and it seems that Gödel was known to his family as Herr Warum – Mr Why - for his endless curiosity. His highest aim is 'pleasure of cognition', and I felt the author had through his own lack of knowledge in the field missed the real significance and influence of Goethe in this respect as there is also an aesthetic component to cognition. What really interested Gödel was conceptual foundations. Wittgenstein and Popper also make appearances.

There is an interesting discussion of his relationship with Bertrand Russell, who regarded Gödel as an unadulterated Platonist while his own approach was much more Aristotelian. Some laconic extracts from his notebooks convey a clear impression of his metaphysical views

about the rationality of the world and the potential further development of human reason. However, he also maintains that there are other worlds and rational beings, 'who are of the other and higher kind.' He thinks that the development of human thought since the Renaissance has been thoroughly one-sided, and states that materialism is false, adding that religions are for the most part bad, but not religion itself. His argument for an afterlife (p. 278) is a rational one, which he takes to entail that our earthly existence is a means to an end for another existence, and he finds it exciting that there might exist truths forever beyond human reach. An engaging read, both on a personal and professional level.

■ Deep Reality

Doug Matzke and William Tiller

Waterside Productions 2020, 386 pp., \$18.95, p/b.

This ground-breaking book describes what the authors call Source Science going beyond classical systems and proposing that our quantum minds 'exist independently of and interact with our individual brains' as very special antennae or transceivers mapping hyperdimensional mind into three dimensions. This understanding recognises the spacelike entangled nature of thoughts, meaning and emotions dynamically connected through the law of attraction. The structure is conversational even if the content is at times highly technical, although there are helpful summaries at the end of each chapter. The premises are bold, recognising the significance of extended nonphysical human capacities and differentiating these from artificial intelligence, partly through an emphasis on the heart. There are extensive discussions on the nature of thoughts, bit physics, emotions, feelings, memory, subtle energy, intelligence, time, meaning, healing and transcendent states; there are also more than 50 pages

of glossary definitions, which are especially helpful in explaining new terms such as correlithm meaning correlational algorithm. Refreshingly, nothing in physics and metaphysics is off-limits, but the treatment of psychoenergetic phenomena is highly rigorous.

The basic propositions are set out with exemplary clarity, and criticism of the limitations of scientific materialism is systematic. The authors point out that if brain and mind are in fact distinct, then our models and research will need to be radically reinterpreted. The scope of their discussion and points of reference is extremely wide and well referenced and they highlight the role of intention in shaping the creative dynamics of life. The final part considers Source Science and the future in pursuing the future of technology in terms of quantum models involving Supermind and Superheart where science and spirituality come together in an expanded understanding of the human that recognises the reality of other cosmic beings. Encouragingly, visions of the future bring in a heart-based culture that overcomes our current negative patterns even if this seems pretty challenging in current circumstances. In this sense, our collective goal by 2030 could be formulated as creating a more compassionate planet rather than succumbing to dystopic fear-based systems of mechanistic control.

■ Paradigm Shift

Martin Cohen

Imprint Academic 2015, 206 pp., £14.95, p/b.

Although this stimulating book was published six years ago, its content is timely in raising issues related to the handling previous SARS outbreaks and the debate around climate change. The thrust is that scientific claims are presented as objective fact, while they are inherently rooted in human subjectivity and historically conditioned social structures, political fashion and even short-term economic self-interest. Cohen takes his cue from Thomas Kuhn and especially Paul Feyerabend in questioning expert opinion and warning against excessive orthodoxy and group-think, especially where science merges with propaganda, as we have seen over the past year. Progress is almost always accomplished by questioning consensus orthodoxy. In a series of wide-ranging chapters on issues in science, medicine, homoeopathy, neuroeconomics, cosmology and even synchronicity, the author begins with what we are supposed to think, followed by a statement of 'what you're not to say.'

We need to remember that expert opinions do keep changing, for instance on evolutionary theory and the practice of lobotomy in psychiatry. The chapter on inexplicable diseases highlights profits made from the fear factor, showing how previous virus scares have just failed to take off in the way that we have just seen, despite dire warnings from many experts, including Neil Ferguson. There is also a danger in identifying a single explanatory theory rather than considering multiple factors, complex systems, feedback loops and variable contexts. The author takes a sceptical view on global warming, especially as a political orthodoxy, and his arguments and related evidence are worth pondering in this contested field: 'science' is not monolithic, nor does it have a monopoly on rationality. The final chapter considers paradigm shifts more generally, reminding the reader of Sir Karl Popper's notion of falsification and the theory-laden nature of observation. New ideas are suppressed because they are necessarily subversive of existing basic philosophical commitments, as Kuhn pointed out – the author concludes that 'science is a historical, piecemeal and fallible process of gaining limited knowledge of the world' which is necessarily open to debate and revision.

■ Hard to Break

Russell A. Poldrack

Princeton 2021, 214 pp., £20, h/b.

Subtitled 'why are our brains make habits stick', this is a fascinating update on neuropsychological research, some of which necessarily impinges on philosophy in terms of agency. The author regards the brain as 'a habit building machine' (note the mechanistic metaphor) and even uses phrases such as 'the brain exerts control', which tells you something about scientific habits of mind. The first part explains the nature of habits in relation to goals and reflexes, with an emphasis on trigger and response, also involved in reinforcement learning. The author describes the role of dopamine in building habits, as well as that of the basal ganglia in the reptilian brain. Habits are embedded in routines, and also enable us to perform skilled actions unconsciously. It seems that the ancient battle between habits and goal-directed behaviours reflects the competition between different brain systems involving the whole notion of willpower and self-control. It turns out that levels of self-control are strongly correlated with the ability to form good habits. Addictions illustrate the transition from impulsivity to compulsivity that apparently relies upon many of the same mechanisms as habits, but supercharged by dopamine.

The second part considers the science of behaviour change, particularly relevant in terms of current public health policies, of which giving up smoking is a classic example, though addictive substances are routinely incorporated into foods through research into brain neurochemistry. The author discusses various possible strategies for behaviour change, including the architecture of choice, loss aversion and framing, formulating rules, intervening in trigger warnings and training inhibition. We will all recognise what he calls the intention-behaviour gap. There is also work going on in memory modification, although this and other 'hacking techniques' are open to abuse and one should be wary of such phrases as 'precision medicine', an extension of the engineering metaphor. The epilogue was written during lockdown and I found it surprising that the author made no mention of highly effective behavioural psychology techniques employed over the last 18 months to induce fear and compliance – with such success that social behaviour will in all likelihood be fundamentally modified going forward. However, he is right to highlight the challenges posed by our impact on the environment to which his field may have a significant contribution to make.

■ Nonscience Returns

Brian J. Ford

Curtis Press 2020, 302 pp., no price given.

This is an updated edition of the book first published in 1971 as a scathing critique and parody of the way in which scientists dedicated to the search for truth have been largely replaced by opportunistic and arrogant experts claiming exclusive intellectual authority and dedicated to their public image and media exposure. They tend to use jargon and buzzwords such as 'smart' and are mainly men. Governments claim to follow expert scientific advice, but in the case of the current crisis, such experts are largely beholden to pharmaceutical financial interests, and competing views are censored and removed – there is no open public debate, as would be normal in science where disagreements are normal. Data can be selectively used to substantiate claims, and conformity is the order of the day. The table on page 22 contrasts intellect with memory, originality with conformity, heterodoxy with orthodox methodologies, and integrity with circumspection. The chapters that follow explain how to become an expert and the corresponding training process and career path, including how to get published, how to impress your colleagues and acquire letters

after your name, how to get into the press and how to become famous. A lot of this rings only too true, and is tellingly illustrated in a provocative controversial fashion drawing on many fields of enquiry (see table on pp. 214-5). Readers will find plenty to agree and disagree with in this stimulating and heavily ironic book.

MEDICINE-HEALTH

■ Spirituality and Wellbeing

Edited by Bettina E. Schmidt and Jeff Leonard

Equinox 2020, 248 pp., £26.95, p/b.

This valuable interdisciplinary volume is a significant contribution to the study of religious experience and health, especially given rising interest in both spirituality and well-being and their overlap. The initial broad definition of spirituality is 'that which gives meaning, value and purpose to a person's life', which makes it central to well-being, as a quotation from The Dalai Lama emphasises – where happiness is mutual and based on love and tenderness. The introduction gives a very useful elaboration of the dimensions of spirituality and the various disciplines in which it is reflected, while the first chapter provides further critical analysis. An interesting leitmotif throughout the book is the tension between spirituality and spiritual experience on the one hand, and training in secular biomedical materialism on the other, which tends to pathologise such phenomena and make them difficult to talk about.

The contents are very diverse: Chris Roe writes about clinical parapsychology at the interface between anomalous experiences and psychological well-being. There are chapters on the Christian understanding of the body, spirituality and well-being in China, two chapters on the psychospiritual process involved in AA, another two chapters on cultural differences and similarities between Brazil (where 79% consider themselves religious) and the UK, and a contribution using autoethnography to explore the spirituality of epilepsy. Self-care emerges as an important theme, and is related to self-transcendence, authenticity and social belonging. I particularly enjoyed Becky Seale's chapter on Buddhist practice and the person-centred approach to counselling and psychotherapy, where she links her own spirituality of compassionate presence (Rogers uses the term 'unconditional positive regard') and deep listening to her professional work that itself becomes an aspect of her spiritual practice – including the embrace of suffering and mutual presence in the moment. This

volume will be of particular value to psychiatrists and psychotherapists.

■ Burnout – A Spiritual Crisis

Stephen G. Wright (SMN) –
www.sacredspace.org.uk

Sacred Space Publications 2021 (2010),
97 pp., £11.95, p/b.

Although this profound reflection is written within the context of the caring professions where the challenge of burnout has been intensified over the past 18 months, the existential implications are universal. Burnout is associated with extreme stress and exhaustion where we are brought to a dead stop and are unable to continue. Something has to change when we have reached the limits of our capacity to cope. Stephen writes from both professional and personal experience with a real sense of concern and compassion, illustrating his narrative with pertinent case histories while also using figures to identify the extent of the issue within a managerial, box-ticking culture that also entails strain on relationships – over-giving while under-receiving (p. 39) His most important insights relate to burnout as a spiritual crisis – 'what burns out is only the everyday self, the soul cannot burn out.' It does, however, recognise our true calling.

Stephen lists signs and portents of burnout while also providing useful self-assessment exercises and practical suggestions in a series of R's: retreat, reconnection, recollection, reflection, re-visioning, recovery, right relationship – all of which involve soul care, support and the realisation that 'we are essentially loved and lovable and worthy as we are.' (p. 67) I think he is right to identify burnout as a spiritual problem in terms of meaning, connection and purpose – loss of connection with the Source. All this becomes evident in his own story related in the Afterword where he discovers that 'who we think we are is not necessarily who we really are.' (p. 79) We are 'human belongings' as well as human beings and we thrive most in connection and collaboration; at a deeper level we can recognise 'our mutual I-Amness.' This is a wise and poignant work.

■ The Green Fuse

Hilary Mifflin (SMN)

Matador 2021, 355 pp., £15.99, p/b.

Subtitled 'our deep connection with the power of plants', this inspiring book describes Hilary's fascinating journey after experiencing 'feelings of supreme well-being' while following the Breuss Diet – a 40-day herbal cancer cure that initiated a profound inner process through reading Jung's autobiography with its emphasis on dreams – she

includes a number throughout the book. Its deeper message is that the decline in the medicinal use of plants from the British Pharmacopoeia between 1864 and 1993 – an incredible 522 entries – is symptomatic of the loss of traditional knowledge held by indigenous tribes and the corresponding alienation from nature as we have developed a mechanistic and pharmaceutical approach to medicine and health. Central to the narrative is the story of her house and garden at Chevenoz in the French Alps of Haute Savoie, where she not only created a herb garden but also developed a range of products including tinctures, dried herbs, infused oils and incenses – a deeply satisfying process. Hilary explores the use of herbs in major world healing systems and their central concepts of connection and balance, as well as the continuing role of herbal medicine within a holistic context with an energetic basis.

She devotes a chapter to important ideas and influences, including Edward Bach's flower remedies, Goethean science and Steiner, Alexander von Humboldt and Maria Thun's biodynamic calendar – also courses at Schumacher College. She delves more deeply into shamanic traditions with their embodied modes of perception transcending the boundaries between inner and outer. The garden comes vividly to life for the reader, especially in appreciating the rhythm of the annual cycle, all this beautifully illustrated. These rhythms are also shamanic in connecting with seasons, sun, moon and planets, and the principles of 'expansion and contraction, birth, growth and death.' (p. 195) Traditional festivals are aligned to this cycle. The energy of life corresponds to the spirit of creativity, strongly present in this book and in the author's drawings of the Green Man as well as her beautiful quilts and wood carvings. This energy is also vitalism, derided by mechanistic orthodoxy that sticks within its self-limiting boundaries.

Hilary devotes a chapter to plant profiles that include shamanic journeys to the spirit of different plants, but also details for cultivation and of therapeutic uses. These include Lavender, Juniper and Rose and lead to a deeper energetic insight and sense of connection, joining head and heart, science and spirituality, objective and subjective. Hilary remembers what we have forgotten as a culture and opens up different levels of existence and meaning that are also integrating healing avenues reconnecting us to soul, spirit and the beautiful planet on which we live. Her story embodies an ecological spirituality with expanded human capacities that also unfold resonantly in the reader.

■ Emotional Repatterning

Lisa Samet ND

O Books 2021 (John Hunt), 131 pp., £8.99, p/b.

Lisa Samet has a background in naturopathic medicine so it was a huge challenge when her son was diagnosed with leukaemia and had to be treated conventionally, an episode she describes in the first chapter of this very helpful book. While NLP and CBT can provide effective relief, they are limited in addressing only the conscious mind rather than underlying subconscious beliefs, memories and habits that drive our behaviour. Insights from neuroplasticity indicate that we can in fact change these deeper patterns, but our education system provides us with very little emotional wisdom and training. The central part of the book considers stories around key themes such as self-love, acceptance, responsibility and regret, sharing many examples of how it is possible to rewrite the inner narrative and transform its significance. Our challenges can be regarded as precisely what was required to develop our individual capacities and character. We can ask ourselves what lessons we learned and how we were able to grow. Self-reflection is also central to reinterpreting life history, for instance in relationships. Readers will recognise themselves in many of the stories, which can form a starting point for our own self-liberating reinterpretations.

■ Live Longer, Live Younger

Dr Rajendra Sharma

Watkins 2021, 318 pp., £14.99, p/b.

This book is nothing less than a Bible for designing a personal plan for a long and healthy life. Dr Sharma the author of *The Family Encyclopaedia of Health* and brings an amazing clinical research base to this new book. The basics are simple, as he sets out: eat well, exercise, avoid bad habits, be happy. We need to work out elements of our lifestyle that might require some modification by understanding the way our bodies work and the impact of various factors on our overall health and well-being in a system dominated by drugs and surgery. The author explains the various factors involved in ageing before moving on to basic knowledge of the body and key factors, also including adequate sleep and supplementation. There are then detailed chapters on diet and nutrition, exercise, detoxification, minerals, cell function, the heart and arteries, the nervous system, hormones, the immune system, and other systems and organs. This enables readers to home in on specific items and corresponding treatment regimes. The chapter on the immune system is of particular relevance

at the present time, including as it does specific anti-viral supplemental programme closely corresponding to the protocol issued by the American Association of Physicians and Surgeons - <https://aapsonline.org/CovidPatientTreatmentGuide.pdf> - that has prevented 85% of hospitalisations and deaths through early treatment intervention. These approaches have been censored in favour of vaccines. Look no further for a comprehensive guide to healthy ageing.

■ Curing the Incurable – Beyond the Limits of Medicine

Dr Jerry Thompson

Hammersmith 2021, 448 pp., £14.99, p/b.

This book about what survivors of major illnesses can teach us very much complements the book above. The approach is empirical, looking at what works, with an emphasis on cancer. The starting point is a study by H.D. Foster of spontaneous remission in 200 cancer patients, over half of whom were metastatic. Results showed that 87.5% had made major dietary changes and 56% had used some form of detoxification, eliminating tobacco, sugar, meat, alcohol, chocolate, white flour, milk, tea and coffee. The book is in four major parts, beginning with changing your diet, then moving on to the healing power of your mind, minimising toxicity and maximising energy. As the author points out, our food has become progressively adulterated and our environment more toxic. The chapter on the power of the mind is very well informed, dealing with the beliefs, attitudes, expectation and the use of affirmations and relaxation techniques, while also seeking appropriate support and releasing trapped emotions. The discussion of toxicity explains how to reduce your exposure and release toxins, while that on energy focuses on different levels – including thought as energy – and its role in healing. The book contains much sound advice for the maintenance of health, and is an invaluable resource for those facing more fundamental health challenges.

PHILOSOPHY- SPIRITUALITY

■ Why We Are Restless

Benjamin and Jenna Silber Storey

Princeton 2021, 252 pp., \$27.95, h/b.

As indicated by the subtitle, this culturally significant book engages our quest for contentment through the genealogical lenses of four French moralists – Montaigne, Pascal, Rousseau and Tocqueville – each of whom lived in different centuries in a

cascading process of influence through changing circumstances. Although there is historical progression in terms of ideas, it struck me that the differences between these four men are also temperamental, which is bound to influence one's conception of happiness. Each of these figures features on standard French literature courses, and I reviewed a major biography of Montaigne in these pages a number of years ago. The notion of flourishing is by definition related to one's understanding of the nature of the human being, which has been metaphysically contracted over this period, corresponding to the rise of materialism and consumerism.

The basic question is how we should live. Montaigne answers the question by aspiring to enjoy the human condition, which the authors call 'immanent contentment' or moderation through variation, where one achieves a certain balance and enjoys life in the moment. This has a lot to be said for it in terms of what Charles Taylor calls affirmation of ordinary life. In the time of Pascal, the ideal was the 'honnête homme', but he regarded this as a rather superficial in relation to the essential spiritual quest. Rousseau was influenced by both men in criticising the bourgeois ideal and in sentimentally immersing himself in nature. Tocqueville's famous work is about democracy in America in the 1830s, where the ambitious pursuit of happiness lies at the origin of the Republic and democratic individualism. He remarked that American society is all middle-class and observed a people 'restless in the midst of their well-being' – which is still the case in our time. So, paradoxically, seeking worldly contentment leads to widespread discontent, notably where the depth dimension of being has gone missing and the 'web of permanence' has been dissolved – the soul is now naked.

The conclusion on liberal education and the art of choosing is revealing, encapsulated in the graduate question: law school or a PhD? Gifted young people with an excess of options are concerned about 'spending their chips' and investing their potential in a particular course of life, yet this is essential: converting 'the hazy but infinitely promising *might be* into a definite and limited *is*' and striving to remain as long as possible in the condition of stem cells. (p. 177) The 'misère' identified by Pascal and Rousseau 'is an enduring sign of the mismatch between the kind of happiness we pursue and the kind of beings we are' in terms of self-transcendence – to lose one's self is to find one's Self – and our susceptibility to distraction and diversion hides this very 'misère'. It is here that our

four moralists have a great deal to contribute to our own consideration of 'the framework of abiding questions that structures human life', and indeed it was Pascal who said that we did not know how to sit still and were therefore subject to distraction and anxiety. I would add that we each need to find our own still centre, which has to entail some form of regular spiritual practice, giving our day a rhythm of withdrawal and return, contemplation and activity. This study is a rich resource for reflection.

■ From a Mountain in Tibet: A Monk's Journey

Yeshe Losal Rinpoche

Penguin Life 2020, 256 pp., £11.65 h/b.

Anne Baring writes: This book tells the harrowing story of a young boy's escape with his older brother from Tibet, after the Chinese invasion of 1959. It chronicles the unfolding of his life after that devastating experience of loss and pain. Living at first in India and then in America where he succumbed to the excesses of life there, he decided to become a monk, guided by his love and respect for a Tibetan spiritual leader and for his brother. Now in his seventies and Abbot of Samye Ling monastery in Scotland, he has told the story of his life and his profound and inspiring response to its many challenges. His book is the deeply moving story of a remarkable man's journey to wisdom, compassion and a meaningful life. I could not put it down.

■ The Black Madonna

Annine van der Meer –
www.pansophia-press.nl

Pan Sophia Press 2019, 437 pp.,
(289 illustrations), no price given.

This is an extraordinary overview and guidebook to the Black Madonna that includes short descriptions of 450 Black Madonnas in France – there is even one in my village church. Annine began her studies with the great Gnostic scholar Prof Gilles Quispel and has since made an in-depth study, as is evident from more than 100 notes and references following each chapter. She explains the symbolism of black and its association with the earth, chaos, night and descent into underground caves along with the historical evolution of the Black Madonna. There are associations with many folk tales and legends, megaliths, Celtic tribes, Mary Magdalene and especially the Romanesque era. The Virgin Mary represents the idealised White Madonna, but the Black Madonna is more ancient and primal, associated with both darkness and light as well as Sophia and Wisdom – also connecting the visible with

the invisible. Many sites, including Chartres, were associated with pre-Christian shrines and sacred places. Indeed, the name Chartres comes from *Car* or *Carn* meaning holy mountain. There are Black Madonnas in the crypt, preserved from the 1194 fire (she is wearing a crown of oak leaves, sacred to the Druids), and another in the main cathedral. Then there is Notre Dame de la Belle Verriere (1150), which also represents a Black Madonna, while Mary Magdalene representing the Black Madonna was known as Notre Dame de Lumiere.

A whole chapter is devoted to the Black Madonna and Mary Magdalene, who gave rise to many such statues in the south of France where she taught, even though some were whitewashed (!) or have just disappeared. Annine illustrates the closeness of Mary Magdalene with Jesus depicted in a statue from Foix where she is seated on the left of Jesus at the Last Supper, and there is a stained-glass window of them together in Limoux. Later this year, Annine's major book on Mary Magdalene will be published in English and she is giving us a webinar in October. The study continues into the 11th century Romanesque period and the later Gothic cathedrals dedicated to Notre Dame, which Annine interprets as the Triple Great Mother in her white, red (bride) and black aspects. There is a special connection between Mary Magdalene and the Cathars, who recognised her as the wife of Christ and whose main text I believe to be the *Gospel of the Beloved Companion* that purports to be the complete Gospel of Mary Magdalene, where the Spirit is feminine. All this heralds an era of potential spiritual awakening, especially to the Divine Feminine. A vital and definitive reference work.

■ Ensoulment

Natalie Zeituny – www.nataliezeituny.com

Self-published 2018, 229 pp., p/b,
no price given.

This is a book of remarkable spiritual and cosmological insight based on the author's own unfolding deep purificatory process of what she calls ensoulment, 'the entering of the soul into life, into your life, in this very moment' with a corresponding development of sensitivity and a healing journey towards an expanded version of manhood and womanhood. The book will speak to individual readers in terms of their own life journeys through the stages of waking up, soullessness (the dark night), alchemy and relational entanglement, soul becoming, and entering into and expressing the Soul of the World. At a certain point, our soul asks us

where we are going and whose life we are living in a call to depth and authenticity. Natalie's own story of stepping out of corporate life is riveting as she describes her two archetypal aspects of the modern mystic and the wild woman, each of which demands expression and which are brought to life in an incredible love story of integration on the basis that 'we live in a universe that is constantly learning from each one of its creations' in terms of rippling experiences and autopoietic feedback loops. Indeed, experience is the basic cosmic creative unit animating the fabric of the universe (p. 162) in a similar way to Whitehead's more formal notion from of panexperientialism. We are also called to 'digest, transmute and integrate darkness for the benefit of cosmic evolution.' (p. 57) A central challenge is to return to the intelligent integrated heart, especially in view of the progressive mechanisation and technologisation of our existence in a devouring dualistic supremacy that exports human intelligence to matter and creates the risk of soul death (p. 183).

Natalie explains that 528 Hz is the love-frequency to which we need to attune as an upgrade of the Earth's operating system with its structure of 12 essences forming a Council: Light and Darkness, Mother and Father, Energy and Vibration, Consciousness and Love, Beauty and Technology, Time and Earth, with the Soul of the World in the centre. The process involves essence evolving through form and form through essence inside soul spaces. We are especially subject to Dark Essence at this time, but this represents our evolutionary learning challenge (p. 75) in creating a New Earth Consciousness and a New Earth Leadership Network while also upgrading and healing intimate relationships: 'the Soul of the World O/S is continuously upgrading and fine-tuning towards a better version of herself....the cosmic O/S has an inherent intelligence propelling it towards higher levels of beauty, novelty, and complexity soulful-essence-based living networks' (p. 139-40) This is our real hope.

The basic premise is that 'we are all one and we are the universe' expressing itself in a reciprocal personal-collective-cosmic field where each reality includes multiple elements, relational positions and processes generating experiences. This dynamic cosmic vision is perceptively elaborated in the final chapters and deserves our serious study as 'a sophisticated, self-generating, self-observing, and self-furthering life form.' In this context, 'time is perceived as the memory of experience, while space is the intensity of experience' in five realms flowing in

and out of each other from universal to personal and back again. We are still in the process of developing collective consciousness as an essence, and our experiences create vortices of attraction through repetition involving ‘expansion and evolution of all essences and souls through experience’ towards becoming a generative whole. Such a profound spiritual-scientific understanding is vital for our time and the very nature of our future depends upon it – how genuinely intelligent are we capable of being at this time?

■ In STEP with Quaker Testimony

Joanna Godfrey Wood

Christian Alternative 2021, 74 pp., £6.99, p/b.

The STEP in the title stands for simplicity, truth, equality and peace - principles at the heart of Quakerism and in the writings of Margaret Fell (1614–1702), who was the wife of George Fox. The book explains the background of Quakerism in terms of ideas and practice before considering the four main themes. There are extracts from the writings, followed by adaptations, ideas and notes, highlighting particular themes such as the simplicity of silence and stillness, light as truth, equality of ministry, personal peace, and striving for peace in the world. There is a challenging directness and inner focus that ‘can speak to our condition’ in our journey towards wholeness, where we are all still works in progress.

■ In Praise of Ageing

Carmel Shalev

Watkins 2020, 191 pp., £10.99/ p/b.

Subtitled ‘awakening to old age with wisdom and compassion’, these reflections are divided into four sections – reality, vulnerability, identity and meaning – with individual chapters on feelings such as illness, retirement, worry, regrets, friendship, elderhood, courage, freedom and joy. This is a journey we all take, so our approach and attitude are critical to making the most of the challenges of life in changing circumstances. Books like this all the more important in giving value to the ageing process in a youth culture that has little respect for life experience and wisdom. We are responsible for our life narrative, which we are also free to change. At any point, we can bring awareness into the present moment rather than preoccupy ourselves with past and future concerns; we can also learn the value of acceptance while remaining proactive and engaged in life – ‘becoming in interrelationship.’ Our friendships are tremendously important and require their own

cultivation, especially in the light of our limited time on earth. The author advises that ‘we need to trust to ourselves and our ability to meet what life offers with kindness, compassion, calm and joy’ – which is a matter of ongoing practice in response to our common human condition. Forgiveness and inner freedom are closely related, and we always have the opportunity to treat life as a whole as a form of spiritual practice that also happens to be the best preparation for death.

■ Women of Ideas

Edited by Suki Finn

Oxford 2021, 311 pp., £9.99, h/b.

This book features 29 interviews from the podcast Philosophy Bites with leading women philosophers, beginning with an interesting chapter on what it is like being a woman in philosophy – following in the footsteps of the likes of Mary Midgley, Iris Murdoch, G.E.M. Anscombe and Simone de Beauvoir. Just under 30% of philosophers in UK universities are women, the lowest outside STEM subjects but still a considerable improvement on previous times. The coverage is wide and rigorous across a huge range of subjects such as the status of animals, blame and historic injustice, civility, trustworthiness, philosophy in Africa, Hume and Buddhism, and Merleau-Ponty on the body. Two chapters I found of particular interest were Onora O’Neill on medical consent and Mary Warnock on philosophy in public life. There has been a move from implicit to explicit consent and of particular relevance to current context is the Nuremberg code formulated after World War II and stipulating that consent implies that there has been no coercion, deception, or manipulation, all factors present in current vaccine mandates. Mary Warnock’s thoughtful piece draws on her experience of chairing government commissions, where she observes that we need to distinguish between our gut reactions and whether something is actually harmful – philosophers in the House of Lords are also well placed to exercise its function of scrutinising legislation. A highly informative volume.

■ Finding Zen in the Ordinary – Stories and Reflections

Christopher Keevil

Mantra Books (O Books) 2021, 93 pp., £7.99, p/b.

This is a wonderful bedside book consisting of 48 brief stories, prose poems, dialogues with a Zen teacher and moments of awakening where we see the extraordinary in the ordinary, sensing stillness beneath the surface noise:

*Little thoughts ripple
Then subside.
All is vast and quiet....
Wide open space.
Aware.*

Simplicity, directness, healing, insight, sharing, light, peace, presence – highly recommended.

■ Firebird

Alexander Schieffer – www.trans-4-m.com

Home for Humanity Press 2017, 125 pp., no price given.

This is a work of extraordinary power and eloquence, echoing the prophetic voice of Rumi for our time. Aptly subtitled ‘a poetic journey of awakening the inner fire’, the book takes the reader on a transformative rollercoaster through the processes of evocation, initiation, involution and elevation to find and express the authentic voice of the soul. The style is laconic and the engaged reader is fully caught up in the alchemical momentum as the heart opens to abundant overflowing and we are challenged to love ‘when bombs fall/ when women are raped’ – a nightmare from which we need to awaken in order to give birth to a nourishing new culture ‘costing not less than everything’, as T.S. Eliot put it: ‘becoming essential/ is the call of our time’, realising our oneness and wholeness in union and action, ‘fully surrendered/ to life’s flow’ and suspended in stillness so as to access our deepest knowing: ‘become a living temple/ made of light/ with arms so wide/ that you embrace/ the world/ as one.’ We are seeking the Beloved, but the Beloved is also seeking us – we can rise passionately and courageously from the ashes while also plumbing the depths of life ‘fully exposed/ immersed in oneness/ rising, living, dying/ every day.’ I specially loved his poem on the garden birds (p. 95) where, exquisitely,

*‘each chirp
each whisper
is a blessing
how rich these days
of silent presence
wordless stillness
when garden
birds and soul
are all but unborn notes
in life’s one song.’*

The last poem asks who will remember these truths? These are universal and, as Albert Schweitzer remarked, like fruits on the tree in each summer, they need to be re-expressed in every generation. This is just such a potent expression for our own time.

■ Everything is Your Fault

Rajan Shankara (www.rajanshankara.com)

O Books 2021, 146 pp., £10.99, p/b.

Readers might balk at the last word in the title of this book, in which case you can substitute responsibility – which appears in the subtitle. This is the story of spiritual transformation from and exploitative, aggressive drug dealer to meditating monk and beyond. The story begins with a police encounter where the author was sure he was about to be arrested, but the officer says that he trusts him, which is enough to precipitate a radical transformation and re-orientation. We are indeed responsible for our thoughts and emotions, which are then mirrored in the outer world. The narrative weaves reflections and aphorisms with autobiography involving considerable disciplined practice, especially during his time in the monastery. The author draws some pertinent thoughts from a book written by Robert Speer in 1917 about the philosophy of excellence. He applies these lessons on leadership during his transformative process involving deeper self-discovery and meditative practice. He discusses the nature of energy management and the role of willpower, especially during the dark night of the soul. The overall philosophy of the book is summed up on the final page: ‘Responsibility and discipline create purpose. That purpose creates drive. That drive is willpower and creates one victory after another after another. This is self-mastery. This is the path of evolving through challenges... living like this creates wisdom.’ In this sense, the path is more one of masculine Yang, although it also involves surrender of the ego.

■ Letters to a Young Poet

Rainer Maria Rilke – translated by Anita Barrows and Joanna Macey

Shambhala 2021, 108 pp., \$14.95, h/b.

First published in 1929, three years after the death of Rilke, this is a book I have been meaning to read for many years, and it is indeed a classic on art, solitude, sexuality, reciprocity and the experience of understanding life. The young poet to whom these ten letters are addressed was a 19-year-old cadet in the year of the first, 1903. Rilke encourages Franz Kappus to go within, to love his solitude, to trust the ripening creative process, to protect his inner life and his capacity for subtle perception. Famously, he should ‘have patience with all that is unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves, like closed rooms, like the books written in a foreign language.’ He reminds the reader that everything has to be lived, including the questions, and in

this way we can gradually live into the answers. The next sentence is rarely quoted, but important in my view: ‘perhaps you bear within yourself the capacity to imagine and shape of sacred way of life.’ (p. 34) The essential arises from the depths within in what Jung would call individuation. Rilke also has beautiful thoughts about learning to love, which he says is not about merging: ‘it is a noble calling for the individual to ripen, to differentiate, to become a world in oneself in response to another....the love that consists of two solitudes that protect, border, and greet each other. (p. 56, 60)

■ The Art of Celtic Seership

Caitlin Matthews –
www.hallowquest.org.uk

Watkins 2021, 194 pp., £12.99, h/b.

Caitlin is a world authority on the practice of Celtic spiritual traditions and the author of over 80 books and card decks. The meaning of the word ‘seer’ implies a depth of vision beyond surface appearances into the invisible, unmanifest world perceived by our inner senses. This constitutes *glefiosa*, or ‘bright knowledge’ that was accessible to our cultural ancestors and attuned them to a wider and deeper reality where the language is one of images and metaphors, with which we are all familiar through our dreams. The book is a reminder of what we have lost through overemphasis on left hemisphere thinking, even to the extent of closing down aspects of the humanities so as to focus on STEM subjects required for economic growth. In doing so, we are closing down our own finer and subtler senses, a process that this book seeks to reverse by enabling readers to become better attuned to our instincts, imagination, insight and inspiration – with examples drawn from many historical poet-shamans as well as practices in nature and awareness of what is held within the landscape.

■ The Translator of Desires

Poems by Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi – translated by Michael Sells

Princeton University Press 2021, 323 pp., £20, p/b.

This is a collection of 61 love poems, regarded as a lyrical masterwork from the late 12th and early 13th century, and represents the first complete English translation for over 100 years. The introduction sets the work in its cultural and personal context of Arabic Love poetry and the particular relationship at the heart of these poems about love, desire, passion and longing as well as the tension between eros and mystical love. There are extensive notes on individual poems and some essential explanations about the nature

of the young girl idealised in these verses that also throw up paradoxes about the nature of the self: ‘how can one pierced through the heart by love have any trace of self to be bewildered? Love consumes... who is left to be that will do? Here are some representative lines:

*Their spring meadows
are desolate now
but desire for them
lives on in the heart
These are their ruins
Tears in memory
of those who melt
the soul forever....*

*Don't crush a man
drowned in tears
yet aflame
With ceaseless sorrow*

*Put down your flint,
fire-striker
Here is passion's fire
Take an ember*

PSYCHOLOGY/ CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

■ Psychology of Yoga and Meditation

C.G. Jung

Princeton 2020, 323 pp., £28, h/b.

This is a further volume (6) in the remarkable series of public lectures given by Jung at ETH Zurich between 1933 and 1941 – there was often standing room only. They are extraordinary in their depth of analysis and engagement with the classic texts of Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras*, the *Amitayurdhyana-Sutra* from Chinese Pure Land Buddhism, and the *Sbri-chakra-sambbhara Tantra*. Very few scholars were engaged with these texts in the 1930s, and Jung was unique among psychologists in his interest and in drawing parallels with his own idea of active imagination. The book provides a fascinating chronology of the turbulent period during which these lectures were delivered, detailing his own considerable activities. The extensive introduction provides a thematic and contextual overview, including his collaboration with Heinrich Zimmer. The tone of the lectures is informal, and indeed the text has been reconstructed from stenographic notes. Jung observes a radical difference between Eastern and Western approaches to consciousness where we take for granted what for the East ‘is the absolute centre of the world: that which light is outwardly, consciousness is inwardly. There you have a fundamental concept of the East’ (p. 59) where ‘enlightened

consciousness is the inner sun' corresponding respectively to the Buddha and Christ. Elsewhere he remarks that the East thinks from inside out, not from outside in as we do, prioritising respectively first- and third-person perspectives.

Jung draws comparisons between Tantra and alchemy, and often returns to contrasting ideas of the self and its development in pursuit of liberation and salvation, beginning with unconsciousness and ending in what we would call cosmic consciousness while also including the *coniunctio* of masculine and feminine. He draws on a number of commentators in elaborating his own understanding and proceeds carefully in his analysis. Fascinatingly, he brings in Eckhart to his discussion of emptiness, humility, self-naughting and the I-consciousness, relating this to detachment. He quotes him as saying that 'it is far better for God to be in the soul than for the soul to be in God.' (p. 243) Then he brings in some remarkable parallel passages from Angelus Silesius and the Upanishads. He also mentions *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, commenting that 'at the moment China must practise modern methods of war and has no time to meditate.' As Jung also said in his famous interview with John Freeman: 'Either I know something or I don't know it. A religious factor must be an experience; belief is not an experience... either it bridges lived experience, or it is absolutely nothing. I stand for the perspective of lived experience' (p. 260) – this is gnosis. As you can gather, there are some remarkable and penetrating insights in this volume that still speak to our time.

■ Jung, An Introduction

Ann Casement

Phoenix 2021, 266 pp., £21.99, p/b.

Damien Spendel writes: Here, Ann Casement provides an insightful addition to the introductory literature on Carl Jung. Although the terrain is familiar this map has new accents much appreciated by this reader. For example, the split from Freud is discussed in more depth. Perhaps a different understanding of libido was given as the cause but this cannot have been sufficient and Casement sees an archetypal pattern underpinning this break. The aftermath and present-day impact of this split is noted and one is left wondering if and how this split could be reconciled.

The author walks the reader through the core Jungian concepts - archetypes, persona, shadow as well as anima and animus with illustrative dreams. The *puer*, properly matured and the creative force in an individual is discussed in the form of David Bowie.

The process of growth is known as individuation in Jungian terms. Here, one encounters the self, sometimes numinously. This self is explained as the totality of the psyche and is the prime archetype. With the core concepts introduced, the objective of analytical psychology, transformation, and the means, alchemy, can be assessed.

The critical appraisal of Jung's Psychological Alchemy is a major part of this book. There is a parallel investigation of the imagery in the *Rosarium Philosophorum* and the ten Ox-herding pictures which helps with understanding what individuation could mean. Transformation is a topic per se, here from the perspectives of both Jung and Bion. Jung's Transmutation as described in the *Red Book* and is sensitively related to Emma Jung's work on the Grail Legend. Other eminent women in Analytical Psychology are recognised before the book concludes with brief biographies of other major, original figures. Overall, this book is strongly recommended for a well-struck balance between professional biography, technical exposé and critical contextualisation.

■ Dismantling Freud – Fake Therapy and the Psychoanalytic Worldview

Samuel Bendick Sotillos

Angelico Press 2020, 486 pp., \$22.95, p/b.

This is an erudite and far-reaching study of the dubious cultural influence of Freud written by a practising psychotherapist and from the viewpoint of the perennial philosophy tradition. The premise of the approach is that 'psychoanalysis has waged an assault on traditional conceptions of human nature by eclipsing everything of a transcendent order – even branding religion itself kind of psychopathology.' This has led to the familiar and prevalent spiritual and existential vacuum that denies the essence of our humanity as spiritual beings. Freud's influence has been further developed by his nephew Edward Bernays through his seminal book on propaganda in 1928, from which the following quote is chillingly relevant to our times: 'the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organised habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society.' Our whole scientific worldview or 'cultural superstructure' has become imprinted with the secular pseudo-religion of scientism that treats spiritual experiences as illusions and insists on the adequacy of mechanistic and instrumental thinking.

Sotillos draws on a vast range of literature – there are nearly 180 pages of references and notes – and the chapter headings indicate the detail of the argument in relating the history of the psychoanalytic movement, its relationship to loss of faith, the making of psychological man – from *imago dei* to *homo naturalis* – psychologism as the reduction of reality to psychological criteria, Freudianism as a counter-religion transitioning from metaphysics to metapsychology and colonising the human psyche with new terminology. Mysticism is interpreted in terms of the regressive oceanic feeling, and religion is replaced by psychopathology, leading to an ethical void resulting from a corrosive ideology. All this extends the cultural impact of Darwinism in terms of disenchantment and desecralisation. In traditional circles, it is common to find Jung also criticised for reducing metaphysics to psychology – 'statements of the psyche' – and while this is true at one level, Jung entered deeply and existentially into gnosis and alchemy while at the same time trying to insist that his approach was purely scientific – a prophetic tension analysed by Peter Kingsley in his magisterial *Catafalque*.

I am very sympathetic to the author's diagnosis of the implications of the loss of the sacred, also argued by the Prince of Wales. Interestingly, in his classic 1890 book *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*, Thomas Jay Hudson refers to the rival hypnosis schools in Nancy and Paris, where the former was open to New Thought spiritual ideas of the universal mind, while the Paris School of Charcot, which influenced Freud, spoke in terms of abnormal nervous conditions 'explicable on the basis of cerebral anatomy or physiology.' The history of psychology would have been very different had the first school and New Thought become predominant, as they were with William James. At any rate, this remarkable and a timely book puts Freud in his proper place as a regrettable overall profane influence on western culture while making a strong case for freedom and embodiment of the Spirit as the true compass for future cultural evolution.

■ Living in the Mystery – Between Head and Heart

Jan Arriens (SMN)

Quaker Fellowship of Afterlife Studies 2021, 119 pp., no price given, p/b.

This book recounts a personal quest to integrate head and heart, reason and intuition, scepticism and openness to psychic and mystical experiences. Jan discusses experiences of his own as well as those of other people, and there are some fascinating recollections

of Raynor Johnson, an early Network Member and author of a number of classic books on the interface between science, psychic phenomena and mysticism, including *The Imprisoned Splendour*. An unusual feature of the book is Jan's engagement with prisoners facing execution, who also describe extraordinary experiences of the light (e.g. p. 43). Many of these experiences contain elements unknown to the experiencer but subsequently verified, which should render a totally sceptical position logically invalid. All this points to a wider and deeper understanding of consciousness and indeed life. Jan carefully weighs all this in the balance, also reflecting on the presentations of Bernard Carr from our 2017 meeting in Jamaica. The title aptly reappears in the final chapter where he concludes that we have a longing for the whole and for experience of Love as the energy of connectedness and communion; indeed, science is also moving in the same direction towards subtle interconnection. A reflective read infused with wisdom.

■ Spirituality in Psychotherapy

Amalia Carli (SMN)

Sidestone Press 2020, 328 pp., €40, p/b.

This fascinating book based on interviews with Western European psychotherapists discusses how they understand, navigate, experience and integrate spirituality in their professional encounters with clients. The study takes a post-modern and social constructivist viewpoint that conveys 'an open, fluid and nonreligious spirituality integrating different perspectives and traditions.' The findings suggest an understanding of spirituality as a valid construct independent from religion within a broadly nonmaterialistic scientific paradigm that accepts personal experiences as a genuine source of spiritual knowledge. The approach is comprehensive and systematic, taking what the author calls a 'bricolage' approach to qualitative enquiry that challenges academic limitations, including the exclusion of Jung from academia and taking into account the findings of the Galileo Commission.

The author develops Crotty's research model that takes into account ontology, epistemology and theoretical perspectives to generate a corresponding qualitative methodology and research methods. This is developed into ten lines of enquiry that form the basis of interviews that also address the evolution of the therapists' own views in the encounter with the spiritual experiences of clients. This necessarily impinges on the therapist's own spirituality and personal practice. The findings indicate a similarity of

views across a range of backgrounds along with a nondogmatic and non-pathologising clinical attitude. There seems to be a lack professional networks in this field, and interviewees also felt constricted by various kinds of dogma. All this is elaborated in the detail of the interviews. At the end of the study, the author makes a number of suggestions involving openness and attentiveness to the personal experiences and spiritual development of clients while remaining present and addressing issues arising in a creative and flexible manner. The book will be of special interest to transpersonal psychotherapists as a reflective mirror in their own practices.

■ Living Mindfully Across the Lifespan – an Intergenerational Guide

J. Kim Penberthy (SMN) and
J. Morgan Penberthy

Routledge 2021, 230 pp., £24.99, p/b.

This mother-daughter navigational handbook is a unique resource in drawing on personal and professional experiences – including those of the authors – cutting-edge scientific research and a wealth of practical exercises. The authors' own accounts of their challenges and development are frank and illuminating, and they will surely resonate with readers' experiences – for example in relation to high achievement and low self-esteem due to lack of parental affirmation. The 12 chapters cover self-worth, self-esteem and self-efficacy, coping with unfairness, the importance of positive attitudes and beliefs, effective communication, interpersonal mindfulness, goal setting, problem-solving, the need for resilience in adversity, emotional regulation, coping with pain, cultivating happiness, and facing death with equanimity.

The authors have certainly achieved their goal of writing an accessible and helpful guide to the challenges of life from early development to old age. The chapters are structured to provide an introduction and overview of the topic, including relevant research literature, then practical and effective strategies and exercises to help the reader, based on what has worked for them and other professionals. Readers are able to dig more deeply into immediately relevant sections, while some issues such as the need to cultivate self-compassion are universal – this is one instance where the authors relate their own journeys and recommend a loving-kindness meditation. Sometimes, they make specific recommendations for helping young people, which may also involve role-modelling. Kim shares a revealing anecdote from her early professional

life when she and her husband were returning late after long hours, and he would go into masculine problem-solving mode when all she needed was sympathetic listening and support. This comprehensive, practical and empathetic guide can be warmly recommended to general readers, but especially to those working in therapy and healing.

■ The Life and Insights of Joseph Chilton Pearce

Edited by Michael Mendizza

Park Street Press 2021, 332 pp., \$18.99, p/b.

Joseph Chilton Pearce (1926-2016) was an expert in child development who devoted his life to exploring how we could actualise our highest potential and capacities while drawing on the power of imagination and play. This book provides a contextualisation featuring seven of his major books over a 40-year period, each of which builds on the last towards a biology of transcendence, the rebirth of the spirit, and the centrality of the heart-mind matrix in developing creative intelligence at the level of wisdom-insight that also requires secure bonding. The verbal-intellectual knowing of the left hemisphere is insufficient, and it is fascinating to see how he draws on the work of David Bohm, regarding his Implicate Order as the source of such wisdom-insight while also emphasising the importance of spiritual practice in the emerging process. Our bodies also contain multiple intelligences that can be compromised by stress. Pearce regards the brain as the way mind is in physical reality where thought, consciousness and insight form a trinity: 'body is an instrument of brain; brain is an instrument of mind; mind can be considered an instrument of consciousness, which, in this sense, can be considered as an instrument of insight-intelligence' - as also noted by Wilder Penfield.

Insight-intelligence is also the level of Spirit and Self to which we must open for a full expression of our potential, which includes heart-mind bonding – completely absent from academic settings. It is only through the heart that unity and communion can arise: 'without brain, heart is nothing. Without heart, brain is nothing.' We now find ourselves in the dangerous situation of having created what Pearce calls a cultural counterfeit in virtual reality, which constitutes 'about 90% of a young person's entire experience on a sensorimotor level in this world.' The average six-month-old infant already spends two hours a day in front of a backlit screen, and the average five-year-old American child has spent 6,000 hours watching

TV – hence the construction of reality has now become virtual rather than real, bypassing ‘all the structures of the brain involved in relationships’ and replacing real-life play with computer games – a situation exacerbated during the pandemic and potentially leading to a further diminution of empathy. The book contains important messages which we neglect our peril.

DEATH AND DYING

■ Surviving Death

Leslie Kean

Three Rivers Press 2017, 407 pp., \$18, p/b.

Leslie Kean is a journalist who has made her personal investigation of this question as well as reading widely in the literature; she was closely involved in the recent Netflix series on death. The four sections explore children who remember previous lives, near death journeys out of the body, communications from nonlocal minds and what she calls ‘the impossible made real’ – including materialisations. Interspersed with her own work are substantial expert chapters by well-known authorities including Jim Tucker, Peter Fenwick, Pim van Lommel, Alan Gauld and Erlendur Haraldsson. As readers will be aware, most of these areas are ignored by mainstream science and academia as ‘impossible’ given the ultimately unexamined premise that consciousness is generated in the brain. The author takes an open-minded and rigorous approach, finding that the strength of some of her own evidence is overwhelming in the detail and precision of the information conveyed. It is this detail that sceptics tend to avoid, preferring to deal in dismissive generalities.

Importantly, the various lines of evidence pursued interweave in terms of understanding, each demanding an approach beyond currently prevalent scientific materialism, as also argued by many other researchers and the Galileo Commission Report. The author carefully discusses competing hypotheses in terms of their explanatory power, in particular the survival hypothesis and living agent psi (LAP), which itself goes well beyond reductionist approaches while maintaining that the source of information is not discarnate. This is where cases revealing previously unknown information are arguably critical in tipping the balance, even though, from a legal point of view, there are always elements of probability demanding that one reach a conclusion ‘beyond reasonable doubt.’ Science is also now making interesting contributions, for instance

the finding that ‘the EEG pattern of correlations for NDE memory differed from the pattern for memories of imagined events.’ (p. 99) Similarly, there are different brain states in the medium corresponding respectively to psychic readings and survival messages correlating with the medium’s own intent.

The author leaves no stone unturned in the range and detail of her investigation, as well as the scrupulous consideration of competing explanations. All this correspondingly exposes the reader to a huge amount of data and analysis that are sufficient to enable conclusions to be drawn that will lead to an expansion of scientific and philosophical understandings if taken on board. She describes this as ‘a multi-layered, interconnecting journey’ providing the basis for a rational case built on the evidence. Personally, I do not take the view that the LAP is beyond a shadow of doubt, but it does strike me as a violation of Occam’s razor, which is normally used to justify reductionism. Personal experience plays a crucial role beyond reading and experimentation, and it is this that can ultimately convey a sense of conviction, as those who have experienced a ‘Flip’ can testify since this is also informed by a sense of inner knowing. This is hugely valuable addition to the field, which can be highly recommended to seasoned researchers as well as general readers looking for a reliable guide.

■ The Luminous Landscape of the Afterlife

Matthew McKay PhD

Park Street Press 2021, 126 pp., \$14.99, p/b.

The scribe of this remarkable channelled text is a clinical psychologist and professor of psychology who lost his son Jordan in a fatal knife incident. This is one of the most inspiring and spiritually instructive books on the afterlife that I have read, and its overall narrative is consistent with other literature in the field, including the writings of Swedenborg. It is subtitled ‘Jordan’s message to the living on what to expect after death’ and represents a modern book of the dead with corresponding insights and advice. He begins with his own passing and finding himself in a landing place where he is received by members of his soul group after an initial phase of disorientation while detaching from the body. We are advised to listen for love and belonging as we accustom ourselves to our new state. The text explains the nature of life review, which is grounded in the fundamental metaphysics of the oneness of love and consciousness, something we easily forget while incarnate, all

the more so if our lives have diverged from the path and lessons of love. This is the basic curriculum of human life – ‘seeking love in a jungle of threat, fear and distraction.’

There are explanations of time as elliptical rather than linear, the matrix of cause and effect, lines of probability within lives, and, most importantly, the nature of the one love and consciousness. When we merge with the all, we are ‘flooded with knowledge and belonging. That oneness is love, composed of the most profound truth and beauty.’ In these moments, ‘time expands to the point of irrelevance.’ (p. 50) Love in terms of merging, knowing and belonging is experienced as the foundation of consciousness where ‘the light is love, connecting everything.’ Evolution is about advancing in the conscious discovery of love, moving from selfishness to community to oneness ‘all fuelled by *intentional* love.’ We are both distinct souls and always one along a continuum of growth and development. Intention and attention externalise our will and provide the means of ‘travel’ through thought with directional energy. The content of this book serves both as an invaluable guide and a reminder of essential spiritual principles that we are here to learn and apply.

ECOLOGY-POLITICS

■ The Division of Light and Power

Dennis Kucinich

Finney Avenue Books 2021, 657 pp., \$34.99, p/b.

I have been following the career of Dennis Kucinich for many years, and most people are unaware that when in the House of Representatives he twice ran for the Democratic presidential nomination, but received very little press coverage. As one commentator notes, this is the real-life David versus Goliath story of one man taking on powerful corporations and political interests with great political integrity, but at very considerable personal cost. The author gives an insider’s account of his battles when he became Mayor of Cleveland in his early 30s and found himself pressured to sell the city’s publicly owned electricity system, Muni Light, whereby a lot of operatives stood to make a great deal of money at the expense of ordinary people. The potential buyer, CEI, employed a range of dirty tricks (p. 495) to put pressure on the municipality. Dennis is told by a senior colleague that ‘the shedding of innocence is the beginning of wisdom’ – for which read corruption. When Kucinich could not be bought, the Mob (Cleveland Mafia) fraudulently

sets him up for sexual harassment and a hitman is hired to kill him (the man speaks about this on p. 542), as actually happened to Mayor Moscone of San Francisco. The local police chief tells him that he is getting in the way of some people making a lot of money – this is the essential issue.

The assumption is that everyone has a price, but this does not apply to Dennis. He is taking on not only a bank and the utility, but the entire system: ‘it’s not only corporate ties, it’s relationships - they are friends who socialise and do business with each other.’ The result is ferocious attacks in the media and loss of the next election following a series of manufactured crises that left him politically vulnerable. The price of saying ‘No’ was very high at the time, and also affected his close associates; he himself was subjected to an unwarranted IRS investigation and considerable financial hardship, also resulting in the breakdown of his marriage. Three years after the default, CEI admits its plan to achieve the monopoly, and the truth gradually emerges. This includes the intelligence information that his murder contract was due to him causing ‘considerable problems for local dishonest businessman, politicians and criminals’, impeding organised criminal activity and its ability to make money in the city.

Dennis himself forgives all those who were involved in any plot and sets himself free from polarised thinking. 20 years later, he movingly receives a special award from the council for his courage and foresight in refusing to sell Munny Light! He notes that politics is inherently transactional, making it hard to distinguish between normal and corrupt politics. Every new officeholder has to decide early on if he or she will participate in ‘The System’, or challenge it: ‘once elected, you must either join The System or fight it. Dennis felt he had no choice ‘if I wanted to live an authentic life with integrity.’ The same issues relating to systemic corruption continue today, as is only too evident in the mainstream pandemic policies dictated by the financial interests of Big Pharma with their extensive lobbying power, media influence, campaign contributions and capture of federal agencies.

■ How Everything Can Collapse

Pablo Servigne and Raphael Stevens

Polity 2020, 223 pp., £14.99, p/b.

Rumblings of the potential collapse of our modern civilisation date back over 100 years to Oswald Spengler, then the work of Arnold Toynbee and Pitirim Sorokin, among others. Significantly, some leading French commentators are quoted from 2011 that a state of emergency ‘will have no time for

our slow and complex processes of deliberation. The West will be panic stricken, and will transgress its values of freedom and justice’ – as indeed we have been seeing. The three parts address the harbingers of collapse, potential timing, and the nature of the emerging field of ‘collapsology’. Many people are now feeling a sense of unease – even grief - at our prospects fed by acceleration and transgression of limits and boundaries, as witnessed by numerous scientific and demographic studies. These developments are not necessarily proportional in a foreseeable way, but they increase the risks of sudden, unpredictable and irreversible catastrophes as the systems not only become more complex but also locked in. Indeed, Joseph Tainter argues that ‘this apparently inexorable tendency of society is to move towards greater levels of complexity, specialisation and sociopolitical control is even one of the major causes of the collapse of societies.’ (p. 68)

The summary of Part 1 notes that we have ‘dangerously undermined the conditions that formerly allowed (our) stability and survival’ and that we are moving towards a very unstable, nonlinear future where major disruptions will be the norm but with diminishing social resilience, exacerbated by linear reductionism that fails to perceive the systemic nature of our crises, as Fritjof Capra pointed out in a recent talk on systems ethics. We are no longer in a situation of problems and solutions, but rather in a predicament with limited scope for manoeuvre, as also noted in the work of Jared Diamond. Due to nonlinear factors, it is hard to forecast exact timings, but denial seems to be built into our social psychology in spite of the available data – ‘we tend not to believe in the eventuality of a catastrophe until it has actually happened.’ The focus here is very much on environmental factors, and an important missing element is the influence of technocracy in relation to sustainable development. In their conclusion, the authors point out that the three states of approaching the limits, exceeding boundaries and increasing complexity are irreversible and create global systemic risks that are simply not amenable to normal policy options based on prediction and control. Any really creative initiatives will have to come from organised grassroots movements. A sobering assessment that rings only too true.

■ Transformative Learning

Edited by Satish Kumar and Pavel Cenkl

New Society Publishers 2021, 267 pp., \$22.99, p/b.

In 1990, the year before the launch

of Schumacher College, I went down to Dartington to discuss with Satish Kumar my possible involvement with the initiative. It was a Sliding Doors moment of choice, which in the event I decided not to pursue. As everyone knows, the college has been an extraordinary beacon over its thirty-year history, attracting a galaxy of leading thinkers to manifest and co-create Satish’s vision of education for head, heart and hands which he also developed in his Small School. Over 50 short contributions celebrate the courses on holistic science, organic agriculture, regenerative economics, meaningful work, ecological spirituality, indigenous wisdom, home-growing of food and baking of bread, community and reflections from worldwide partners as well as alumni experiences. Within this one volume is an incredible richness of inspirational content.

It is now time to apply this holistic approach to the mainstream which, as Satish points out, has played a central role in deteriorating human conditions, based as it is on ‘the study of the economy without understanding ecology, and the pursuit of materialism without spiritual values’ where nature is simply an economic resource rather than being understood as ‘the ultimate teacher and mentor’. Universities are focused on left hemisphere critical education of highly trained heads, while the heart is left to social life and hands to sport without any integrated approach. He points out that ‘the conventional educational curriculum includes almost nothing about compassion, about a sense of service, about courage or about love!’ It is also indifferent to the development of the imagination, and simply perpetuates business as usual. I urge you to read this landmark volume as a guide to a desirable human future of deep connection, genuine community and regeneration at every level.

■ The Blind Guardians of Ignorance

Mats Larson

Imprint Academic 2020, 243 pp., £14.95, p/b.

The author is a business consultant who has spent 30 years helping companies with strategy development and the management of change, with a special emphasis on the necessary transformation to sustainable production and distribution systems. Subtitled ‘Covid-19, sustainability and our vulnerable future’, its analytical starting point is the lack of preparedness evident in our current situation, but also in relation to probable challenges in the immediate future. It has been assumed, wrongly in the view of the

author, that market forces will drive the necessary change when both the political and economic focus is overwhelmingly short-term and targets are postponed into the future. The author insists that huge government investments will be required in the necessary infrastructure, especially in the transition to a circular economy beyond dependence on fossil fuels in view of declining supplies. There are also challenges arising from the very nature of complexity. Business and political leaders nod and listen politely but their priorities are respectively the bottom line and the next election. The author proposes something akin to the post-war Marshall Plan, but oddly enough he makes no mention of the WEF Great Reset that aims at just such a swift transition to sustainability and sees Covid-19 as a window of opportunity - though personally I find its transhumanist underpinning and surveillance agenda rather chilling.

■ The Twilight of Democracy

Anne Applebaum

Anchor 2021, 224 pp., \$16, p/b.

Elisabet Sahtouris writes: A very seasoned prize-winning journalist, with deep roots in Europe and America, writes a fascinating personal narrative on how individual players get involved in responding to and often inadvertently co-creating endlessly repeating cycles of authoritarian takeovers in human societies, with special emphasis on the divide and conquer model leaders use, often leading individuals to change political sides dramatically, old friends becoming new enemies. Unfortunately, her view of this cyclic historic process is ultimately pessimistic, with only slim hope that we will ever get beyond it, despite the best efforts of new generations. As an evolution biologist and futurist who sees us as creatures of biological Nature within a larger, ultimately spiritual, Living Universe, I wish she, too, could learn from Nature's cycles, in which cooperative maturity has triumphed over hostile youthful competition in surviving species for billions of years. It is that which gives me the optimism that the human era of authoritarian empire building is coming to its chaotic end now, as we see the real possibility of our metamorphosis, of integrating peacefully and undestructively into Nature. Not easy, but doable, and so the light at the end of the tunnel she herself longs for, but cannot see.

■ On Sentience - <https://www.peterreason.net/OnSentience.html>

Peter Reason and Sarah Gillespie

Self-published 2021, 45 pp., £10 plus p & p - peterreason@me.com

These exquisitely written reflections follow on from an earlier volume, *On Presence*, and are also illustrated with drawings by Sarah Gillespie. The point of departure is that we already live in a sentient world if only we became aware of this – a communion of subjects – and by paying close and loving attention and emptying the self, we can enter, like Goethe, into communion with the world around us rather than objectifying it. Peter spends many hours of contemplation on the banks of the River Avon, giving rise to the first essay on swans. Then Sarah evokes the mistle thrush – one I remember used to sing its heart out from the top of a tall lime tree in Fife. A third piece describes the looming Icelandic Snaefellsjokull from a boat, while the fourth essay is a beautiful discussion about Fra Filippo's 15th century annunciation as an allegory of receptivity and inspiration which leads on to a profound observation about the nature of attending to the world as living presence while drawing in nature. These essays and drawings are real nourishment for the soul.

■ Planet Ocean

Michel Odent (Hon SMN)

Clairview 2021, 121 pp., £12.99, p/b.

At the age of over 90, Michel is still publishing new books bringing his unique interdisciplinary perspective to our connections with water, drawing on anthropology, history, geology, palaeontology and medicine, all with an emphasis on Mother Ocean. He considers huge fluctuations in sea levels and their effect on navigation indicating that our ancestors were able to travel far further than we give them credit for, whether in the Mediterranean or the Pacific Rim. He compares our connection with dolphins and dogs – the Maori people apparently called dolphins the human beings of the sea; Michel also supports the aquatic ape hypothesis though we are the mammal that cannot swim. He is best known for his pioneering work on birthing pools and favours neocortical inhibition during the birth process. He presents the foetus ejection reflex, the milk ejection reflex and the sperm ejection reflex as highways to transcendence or the oceanic feeling - an absence of limits. The book certainly encourages readers to think about water in a new way.

GENERAL

■ An Enchanted Place

Jonathan Stedall (SMN)

Hawthorn Books 2021, 107 pp., £14.99, p/b.

In this enchanting and deeply humane book, filmmaker Jonathan Stedall recreates a human Winnie the Pooh tale based in AA Milne's village of Hartfield, threatened by a bypass scheme in neighbouring Ashdown Forest. This leads to the formation of an action group to oppose the plan consisting of motley village characters charmingly evoking characteristics of the original story. The 20 chapter headings reproduce the style of the original, for instance 15 'in which Bertie gets a shoe full of water, and Bunny decides to slow down.' The book is full of gentle observations of human foibles depicted in the hugely diverse characters, for instance in the context of tedious meetings. Bertie the poet 'also knew very well that being human involves the heart as well as their head', something the professor gradually latches onto in the course of his terminal illness. Nor do we need 'chemically resistant bees', but rather healthy natural ecosystems.

Bertie also prefers 'the company of one person to time. He found that people were more honest in that situation.' Sheila is highly practical, always ready to help in an emergency, and 'unfazed by fuse boxes, wasps' nests and even blocked drains.' The professor's scepticism is challenged by the other characters, poignantly in view of his impending death, which he eventually faces with stoicism and tranquillity. Questions of ultimate meaning are never far away – and there is a growing sense of empathy and interconnectedness between the characters and with nature. His priorities shift away from 'social history and politics, good wine and the Ashes.' For all, living fully in the moment is true wisdom, along with the warmth of human company. A wise book to savour and ponder by the fireside with a cup of tea or a glass of wine and one that is bound to make you chuckle in recognition.

■ Powered by Purpose

Sarah Rozenthler (SMN)

FT Publishing 2020, 228 pp., £16.99, p/b.

This highly acclaimed book describes a revolution in advanced business outlook over the last decade within the context that companies with an authentic purpose outperform the market by 42%. Sarah has been working for over 15 years as a chartered psychologist, leadership consultant and dialogue coach at a

high level with prominent companies and CEOs. Its content can be applied to organisations and teams at any scale, including the Network. The momentum is towards organisations actualising rather than simply paying lip service to purpose, and the benefits are palpable both in corporate and personal terms. Sarah explains the four capacities of purpose led leadership: cultivate leadership presence, make dialogue authentic, engage your stakeholders, and connect on purpose. In addition, there are three bridges of purpose in terms of lighting up the whole ecosystem, tuning a top team and enlivening your people.

Her own personal experience provides an important backdrop to her energising work in enhancing well-being in what is a win-win situation.

The old Chicago model of profit maximisation at all costs – ‘hard driving, strictly top-down, command and control focused, shareholder value obsessed, win at all costs’ is in stark contrast to the emerging paradigm of purpose-led leadership, as summarised in a chart on page 38. The book is full of helpful diagrams and processes, for instance the relationship between conditioned and true self in terms of presence and supportive practices. The importance of dialogue is emphasised along a conversation continuum also involving deep listening as well as balancing advocacy with enquiry. Purpose itself has to be related to the founding intent as well as actual and espoused purpose while evolving towards a true and compelling purpose. Relationships and the sense of belonging are key to organisational ethos and feedback processes. This evolutionary development of purpose-driven capitalism focused on well-being is essential to our survival, and this book is a hugely valuable roadmap along the way.

■ Leading from the Field

Peter Merry (SMN)

Amaranth Press 2020, 52 pp., £11.21, h/b.

My own endorsement of this exquisitely simple and beautifully produced book stated that it read like a ‘Tao of Leadership’, consisting as it does of 12 principles of resonant leadership and energetic stewardship with accompanying illustrations: boundaries, stillness, attention, feeling, intention, content, timing, progress, form, place, pain, presence. The initial explanations are limited to two or three short sentences, which are then elaborated in the descriptions later in the book. The book is based on a distillation of 30 years of experience expressed in

finely chiselled sentences: ‘Timing – work with the natural rhythms of time. Go when it flows and stop when it blocks.’ Simple and profound wisdom. Highly recommended.

OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED

■ Fundamentals of Microbiome Science

Angela E. Douglas

Princeton 2021, 236 pp., £22, p/b.

This is an important specialist contribution to the emerging field of animal-bacteria symbiosis, reimagining the animal as a multi-organismal being in the context of complex and context-dependent interactions with microbiomes. As such, it bridges recent developments in genomics and symbiosis.

■ Purgatorio

Dante Alighieri, translated by D.M. Black

NYRB 2021, 275 pp., \$19.95, p/b.

2021 marks the 700th anniversary of Dante’s death, hence this new poetic edition of this epic work as ‘a reckoning with human limits and the rediscovery of human potential in the light of divine promise’ that is ultimately about individual reintegration and healing.

■ Smells

Robert Muchembled

Polity 2020, 216 pp., £17.99, p/b.

This is an extraordinarily interesting cultural history of odours in early modern times that gives a fascinating slant on involving social conditions and corresponding outlooks. Readers learn that there was a pervasive stench in medieval towns, how the smell of women was demonised and eroticised concurrently and how perfume was developed in the 18th century as people became more conscious of personal hygiene in an atmosphere pervaded by fear of the devil.

■ The Self-Sufficiency Bible

Simon Dawson

Watkins 2021, 348 pp., £14.99, p/b.

This book lives up to its title – the author lives off-grid on a 20-acre self-sufficient smallholding and shares his extensive knowledge with the readers, starting with the kitchen garden and moving on to bakery, dairy, brewing, crafts, livestock, curing and preserving, foraging, recycling and green energy. There are many great tips and even recipes to be had in passing – highly recommended.

■ Death, Where is Your Sting?

Robert Reiss

Christian Alternative 2021, 189 pp., £10.99, p/b.

Written from a Christian perspective, I did not find this book helpful even though its coverage is interesting and extensive in terms of the literature. The author takes the position of Susan Blackmore on NDEs and states that ‘when the brain dies all that it contains dies with it’ in spite of extensive evidence to the contrary. He quotes the 2015 volume entitled *The Myth of the Afterlife* as authoritative, even though it is hugely biased and incomplete.

■ Harvest

G.L. Davies

6th Books (John Hunt) 2020, 144 pp., £8.99, p/b.

This is the disturbing account of a Pembrokeshire woman’s experience of alien abduction, mostly in the first person, and depicting an extremely unpleasant series of experiences implying that such creatures experiment on humans for their own purposes – all pertinent with the recent release of UFO papers, though I don’t believe that the picture is uniformly hostile.

■ A Secret History of Pandemic and Plague Prediction

R. E. Slater

Self-published 2020, 78 pp., no price given.

A speculative personal enquiry into correlations between astrological configurations and previous plagues and turning points in history, with a special emphasis on the triple conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter and Mars from last December – also compared with the great conjunction of 7 BC and the vision of the Emperor Constantine. The author draws on some interesting historical commentators including Virgil, Aristotle and Albertus Magnus who all warn about upheavals and pestilence associated with such conjunctions, as was the case in 1345 with the Black Death. This makes for intriguing reading, even if correlation is not causation.

■ Generation Panic (GP)

Agi Heale

O Books (John Hunt) 2021, 196 pp., £11.99, p/b.

A useful practical handbook for ‘GP’ers – strong and bright young people who battle with anxiety and insecurity and feel they are failing in spite of their achievements. It is underpinned by a philosophy of success rather than spiritual transformation, although it contains many valuable tips and techniques.

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Werner Heisenberg, Nobel Prize for Physics, 1932

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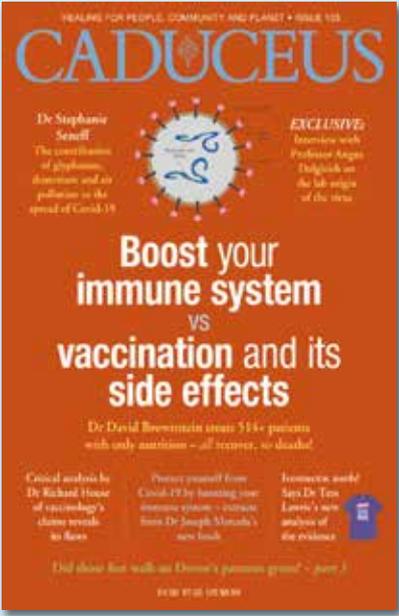
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The Scientific and Medical Network is a leading international forum for people engaged in creating a new worldview for the 21st century. The Network brings together scientists, doctors, psychologists, engineers, philosophers, complementary practitioners and other professionals. The Network is an educational charity which was founded in 1973.

The Network aims to:

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- provide a safe forum for the critical and open minded discussion of ideas that go beyond reductionist science.
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