

Paradigm Explorer



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The Scientific & Medical Network

NETWORK CALENDAR 2023

Wednesday February 1	Joseph Selbie – <i>M-Theory: A Key Intersection of Science and Spirituality</i>
Wednesday February 8	Dr Elena Mustakova – <i>Global Unitive Healing</i>
Wednesday February 15	Felicity Warner – <i>Can Sacred Oils affect Consciousness in those approaching Death?</i>
Wednesday February 22	Charles Eisenstein – <i>The Mask of Reason and the Perils of Dehumanisation</i>
Wednesday March 1	Dr Hema Vyas – <i>Awakening the Intelligence of the Heart</i>
Wednesday March 8	Andrew Baker – <i>Francesco Giorgi's Harmony of the World</i>
Wednesday March 15	Tom Bree – <i>The Sacred Geometry of Nature, Cosmos and Architecture</i>
Wednesday March 22	David Beatty – <i>A Mirror for the Soul: My Journey Towards Dhamma</i>
Wednesday March 29	Emiliano Toso – <i>Biology is Music: understanding the beauty of our cells as a symphony of life.</i>
Wednesday April 5	Monica Bryant – <i>The New Biology of Evolutionary Synergy and Symbiosis</i>
April 15-16	Mystics and Scientists 45 online – <i>Vibrational Healing through Sound and Light with Peter Mark Adams, Phyllida Anam-Aire, Gita Ben David, Chloe Goodchild, Lars Muhl, Therese Shroeder-Sheker and others TBC.</i>
Wednesday April 19	Donna Thomas – <i>Children's Unexplainable Experiences in a Post Material World</i>
Wednesday April 26	Patrick Celka – <i>The Digital Heart Pulse Wave and Consciousness from a Traditional Tibetan Medicine Perspective</i>
Wednesday May 3	John Perkins – <i>Confessions of an Economic Hitman Update</i>
Thursday July 6	50th Anniversary Celebration Day (livestreamed)
July 7-9	50th Anniversary Annual Gathering

CONSCIOUSNESS PERSPECTIVES FORUM

Organiser **CLAUDIA NIELSEN** – claudia@scimednet.org

Webinars from 19:30-21:30pm (London) exploring science, spirituality, consciousness and human experience. Presentations by experts in their field, offering the opportunity to question, comment and interact in the second hour of the meeting.

To get monthly updates, please email me.

UPCOMING EVENTS - 2023

FEBRUARY

Monday 20th PROF RAVI RAVINDRA *Spiritual Search and Scientific Research*

MARCH

Monday 20th PROF CHRISTIAN LIST *The Reality of Free Will*

APRIL

Monday 17th DR. IAIN MCGILCHRIST *What is the matter with things?*

MAY

Monday 15th PROF PAUL SUTTER *Your Place in the Universe*

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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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Cover Photo: View of Pari,
David Lorimer



Choices of Love and Innocence

Paul Filmore, Chair - chairman@scimednet.org

As I sit here writing in the peace of Twelfth Night, I am unsurprised, but I mourn, that so many people seem already to have forgotten the magic of Christmas.

Already the busyness of everyday life seems to swamp that underlying peace which exists for those who look. Resonating in my head are the words from Spenser's The Faerie Queene (Book V Canto II): 'For there is nothing lost, that may be found, if sought.'

The Clod and the Pebble
by William Blake

*"Love seeketh not itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a Heaven in Hell's
despair."*

So snug a little Clod of Clay
Trodden with the cattle's feet,
But a Pebble of the brook
Warbled out these metres meet:

*"Love seeketh only self to please,
To bind another to its delight,
Joys in another's loss of ease,
And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite."*

In this editorial, I thought it might be useful to focus on the 'how to look' aspect of touching our spiritual nature. I feel that the SMN's work in part may be implicitly focused to this end. Perhaps one challenge is how to express explorative thinking in a contemporary way. An area which we at the SMN are debating is whether to provide a glossary of terms that we frequently use: but I digress!

One contemporary vision of our present society is represented in the recent film *Free Guy* (2021). The actor Ryan Reynolds (*Guy*) lives in a world where each day follows a similar pattern. He does not change or develop, even though he semi-consciously knows that there must be more to life. Then, one day, he sees a girl in the distance. Suddenly, for reasons that become clear later in the film, he is triggered into a rapid adaptation, growth and questioning. It requires an excellent actor to change their apparent development level during the course of a film: Ryan Reynolds does this extremely well.

We discover and so does 'Guy', part way through the film, that Reynolds is, in fact, a computer programmed character who lives alongside other similarly stuck-in-a-loop computer-generated characters (called NPC: non playable characters) in a computer-generated world.

These innocent, sleep walking characters, are knocked around and killed by gaming players from 'the real world' in ego-driven avatar skins: an indictment, it would seem, of computer gamers in our present society. What is striking is that *Guy* (Reynolds) after his 'awakening', does not follow the norms of his world, but instead preserves his innocent state

by choosing only to do good. By so doing, he eventually transforms the lives of the other NPC characters and even constrains the gaming characters from continuing to act badly.

This faculty of only doing good, perhaps a simple act of kindness shared quietly in a busy day, has a transformative quality. That quality is what we touch in the Christmas magic, and it has love at its core. Returning to the film briefly, and the theme of this editorial, it is the 'how to look and act', to be able to live consistently in this magic, which so many have seemingly forgotten. For Reynolds, it by was finding love, and steadfastly acting by only doing the right thing which transformed both himself and others, as the positive effects of his living in this way rippled out to those around him.

The choice of not only how to look at life but how to live, is also elucidated in William Blake's three verse poem 'The Clod and the Pebble'. Here he summarises a fundamental human choice of paths: to give love freely, or to manipulate others for gain. I have attempted to highlight these choices in the table, comparing verses 1 and 3. (The term 'despite' uses an archaic meaning: 'dustain' or 'contempt'.)

At this time of peace, and as a New Year of new possibilities, directions and reflections opens (our 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Scientific & Medical Network), I wish you well, and pass on warm wishes from everyone here at the SMN.

With best wishes,
Paul

1. <i>"Love seeketh not itself to please, Nor for itself hath any care, But for another gives its ease, And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair."</i>	3. <i>"Love seeketh only self to please, To bind another to its delight, Joys in another's loss of ease, And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite."</i>
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Bringing the Biomedical Paradigm into Consonance with Quantum Reality

Sarah S. Knox

Abstract

This paper reviews underlying assumptions that have become the basis for our current conceptual approach to clinical medicine and the study of consciousness. The author's hypothesis, based on current data, is that major progress in the effective treatment of chronic diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular diseases will require a fundamental change in the conceptualisation of the essence of what it means to be human. The primary issue is that experimental data from quantum theory show that at a subatomic level there is no difference between matter and force field. As counter intuitive as this may seem, the data are unequivocal. The challenge posed by quantum field theory, is that materialist reductionism, one of medicine's most basic and cherished beliefs, is about 100 years out of date. Endogenous bioelectric fields generated from multiple types of ion

channels and active, nonlocal fields of information in the quantum vacuum, interact without boundaries, forming new patterns of information and leading to new questions about the nature of human reality. It is not scientifically accurate to regard humans as simply the sum of their material components (e.g., DNA, hormones and other biochemicals). Limiting the scope of our research to that small subset of data, is like trying to understand the essence of an elephant by limiting investigations to its tail. Important processes in embryogenesis, wound healing and biological signaling are not limited to chemical signaling but occur through interactions with fields of information that are freely exchanged within and between the body and the environment. The outdated materialist belief that serves as the foundation for biomedical theory and practice has also limited the purview of consciousness

research to neurophysiological substrates in the brain, thereby excluding all forms of transcendent experience as epiphenomena of neurophysiological changes. At its core, our belief concerning the essence of who we are as humans, drives our scientific approach to what we deem relevant to investigate. Evidence based medicine is only as good as the evidence upon which it is based. If that evidence is missing important data points, the questions we ask and the conclusions we draw, including the relevance of consciousness for human interaction and evolution, will be misleading. We are currently at a tipping point where accumulating data can no longer justify massive financial investments in materialist reductionist medical science in the hopes of curing cancer and cardiovascular diseases or understanding human consciousness. It is time for a fundamental reassessment.

Introduction

The thesis of this essay is that our scientific definition of what it means to be human is inaccurate and needs major revision. The implications for science and humanity are profound. Biomedical theory is based on the underlying assumption that the body is a physical machine composed of individual parts and that when something goes wrong, the objective is to diagnose which part is broken, or in the case of infections, what the causative agent is so that the problem can be fixed. This method has proven quite successful in many acute situations because effective treatment such as setting a bone or developing vaccines and antibiotics can be achieved without the need for addressing underlying, ongoing, systemic vulnerabilities (as important as they may be).

However, in the case of chronic diseases that contribute to the highest rates of mortality worldwide (e.g., cancer and cardiovascular diseases), reductive approaches have proven less effective. Ninety-percent of drug-related pharmaceuticals tested in cancer clinical trials never advance to receive FDA approval in the US [1]. A primary problem with the current targeted approach, is that chronic diseases, are usually complex and multi-faceted. Factors that may have contributed to disease initiation are not necessarily those that function to maintain it; and the roles of cause-and-effect factors change as the disease progresses. This means that there are numerous affected feedback loops and the relationships among them are non-linear, complex, and continually changing. Targeting the killing of mutated cells to cure cancer ignores the systemic dysfunction that allowed dysfunctional cells to survive in the first place. Normally they are destroyed by the body's own anti-cancer defense systems, and we never know they occurred. Despite overwhelming evidence of the complexity of tumorigenesis and the need for systemic approaches (2,3), reductive targets (e.g., single molecular pathways) continue to dominate mainstream approaches in oncology.

Conceptually, the biomedical model also assumes that because disease manifests in the physical body, it originates in matter, and that there is a linear cause / effect relationship between an "initiator", usually identified as a singularity such as a virus, bacteria, or mutation, and the disease. The crux of the problem is the way that matter is being defined and how its role is contextualised in relation to the 'ecosystem' of the person who is sick. As a starting point, it is time to recognise and acknowledge the profusion of data from physics showing that at a subatomic

level, there is no difference between matter and energy (force field). This means that the nature of reality cannot be reduced to particles of matter. Everything is vibrational. Furthermore, we need to shift emphasis from the study of symptomatic organs (e.g., identifying mutation types in tumors) to disease context and process. Tumors are dynamic organisms affected by and affecting their microenvironment in ways that are continually changing.

Tumor-associated macrophages (TAMs), one of the body's immune surveillance defenses, illustrate this well. The normal role of TAMs is to promote innate and adaptive immunity and the phagocytosis of dying cells [4]; i.e., they defend against tumors. However, during tumor formation, their function changes as they become co-opted by the tumor itself [4,5] to promote immunosuppression and tumor invasion [5], the exact opposite of their original function. The concept which has been lost in the narrowing fixation on improving molecular technology, is the dynamic process of continually changing relations between contributors and mediators as illness evolves. Furthermore, a narrow emphasis on physiological malfunction ignores the large body of evidence demonstrating the mechanisms through which psychosocial factors can contribute significantly to these chronic conditions [6-9], including multiple pathways in cancer, such as migration, the invasive capacity of tumor cells, tumor-cell growth, and stimulation of tumor angiogenesis [9,10].

The Parts and the Whole

Systemic dysfunction involves multiple systems, not all of which are symptomatic. Clinically this has enormous ramifications. Targeting the pharmaceutical knock-out of a particular molecular pathway correlated with tumor development, ignores the fact that there are *always multiple pathways involved*. Healing the inflammation underlying most carcinomas requires anti-inflammatory mediators, the termination of proinflammatory signaling pathways, and the clearing of inflammatory cells (11). Mutations do not survive without *systemic* immune dysfunction. Of the approximately 10 trillion cells in the human body, each day about 70 billion divide to make new cells. It has been estimated that a minimum of 10,000 lesions (depurinations) occur, which if not repaired become mutagenic [12,13]. These are usually destroyed by a plethora of innate anti-tumor defenses such as DNA repair mechanisms, tumor suppressor genes, and programmed cell death. For a cancer cell to de-differentiate and disconnect from the basal membrane and metastasise into the body, multiple intercellular communication networks must be highly dysfunctional. Why

does the field of oncology still insist on targeting single molecular pathways? "Cancer is no more a disease of cells than a traffic jam is a disease of cars. A lifetime of study of the internal-combustion engine would not help anyone to understand our traffic problems" [14].

Exclusive focus on molecular mechanisms at the site of dysfunction (tumour, atherosclerotic lesion) ignores upstream changes in inter-cellular signaling patterns that can disrupt systemic networks and cause downstream dysfunction. Examples are the epigenetic downregulation of tumor suppressor genes or upregulation of oncogenes. Living organisms are thermodynamically open systems that continually interact with their environments. Ignoring the context of dysfunction is like the blind men trying to understand the essence of an elephant by feeling individual parts. The tail is "like a snake, skinny and wiggly". The leg is "big and round with skin that feels like the bark of a tree," and the tusk is "curved and hard like a sword". Although each observer is describing *truthfully and accurately* what they see, none of them is even remotely close to understanding the essence of the elephant because they are drawing conclusions from insufficient data. The methods they are using are not adequate to the task.

Targeting the destruction of tumours with chemotherapy introduces toxicity to a body whose function is already compromised. Single target drugs, regardless of the vector used, always hit multiple targets. Even if the primary target is significantly associated with a specific tumor type, this does not mean it is causal. It signifies that it is somehow involved. A car's wheels always rotate when it accelerates uphill, but this does not mean that they are *causing* the car to go up hill. Without a motor, the wheels would carry the car downhill. It is important to distinguish between correlation and causality.

In health, the trillions of cells in the human body function in synchronised communication with each other, coordinating the overall integration of physiological functions. When signaling systems break down, cells become disconnected from surrounding networks, causing disruption of information processing and blockage in the signaling necessary for coherent processing and coordination to occur. That is what allows a cancer cell to detach from its anchored spot on the basal membrane and metastasise into the bloodstream. The constraints and feedback loops that normally prevent this have been disconnected.

Wave / Particle Duality

Evidence based medicine is only as good as the research designs from which the evidence stems. If data are lacking because a question, or part of the data related to the question, have not been included, then the evidence is incomplete.

What is missing in mainstream biomedical research, especially in the field of oncology, is the important role played by morphogenetic and endogenously generated bioelectric fields in molecular, cellular, and systemic signal processing. A fundamental principle of quantum mechanics holds that at a subatomic level, a physical system such as an electron exists partly and simultaneously in all its theoretically possible states until it is measured or observed. At the time of measurement, the probability wave function (as defined by the Schrodinger equation) collapses, resulting in only one of the possible configurations (e.g., wave or particle). There is extensive research in this area but due to space limitations one example will have to suffice, and that is the way we determine the characteristics of DNA (15).

The current protocol involves separating the two strands of the double helix to access and measure the sequence of base pairs, which are the code for making amino acids. With respect to wave/particle duality, sequencing methods highlight particulate aspects of DNA, but obscure another characteristic function of the DNA strand, which is the wave form that serves as an electrical conductor [16-18]. DNA is a highly charged molecule that carries two ionised monovalent groups on its outer surface per base pair [19]. To see the 'wave form', i.e., the electrical conductance, the double helix must be left intact. The charge conduction pathway consists of wave functions that extend perpendicular to the base planes [20]. According to Hans Peter Durr, nuclear and quantum physicist and student of Werner Heisenberg, the DNA macromolecule with its hundreds of thousands or even millions of electrons should be considered a single indivisible overall electron cloud capable of collective coherent excitations [21]. This basic characteristic of quantum reality, manifesting as a wave or a particle depending on how it is measured, has demonstrated that the experimenter can never be 'objective', i.e., an impartial outside observer, because s/he influences the outcome through experimental design and the choice of variables to include in the equation [2]. The biomedical research community seems completely unaware that the way they set up their experiments determines which aspects of DNA they see [15]. We get answers only to the questions we ask. Extensive research on the physiology of membrane potentials stemming from ion gradients

has led to the knowledge that endogenous oscillatory electric and electromagnetic fields in cells and tissues play a key role in epigenetically regulating stem and tumor cell behavior [22,23]. Why is this information not being utilised in clinical oncology research?

Quantum Field Theory and Fields of Information

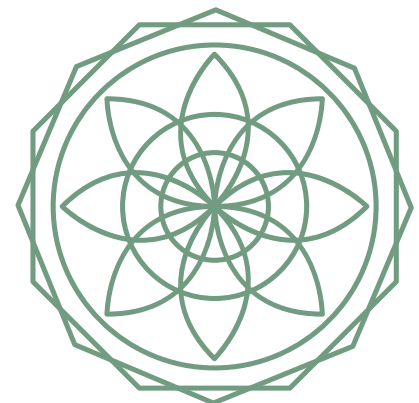
The importance of the body's endogenous fields lies in their pivotal role in biocommunication. It is important to understand that these fields transmit information. Fields are the opposite of points in that they are spatially distributed, meaning that there are non-local influences at all points in the field. What quantum field theory tells us about the nature of reality is that the particles that we think of as basic building blocks of matter, are merely quantum fluctuations / excitations in overlapping fields [24]. According to David Bohm [25], "relativity implies that neither point particles nor the quasi-rigid body can be taken as primary concepts." They must be expressed in terms of events and processes. Whereas classical physics assumes that particles (e.g., atoms) can be isolated and remain constant over time, behaving the same way in isolation as in aggregation, quantum field theory abolishes the concept of inert matter altogether (26). David Bohm expressed it as: "The speed of light is taken not as a possible speed of an *object*, but rather as the maximum speed of propagation of a *signal*" [25]. What we regard as continuity of an object over time, refers to the "gestalt" or form [27]. Your body has exactly the same features now that it had two years ago and yet most of the cells are not the same. They have been worn out and replaced. The form, not the matter is the same. In a symphony recording, the music isn't in the record's vinyl. The recording could just as easily have been made on a CD or a magnetic tape. The music is a "gestalt" that exists in patterns of information (interference of wave forms) in multidimensional space [21].

Morphogenetic Fields

Contributing to the body's maintenance of form over time is a type of informational field, that accumulating data show plays a key role in multiple bodily processes, namely the morphogenetic field. The term morphogenetic has been defined as: "the sum, integrated over 1 temporal and 3 spatial dimensions, of all non-local patterning signals impinging on cells and cell groups in an organism" [22]. Although DNA provides the codes for making amino acids which form protein structures for cells and tissues, it is not the only mechanism contributing

to the development of form during embryogenesis, or its maintenance during aging. Endogenous spatio-temporal patterns of resting potentials in somatic cells provide instructive cues not only in embryogenesis, but also in limb regeneration and cancer [22,23,28,29]. It has been demonstrated that blocking gap junction signals to create two heads in a planaria worm causes long-term morphological changes *without any changes in DNA* [28], and that altering the gradients of resting transmembrane potential during embryogenesis (e.g., planaria, salamanders) can alter the form (positional information) of the developing organism (22). The relevance of the field concept for biology is that it is not confined to cellular behavior but incorporates the hierarchical organisation of the system as a whole, including chemical, pressure, tension and bioelectrical signals [22]. This means both energetic and non-energetic information transfer. However, the significance goes even deeper. David Bohm emphasised the importance of a "new order of physics", one where the actual, individual object of classical physics is replaced by a more abstract kind of potential and statistical object that corresponds to the quantum or wave function state of the system [25].

From a biological perspective, the most neglected part of this field involves endogenous bioelectric signals stemming from ion channel networks. They contribute to maintaining the organisational whole while tissues age or are removed due to traumatic injury, and they provide the overriding guidance directing cell migration in epithelial wound healing (29). Although the genome is tightly linked to bioelectric signaling (see above), bioelectric networks provide an autonomous layer of control, distinct from biochemical and genetic controls (28). If we conceptualise inter- and intracellular, as well as inter-tissue communication as *only* biochemical, (i.e., substances sloshing around through the blood stream until they stumble upon the correct 'lock and key' receptors on cell surfaces), then the speed and coordination



of systemic functioning necessary for long distance communication would not be possible, and coherent functioning in the body would not exist. The multiplicity of genes, proteins and macromolecules that must be able to simultaneously synchronise their activity to carry out cellular functions and maintenance that coordinate communication between tissues and organs across the body is almost impossible to conceptualise. What is important about quantum field theory is its relevance at a systemic level. It has been shown that it is possible for multiple components to produce a common oscillation in unison, leading to functional coherence, or collective behavior of multiple systems, even without the low temperature conditions of a Bose Einstein condensate [30].

The necessity for system level coherence in living organisms is best illustrated by the biochemist, AL Lehninger [31], who pointed out the complexity of interactions that regularly occur in a single bacterial cell. It “synthesises simultaneously perhaps 3,000 or more different kinds of protein molecules in specific molar ratios to each other. Each of these protein molecules contains a minimum of 100 amino acid units in a chain... Yet at 37°C the bacterial cell requires only a few seconds to complete the synthesis of any single protein molecule. Not only can the bacterial cell make individual protein molecules rapidly, but it can make 3,000 or more different kinds of proteins simultaneously, in the precise molar ratios required to constitute a living functioning cell”. The speed and coordination that these biological processes require can only work with a streamlined, coherent form of communication that cannot be achieved by ‘lock and key’ chemical signaling alone.

David Bohm likened a hologram to quantum level reality because the whole remains the underlying substrate and can

be recreated from the individual parts [32]. This is reflected in the non-locality principle of quantum mechanics. Two photons that are split and accelerated miles in opposite directions, respond simultaneously to the perturbation of only one of them. The response of the second particle cannot be interpreted as a transfer of information between the two particles because it would necessitate exceeding the speed of light. These particles are entangled, i.e., part of an underlying whole, like waves in the same ocean. There is no “spooky action at a distance” because together they are part of the same whole. Embryogenesis provides a biological analogy [33]. After fertilisation, there is a zygote, a single whole that begins to divide and subdivide until all the cells, tissues and organs of the fetus have formed. The “whole” is not built up from parts, the parts are subdivisions of the whole.

The theoretical physicist, John Wheeler, has carried the conclusions of physics even further. His interpretation of reality states that, “every item of the physical world has at bottom...an immaterial source and explanation..., in short, that all things physical are information-theoretic in origin and this is a participatory universe [34]

Implications for “Alternative” Healing Methods

In recent years, there has been an interest among some medical practitioners to attempt to integrate what have been termed “alternative” healing methods, (e.g., energy healing, nutraceuticals) with allopathic medicine to form “integrative medicine”. The goal is admirable but unfortunately, the approach has been rather haphazard and not based on any systematic re-formulation of the underlying tenets of materialist causality. There has been no discussion of the underlying basis for choosing a specific

method to treat a specific clinical condition. The logic seems to be, “if apples don’t work, let’s try oranges”. One such example is the use of acupuncture to treat nausea from chemotherapy [35]. Chemotherapy is toxic to all cells but kills cancer cells faster than healthy cells. Chinese acupuncture is a well-established 2000-year-old method designed to restore the body’s own ability to heal by strengthening and unblocking ‘energy meridians’ hypothesised to influence core bodily functions [36-38]. Nausea is a healthy response to a massive ingestion of toxins. What is the rationale for choosing chemotherapy to treat cancer but acupuncture to treat its toxic side effects? Unlike bacteria treated with antibiotics, cancer cells are not outside invaders but part of one’s own body. Given the systemic connections within the body, poisoning one part in hopes that it will somehow heal another part, is not the most logical strategy. We get thousands of mutations every day [13] which are normally destroyed by the body’s natural defense mechanisms. Based on the toxicity of chemotherapy and radiation, and given the data on the importance of bioelectric and morphogenetic field networks [22,23 26,39] in physiological functioning, wouldn’t it make more sense to investigate treatment of cancer with an energy treatment modality to re-establish coherent functioning in the fields responsible for the dysfunction?

Cancer clinical trials do not use placebo controls. The control is current treatment. About 10 years ago, I wrote a grant application together with a prestigious medical center, in response to a National Institutes of Health Request for Applications that highlighted the need for innovative science. The goal of our application was to test the treatment of active surveillance prostate cancer patients with acupuncture. These patients have slow growing cancer that does not always

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result in mortality and has manageable symptoms. Therefore, invasive treatment is postponed but they are monitored closely for changes in order to switch to active intervention (e.g., surgery or radiation) if their cancer begins to progress. The study design was a randomised clinical trial with three groups: a control group that would receive usual care, i.e., frequent monitoring; an intervention group that in addition to monitoring would be given diet and lifestyle changes; and a third group that would receive the diet + lifestyle changes + acupuncture. Outcome measures were tumor progression, gene expression changes and markers of inflammation. The patients were to be recruited from the entire catchment area of the medical center. The application was triaged, i.e., refused funding without being sent out for review, despite a nationwide collaboration of top scientists and clinicians in the fields of prostate cancer, diet, and acupuncture. According to the current reductionist tenets of biomedicine (targeting single molecular pathways in cancer), the reviewers did their job effectively. That application was not in line with their current belief system. If we continue to believe without question that all disease causality originates in matter and is reducible to the smallest constituent parts, we will continue to ask the same questions and to get the same types of answers we have always gotten. Science in its current form perpetuates the status quo. Funding agencies claim to solicit “innovative” applications, but their definition of “innovative” seems to be a new permutation *within* the boundaries of the same old paradigm.

Until we become clear that the essence of humanness is not matter and formulate a new set of tenets for our research questions, we will continue to go in circles with what has become the pseudo-science of materialist reductionism, pledging allegiance to an outdated catechism which may further our careers but will do nothing whatever to further the science of healing.

Conclusion: Re-conceptualising the Nature of Human Reality

Given the biomedical myth of matter as ontology, questioning what it means to be human is deemed clinically irrelevant and relegated by scientists to the purview of philosophy. However, since the biologically relevant fields we have been discussing are non-local and do not stop at the boundary of the body, logic indicates that thoughts and consciousness, also involve patterned fields of information and are also non-local. Volumes have been written about the way that the brain processes information, especially the mechanisms of sensory perception (e.g., how electromagnetic

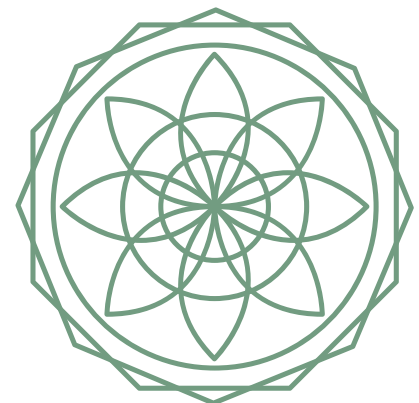
waves are converted into images on the retina and acoustic waves are converted to sound). Neurophysiological substrates and neural networks associated with information processing have been described in detail. What none of this research has succeeded in elucidating is a cohesive theory of subjective experience. The hypothesis being suggested here is that “subjective” cognitions, feelings and experiences result from the emergence of a multiplicity of co-existing states within and between individuals that interact in the form of holographic interference patterns. The work of Karl Pribram showed that memory is distributed in the brain and that cell turnover is too rapid to explain memory storage as consisting of permanent biochemical traces. A hologram is a much better fit for the data than a chemical trace [40]. If memory were traceable to biochemical patterns in specific areas of the brain, a localised lesion would result in selective memory loss [41], but that has not been verified in brain injury data. The hypothesis presented here is that consciousness works through the brain but does not originate there.

Accumulating data on the phenomenon of Near-Death Experiences (NDEs) by people from all socioeconomic strata raise many questions not answered by neurophysiological data. These experiences occur when people are near death or clinically dead but then resuscitated. Descriptions vary somewhat but involve walking towards a bright light, meeting deceased relatives or divine beings such as angels, feelings of joy and peace, or experiencing a Divine presence [42-43]. Current theories hold that people having transcendent experiences are hallucinating due to lack of oxygen to the brain (resulting from drugs, obstructive hypoxia, etc.). One neuroscientist who adhered to that theory until he, himself, had an NDE [44], stated: “Far from being an unimportant by-product of physical processes (as I had thought before my experience), consciousness is not only very real – it’s actually more real than the rest of physical existence, and most likely the basis of it all” [ibid p.150]. He refers to a “spiritual realm or life force” [ibid p.156] from which consciousness arises.

So where does that leave us? This essay is a counter argument to the statement by the recent Templeton prize winner, Frank Wilczek that the most important scientific question is “how does mind emerge from matter?” The hypothesis put forth in this paper is that it doesn’t. If the underlying nature of reality is comprised of complex, overlapping fields of information that cannot be defined as matter and are not bound by the physical body, this implies that the consciousness of all individuals is

part of a greater consciousness, flowing and pervading the universe. If that is the case, then it is primary, not secondary, and does not disappear when the body dies. A dead body contains all the DNA and all the matter it had when it was alive, but it has no life. Is there a life force (qi / prana) that merges again with the rest of the universe after we die? That question is currently tabu in science because science believes, *without supporting data*, that our essence is of matter. What if the opposite is true? What if we are spiritual beings temporarily having a physical experience? This may be the most important question science could be asking. Healing would involve treating the whole person, whose essence is not matter but mind / spirit. Our beliefs about the nature of human reality steer the scientific questions we ask and the variables we choose to include in our experiments. It is time to utilise *all* the extant data for a fundamental reassessment of the underlying tenets inherent in biomedical science, so that it can be brought into congruence with the nature of quantum reality and human experience.

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The Bahá'u'lláh Impulse

Dr. Elena Mustakova

The spiritual impulse to pursue ever greater truth, beauty, harmony, and wisdom has run through the core of the whole history of human civilisation. Periodically through the centuries, prophetic figures have appeared who channeled this collective impulse into systems of spiritual teachings which have propelled civilisation forward and brought about transformations in human society. Each time, after their divine light rose and eventually set on the horizon of history, these prophetic events gave rise to generations of spiritual masters who then set out to explain these prophetic teachings, to elaborate the spiritual principles and practices embedded in them, and to make them accessible to more of humanity.

Historical Background

The mid-19th century was the most recent period of such historic upheaval. The establishment of industrialisation in Western societies and the rise of the scientific method propelled the Romanticism movement in literature and art to give voice to the deep disillusionment with the deadening impact of mechanisation on the human spirit. In response to some of the troubling implications of modernity, there arose in the early 19th century a host of messianic movements in Judeo-Christian and Islamic communities in different parts of the world. They anticipated the appearance of a new prophetic figure, understood as the return of the earlier one in each tradition, who would redeem the human spirit.

The most dramatic of these movements centered around the youthful figure of a Persian merchant who identified himself as the Bab - the Gate to the return of the Promised One of all earlier scriptures. He taught that humanity stood on the threshold of an era that would witness the restructuring of all aspects of life through new fields of learning and a profound transformation of its moral and spiritual life. At the heart of these events, he taught, was the coming of a universal Messenger of God, Whose appearance and Teachings would shake and eventually renew the very foundation of human society.¹

As we can imagine, such a radical claim was met with violent hostility, series of massacres, and persecutions which continue to this day in Iran. When the prophetic figure of Bahá'u'lláh, for whom the Bab was preparing people, did appear, He was thrown into the worst prison in Tehran, known as The Black Pit, to await execution. But through the intercession of a Russian diplomat, He was eventually exiled instead to the Ottoman Empire. His banishment from city to city in the Ottoman Empire aided the swift spreading

of a community of followers. Despite violent Islamic persecution, the movement for spiritual and social transformation spread and attracted increasingly followers from the West.

Bahá'u'lláh spent 40 years in exile and passed away in Akka, near the Bay of Haifa, where is now the center of the global Bahá'í movement. During those 40 years, He revealed a vast body of Writings, which, according to Bahá'í scholar Nader Saiedi, fall roughly into three periods. In the 1850s, Bahá'u'lláh's early mystical writings focused on the human being as noble, with the capacity to become godly and pure. In the 1860s, the focus was on the historical human, and the prejudices, superstitions, unfounded dogmas that arise out of a limited understanding of revelation and prophecy; as well as on the resulting collective traumas, which need to be healed and transcended. In the 1870s and beyond, the focus was on the universal human with the capacity to radiate divine virtue across the globe, and to usher in a Golden Age of planetary spiritual transformation toward unity in all of humanity's diversity.² The Divine Impulse released into collective human consciousness took hold.

Bahá'u'lláh's universal Teachings addressed the foundational questions that had preoccupied religious thinkers in the past, such as the reality of God, the role of Revelation in history, the relationship of the world's religious systems to one another, the meaning of faith, and the basis of moral authority in the organisation of human society. At the center of His Revelation is the establishment of a new Covenant between God and humankind, according to which humanity is now coming of age and is developing awareness of its oneness and of the earth as a single homeland. As Paul Lample, longtime member of the Universal House of Justice, the supreme elected Bahá'í global governing body, points

out, “This awakening opens the way to a new relationship between God and humankind.”³

This new relationship is nothing short of revolutionary. It redefined the spiritual impulse in terms of working toward radical social transformation based on universal spiritual principles of oneness, justice, and unity in a global age. A central expression of that is the upholding of equality between women and men worldwide, even in the Iranian context of oppressive attitudes to women. The first female follower of the Bab, a poetess known as Tahiriḥ (the Pure One), took off her veil publicly, causing an intense commotion in a traditional Muslim society and challenging religious and political orthodoxy. Her courageous campaign to educate and liberate the spirit of Muslim women in the East, for which she was eventually executed, coincides mysteriously with the first women’s rights convention at Seneca Falls, U.S. The spiritual impulse to establish equality between women and men was thus released.

Another central expression of the Bahá’í revolutionising of spirituality is the energetic commitment to the elimination of racial prejudice and the ideal of inter-racial unity. Inter-racial meetings, as well as Race Amity Conferences, were encouraged by `Abdu’l-Bahá in the United States since the first decade of the 20th century. The first Bahá’í inter-racial marriage in the U.S. dates back to 1912, and interracial marriages are very common among Bahá’ís.⁴

Bahá’u’lláh’s social teachings upheld that as humanity grows toward collective spiritual maturity, extremes of wealth and poverty will be eliminated, and a just and sustainable system of planetary governance will be created – one that represents every nation and ethnic group and upholds the dignity of every human being.

This rethinking of human spiritual history spread rapidly throughout the Middle East, as well as to Europe and the United States. With its spread, persecution also grew beyond the borders of Iran. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviet authorities dispersed the highly-developed Bahá’í community of Ashkhabad. The German Bahá’í community, which was the largest in Europe, was persecuted and its institutions disbanded by the Nazi authorities.

Nonetheless, Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation had and continues to have spiritual repercussions beyond what we can grasp, and many who had no direct awareness of His Revelation have been inspired by the spirit of the age. As has always

happened in the spiritual history of human civilisation, a host of spiritual teachers arose simultaneously in different parts of the world, who taught the message of collective awakening and spiritual transformation and unification. Some examples are Sri Aurobindo’s teachings about the evolutionary ascent of humanity toward universal consciousness which spread from Asia into the West; and the Bulgarian sage Peter Deunov, who taught a universal Christianity purified of its dogmatic divisiveness and focused on love and wisdom.

The Divine Impulse Bahá’u’lláh released into collective consciousness was explicitly brought to the West between 1911 and 1913 by `Abdu’l-Bahá, the eldest son of Bahá’u’lláh. Also known as the Master, he travelled through Paris, London, and across the whole United States, and was invited to give talks in countless churches, synagogues, universities, mosques, and public spaces. He spoke fearlessly of world unity and the overcoming of racial prejudice in places where lynching was still rampant.

What were these core teachings released into modern consciousness by Bahá’u’lláh’s Impulse to awaken in the whole of humanity a renewed spiritual understanding of self, of society, of history, and of planetary restructuring?

Core Principles

Complementarity of Religion and Science

Unique to these Teachings is a historical perspective on the evolution of collective consciousness and human society. They elaborate the dialectic between inner and outer, mystical and social, into an integral understanding of the path to spiritual action for the transformation and unification of our complex planet. Below is a succinct summary offered in 1912 by the Master, `Abdu’l-Bahá, of the path to universal peace.

Religion must conform to reason and be in accord with the conclusions of science. For religion, reason and science are realities; therefore, these three, being realities, must conform and be reconciled. A question or principle which is religious in its nature must be sanctioned by science... and reason must confirm it in order that it may inspire confidence. If religious teaching... be at variance with science and reason, it is unquestionably superstition.⁵

This guiding orientation brought about the profound re-thinking of what Ken Wilber described, over a century later, as the four quadrants of human reality – internal life, or the realm of the ‘I’;

the interpersonal realm of ‘we’; the understanding of objective reality or ‘it’; and the understanding of society or ‘they’. Such re-thinking was no longer the esoteric occupation of a spiritual elite but rather accessible to ordinary people; encouraged as foundational to meaningful living in a global age.

Human Nature

Consistent with earlier spiritual understanding, human nature is understood as having three aspects – a body, a mind, and an immortal identity also known as the soul or spirit. The mind is the power of the human spirit and the link between the soul and the body, through which the two interact on each other. The human spirit is described in the following way:

In the world of existence there is nothing so important as spirit, nothing so essential as the spirit of man. The spirit of man is the most noble of phenomena. The spirit of man is the meeting between man and God. The spirit of man is the animus of human life and the collective center of all human virtues. The spirit of man is the cause of the illumination of this world.⁶

Human nature is “a reality which stands between light and darkness.”⁷ Its inner dynamism needs to be understood and its qualities of spirit need to be cultivated. `Abdu’l-Bahá explains that despite common belief that “the spirit is an accident which subsists through the substance of the body”, in fact “the rational soul is the substance through which the body subsists.” In Bahá’í understanding, the “rational soul is endowed from the beginning with individuality; it does not acquire it through the intermediary of the body.” However, “the individuality and identity of the rational soul may be strengthened in this world.”⁸

This strengthening is an intentional process of working with the mind, as the intermediary between the body and the rational soul, to cultivate detachment from excessive preoccupations with physical comforts and distractions, and to purify it, so that, as a mirror, it can reflect clearly the light of the spirit. This understanding is a precursor of the most recent science on the nature of mind, which describes it as the embodied and interpersonal flow of energy and information.⁹ The purer from attachments the flow of mind is, the more human consciousness evolves toward the ability to perceive oneness and to act out of that understanding. Thus, the evolved soul becomes a healer of the historical divisiveness of human society and an agent for social transformation toward unity in diversity. The ‘I’, the ‘we’, the ‘it’, and the

‘they’ become integrated into a holistic way of being and way of serving the evolution of collective consciousness. This rational and clear vision of the spiritual dynamic of reality – radical in the mid-19th century – has now become a commonplace understanding among thoughtful people from different professional and spiritual orientations.

Relationship to Religious Dispensations

Another central issue in human history that Bahá’u’lláh’s Teachings resolved is the relationship among different faith traditions. He introduced the clear organising concept of progressive revelation, according to which historical religious traditions represent a continuity of spiritual understanding and a unitary evolutionary process, which originates in the same Source, and advances human consciousness in accordance with the readiness of the time. From this point of view, God as the Infinite Unknowable manifests periodically in the form of radiant Beings, such as Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Abraham, Moses, Christ, Mohammad, The Báb, Bahá’u’lláh and

the many Spiritual Teachers unrecorded in indigenous history, to guide humanity on its evolutionary path. This understanding of the Manifestations as intermediaries between the Unknowable and humanity, expressions of “supermind” and “Truth-Consciousness,” was later articulated by Sri Aurobindo in India.¹⁰ It also distinguishes the spiritual degree of impact of these Luminaries and founders of religious traditions from the spiritual teachers who then elaborate and further disseminate the teachings.

This understanding offers a clear path to overcoming traditional inter-religious animosities. It establishes that in each religious tradition, we can distinguish the universal spiritual principles from the historically circumscribed social teachings which become outworn with time. While people come to spiritual teachings along different religious and spiritual paths, the universal principles unite, and the particularity of different religious and cultural heritages represents the richness of collective human culture.

It also makes clear the relationship between spirituality, religion, and society. Spirituality refers to our awakening to the spiritual nature of reality and the laws that govern it. Religion structures our relationship to spiritual reality in the context of social life in a particular historical period. It establishes what I have described as the zone of proximal development for the social organisation that is the growing edge for that stage of collective evolution.¹¹ For example, in the new millennium to which the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh were addressed, the zone of proximal development is the establishment of a world federation of states, with governance based on universal spiritual principles that ensure just and sustainable management of planetary resources. Such a form of social evolution, which would have been unthinkable during the Christian dispensation, for example, because of the much earlier stage of development of human consciousness, was nonetheless what Christ described as the coming of world peace, and the founders of other religious traditions referred to as the Return.

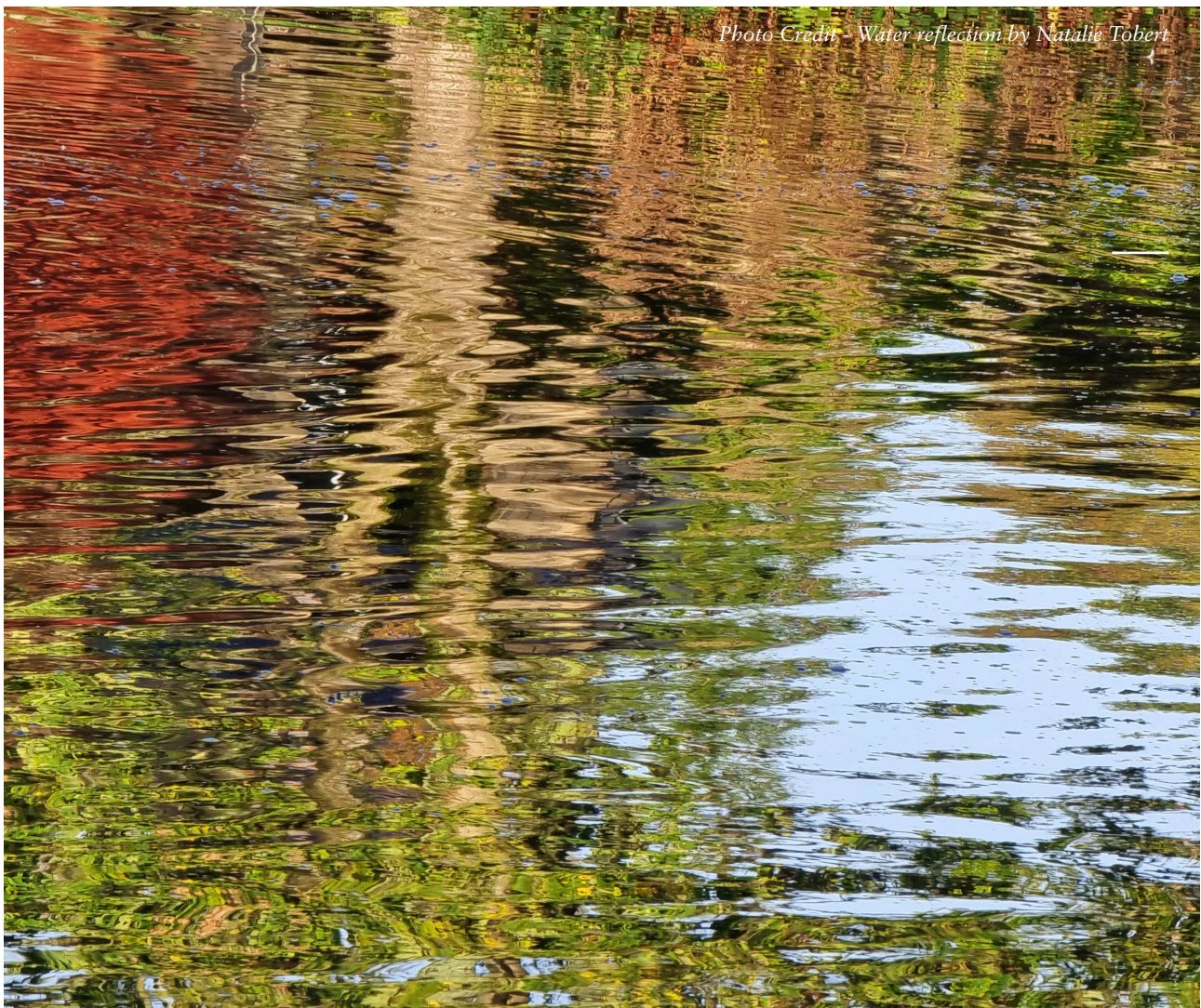


Photo Credit - Water reflection by Natalie Tobert

This also implies that outdated social teachings of different religious traditions need to be released due to their divisive impact on collective growth toward a new form of planetary social organisation. That in no way invalidates the power and depth of impact of each religious tradition. It simply establishes religion as an evolutionary phenomenon – along with all other phenomena on this plane of reality. Hence, true religion channels the Divine force into social structures and processes, through which spirituality becomes socially generative for the majority of humanity.

Bahá'u'lláh also established a clear spiritual methodology of consultative grassroots governance processes, applicable to the full diversity of the human family, for the movement toward global unity. A hundred years later, the Earth Federation movement carried forward this vision. Now countless non-governmental organisations are working on the many complex aspects of the establishment of just global institutions and systems of governance toward sustainable peace. The Bahá'u'lláh Impulse, which brought about tremendous upheavals in the last two centuries, is now visibly coming to fruition.

In 1912, in a talk to a Unitarian Church in New York, 'Abdu'l-Bahá summed it up in this way:

... in this great century the most important accomplishment is the unity of mankind. Although in former centuries and times this subject received some measure of mention and consideration, it has now become the paramount issue and question in the religious and political conditions of the world. ... In this century of illumination, hearts are inclined toward agreement and fellowship, and minds are thoughtful upon the question of the unification of mankind. There is an emanation of the universal consciousness today which clearly indicates the dawn of a great unity.¹²

We see increasingly the emergence of new collective centers – something Bahá'u'lláh forewarned would be necessary in this new age of reaching collective spiritual maturity. 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains how previous collective centers have evolved and in time become outworn:

In the contingent world there are many collective centers which are conducive to association and unity between ... men ... patriotism is a collective center; nationalism is a collective center; identity of interests is a collective center; political alliance is a collective center; the union of ideals

is a collective center, and the prosperity of the world of humanity is dependent upon the organisation and promotion of the collective centers. Nevertheless, all the above institutions are, in reality, the matter and not the substance, accidental and not eternal—temporary and not everlasting. With the appearance of great revolutions and upheavals, all these collective centers are swept away.¹³

Science is also viewed as a collective center of illumination, as it tends to the illumination of the world of humanity... It is the cause of eternal honor to man, and its sovereignty is far greater than the sovereignty of kings ... the noblest center is a center wherein the sciences and arts are taught and studied ... the scientist through his beneficent achievements invades the regions of ignorance, conquering the realm of minds and hearts ... flooding the dark regions and recesses of ignorance with illumination.¹⁴

Bahá'u'lláh suggests that in the age of oneness, a qualitatively new collective center of illumination will emerge. 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes it in this way:

In our solar system the center of illumination is the sun itself ... the one source of the existence and development of all phenomenal things ... Without this quickening impulse there would be no growth ... Likewise, in the spiritual realm of intelligence and idealism there must be a center of illumination, and that center is the everlasting, ever-shining Sun, the Word of God. Its lights are the lights of reality which have shone upon humanity, illumining the realm of thought and morals ... the cause of the education of souls and the source of the enlightenment of hearts ...¹⁵

This 1912 perspective suggests that the particularities of a specific religious tradition can be compared to the different “dawning places” of the one and only phenomenal sun. Their essence is the same. It points to what the interfaith and interspirituality movements towards the end of the 20th century recognised as the “nine points of agreement” of universal spirituality.¹⁶

In summary, the Divine Impulse Bahá'u'lláh released into collective consciousness in the mid-19th century has given rise, over time, to an evolutionary universal language of spirit and action that brings out our highest potentiality as it also honors our roots. More and more, unity is becoming a condition of the human spirit, cultivated in the context of working to build diverse and united communities.

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Endnotes

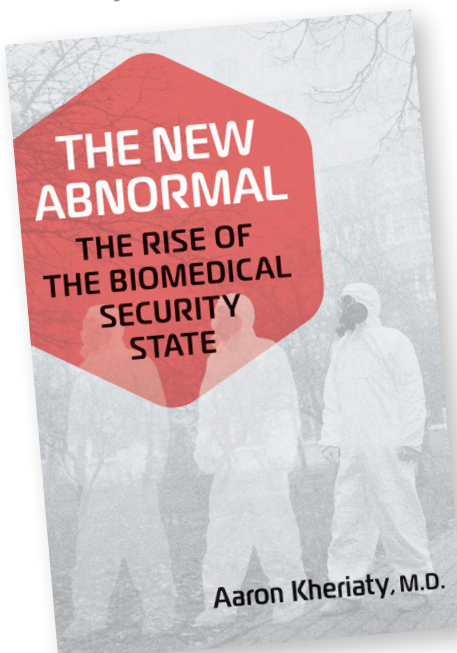
- 1 See Bahá'u'lláh's *Teachings on Spiritual Reality*, Compilation. Paul Lample, Introduction, p. 11-12.
- 2 Saiedi, Nader. *Payam-Bahá'í*, October/November 2017.
- 3 Paul Lample, *Compilation on Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings on Spiritual Reality*, p. 16-18.
- 4 For further understanding of how the Bahá'í Faith treats the issue of racism, see Rutstein's “*Racism: Unraveling the Fear*”, and Perry's “*The Last War: Racism, Spirituality, and the Future of Civilisation.*” For an overview of the current status of racial integration throughout the global Bahá'í community, see the annual editions of *The Bahá'í World*.
- 5 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 394.
- 6 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 239-40.
- 7 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 464-65.
- 8 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, 66.
- 9 Daniel Siegel, *Mindsight*.
- 10 Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*.
- 11 Elena Mustakova, *Global Unitive Healing*.
- 12 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, 82.
- 13 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, p. 101.
- 14 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 348-49.
- 15 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 93-94.
- 16 See Mustakova, *Global Unitive Healing*, p. 206.



Technocracy and Totalitarianism

Aaron Kheriaty MD

*What follows is an essay adapted from Kheriaty's new book *The New Abnormal: The Rise of the Biomedical Security State*, originally published in *The American Mind* and reprinted here under open access from the Brownstone Institute - <https://brownstone.org/articles/technocracy-and-totalitarianism/> The article provides an interesting complementary and contemporary perspective on scientism to follow up the features from the previous issue.*



The Italian philosopher Augusto Del Noce, who came of age in the 1930s and observed with horror the emergence of Mussolini's Fascist regime in his native country, warned that "the widespread notion that the age of totalitarianisms ended with Hitlerism and Stalinism is completely mistaken." He explained:

The essential element of totalitarianism, in brief, lies in the refusal to recognize the difference between "brute reality" and "human reality," so that it becomes possible to describe man, non-metaphorically, as a "raw material" or as a form of "capital." Today this view, which used to be typical of Communist totalitarianism, has been taken up by its Western alternative, the technological society.

By technological society, Del Noce did not mean a society characterized by scientific or technological progress, but a society characterized by a view of rationality as purely instrumental. Human reason, on this view, is unable to grasp ideas that go beyond brute empirical facts: we are incapable of discovering transcendent truths. Reason is merely a pragmatic tool, a useful instrument for accomplishing our purposes, but nothing more. Totalitarian ideologies deny that all human beings participate in a shared rationality. We therefore cannot really talk to one another: it is impossible to deliberate or debate civilly in a shared pursuit of truth. Reasoned persuasion has no place. Totalitarian regimes always monopolize what counts as "rational" and therefore what one is permitted to say publicly.

For example, if people in a Communist society contradict Communist doctrine, the party does not explain why they are wrong. The authorities simply dismiss dissenting opinions as instances of "bourgeois rationality" or "false consciousness." For a Communist, if you have not embraced Marx's theory of

dialectical materialism, then you do not understand the direction of history. What you are talking about is, by definition, pure nonsense and not worth considering. You are obviously on the "wrong side of history." Authorities assume that dissenting opinions must be motivated by class interests (or racial characteristics, or gender, or whatever), which dissidents are trying to defend.

You don't think such-and-such because you reasoned logically to that conclusion; you think such-and-such because you are a white, heterosexual, middle-class American female, and so forth. In this way, totalitarians do not persuade or refute their interlocutors with reasoned arguments. They merely impute bad faith to their opponents and refuse to engage in meaningful debate. They forcibly cut their adversaries off from the sphere of enlightened conversation. One does not bother arguing against such dissidents; one simply steamrolls them after placing them outside the realm of acceptable opinion.

The totalitarianisms of the 20th century were grounded in pseudoscientific ideologies, e.g., the Marxist pseudoscience of economics and history, or the Nazi pseudoscience of race and eugenics. In our own day, the pseudo-scientific ideology that drives societies in a totalitarian direction is *scientism*, which must be clearly distinguished from *science*. The ideology of scientism and the practice of science should not be confused: the former is often conflated with the latter, which creates no end of muddled thinking.

Method and Madness

Science is a method, or more accurately, a collection of various methods, aimed at systematically investigating observable phenomena in the natural world. Rigorous science is characterized by hypothesis, experiment, testing, interpretation, and ongoing deliberation and debate. Put a

group of real scientists in a room together and they will argue endlessly about the salience, significance, and interpretation of data, about the limitations and strengths of various research methodologies, and about the big picture questions.

Science is an enormously complex human enterprise, with each scientific discipline having own refined methods of inquiry and its own competing theories. Science is not an irrefutable body of knowledge. It is always fallible, always open to revision; yet when conducted rigorously and carefully, scientific research is capable of genuine discoveries and important advances.

Scientism is the philosophical claim—which cannot be proven scientifically—that science is the only valid form of knowledge. Anyone who begins a sentence with the phrase, “Science says . . .” is likely in the grip of scientism. Genuine scientists don’t talk like this. They begin sentences with phrases like, “The findings of this study suggest,” or “This meta-analysis concluded. . . .” Scientism, by contrast, is a religious and often a political ideology. “It has been evident for quite a while that science has become our time’s religion,” the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben observed, “the thing which people believe that they believe in.” When science becomes a religion—a closed and exclusionary belief system—we are dealing with scientism.

The characteristic feature of science is warranted uncertainty, which leads to intellectual humility.

The characteristic feature of scientism is unwarranted certainty, which leads to intellectual hubris.

Del Noce realized that *scientism* is *intrinsically totalitarian*, a profound insight of enormous importance for our time. “Many people do not realize that scientism and the technological society are totalitarian in nature,” he wrote fifty years ago. To understand why, consider that scientism and totalitarianism both claim a monopoly on knowledge. The advocate of scientism and the true believer in a totalitarian system both assert that many common-sense notions are simply irrational, unverifiable, unscientific, and therefore outside the scope of what can be said publicly. Antigone’s claim, “I have a duty, inscribed indelibly on the human heart, to bury my dead brother” is not a scientific statement; therefore, according to the ideology of scientism, it is pure nonsense. All moral or metaphysical claims are specifically excluded because they cannot be verified by the methods of science or established by the reigning pseudo-scientific totalitarian ideology.

Of course, the forced exclusion of moral, metaphysical, or religious claims is not a conclusion of science, but an unprovable philosophical premise of scientism. The assertion that science is the only valid form of knowledge is itself a metaphysical (not a scientific) claim, smuggled in quietly through the backdoor. Scientism needs to hide this self-refuting fact from itself, so it is necessarily mendacious: dishonesty is baked into the system, and various forms of irrationalism follow.

The 20th-century totalitarian ideologies all claimed to be “scientific,” but were in fact unfalsifiable by their own circular logic. Because scientism cannot establish itself through rational argument, it relies instead on three tools to advance: brute force, defamation of critics, and the promise of future happiness. These are the same tools deployed by all totalitarian systems.

To hide its own internal contradiction from view, the self-refuting premise of scientism is rarely stated explicitly. Scientism is instead implicitly assumed, its conclusions repeatedly asserted, until this ideology simply becomes the air we breathe. Careful policing of public discourse admits only evidence supposedly supported by “science,” and this atmosphere is rigorously enforced. As we will see in the next chapter, during the pandemic, qualitative (e.g., familial, spiritual) goods were repeatedly sacrificed to quantitative (e.g., biological, medical) goods, even when the former were real and the latter only theoretical. This is the fruit of scientism, which turns our scale of values and priorities upside-down.

It would be hard to find a more effective ideological tool to impose a totalitarian system than by appealing to “science” or “experts” and thereby claiming a monopoly on knowledge and rationality. Those in power can readily choose which scientific experts they endorse and which they silence. This allows politicians to defer inescapably political judgments to “experts,” thus abdicating their own responsibility. One’s ideological opponents are hamstrung, their opinions excluded as “unscientific,” and their public voice silenced—all without the trouble of maintaining a regime of brute force and physical violence.

Defamation and exclusion from public discourse works just as effectively. Those in power maintain a monopoly on what counts as Rationality (or Science); they do not bother talking to or debating the [fill-in-the-blank stigmatized group] “bourgeois,” “Jew,” “unvaccinated,” “unmasked,” “anti-science,” “Covid-denier,” etc.

Repressive social conformity is thus achieved without resorting to

concentration camps, gulags, Gestapo, KGB, or openly despotic tyrants. Instead, dissenters are confined to a moral ghetto through censorship and slander. Recalcitrant individuals are placed outside the purview of polite society and excluded from enlightened conversation.

The political theorist Eric Voegelin observed the essence of totalitarianism is simply that *certain questions are forbidden*. The prohibition against asking questions is a deliberately and skillfully elaborated obstruction of reason in a totalitarian system. If one asks certain questions—“Do we really need to continue locking down?” or “Are school closures doing more harm than good?” or “Are we sure these vaccines are safe and effective?” or “Why has the promised utopia not yet arrived?”—one will be accused of being a pandemic denier, wanting to kill grandma, being anti-science, or of placing oneself on the “wrong side of history.”

Bare Biology

We can now appreciate why Del Noce claimed that a technocratic society grounded in scientism is totalitarian, though not obviously authoritarian in the sense of openly violent forms of repression. In a strongly worded passage of an essay titled, “The Roots of the Crisis,” he predicted fifty years ago:

The remaining believers in a transcendent authority of values will be marginalized and reduced to second-class citizens. They will be imprisoned, ultimately, in “moral” concentration camps. But nobody can seriously think that moral punishments will be less severe than physical punishments. At the end of the process lies the spiritual version of genocide.

In a technocratic society, one ends up in a moral concentration camp if one is not on board with the pseudo-science *du jour*, the ideological trend of the moment. Whatever questions, concerns, or objections one might raise—whether philosophical, religious, ethical, or simply a different interpretation of scientific evidence—need not be considered. The dissident’s questions or opinions do not count; they are ruled-out by appeal to “The Science”—trademarked by the regime and printed with a capital T and capital S.

In another striking passage, written even earlier in 1968, Del Noce warned:

The de-humanization process that characterized the totalitarian regimes did not stop [after World War II]; it has actually become stronger. “We cannot see its endpoint” . . . Given that every society reflects the people who form it, we are

threatened by oligarchies and persecutory systems that would make Nazism and Stalinism look like pale images, although, of course, [these new oligarchies and persecutory systems] will not present themselves as a new Nazism or a new Stalinism.

Given the developments of the last few decades, which manifested with greater clarity during the Covid pandemic, we see clearly that the new oligarchies and persecutory systems will present themselves under the banner of *biomedical security measures essential for maintaining population health*. The oligarchs will preface their agenda with phrases like, “Out of an abundance of caution . . .” and “We are all in this together. . .”. The new social-distancing societal paradigm facilitates the oligarch’s dominance by separating citizens from one another.

Scientism is a totalitarianism of disintegration before it is a totalitarianism of domination. Recall that lockdowns and social distancing, with their inevitable social isolation, necessarily preceded vaccine mandates and passports, when the repressive regime really tipped its hand. Each of these measures relied on exceptionally sloppy data presented

publicly as the only authoritative interpretation of science. In most instances, the pretence of scientific rigour was not even required.

In a scientific-technocratic regime, the naked individual—reduced to “bare biological life,” cut off from other people and from anything transcendent—becomes completely dependent on society. The human person, reduced to a free-floating, untethered, and uprooted social atom, is more readily manipulated. Del Noce made the startling claim that scientism is even more opposed to tradition than Communism, because in Marxist ideology we still find messianic and biblical archetypes dimly represented in the promise of a future utopia. By contrast, “scientific anti-traditionalism can express itself only by dissolving the ‘fatherlands’ where it was born.” This process leaves the entire field of human life wide open to domination by global corporations and their suborned political agents:

Because of the very nature of science, which provides means but does not determine any ends, scientism lends itself to be used as a tool by some group. Which group? The answer is completely obvious: once the fatherlands are gone, all that is

left are the great economic organisms, which look more and more like fiefdoms. States become their executive instruments.

States as instruments of world-spanning corporations, which operate like fiefdoms, is an apt definition of corporatism—the melding of state and corporate power—which coincides perfectly with Mussolini’s original definition of fascism. In this global non-society, individuals are radically uprooted and instrumentalized. The ultimate result, in the last analysis, is pure nihilism: “After the negation of every possible authority of values, all that is left is pure total negativism, and the will for something so indeterminate that it is close to ‘nothing’,” in Del Noce’s bleak description. This is clearly a society suited neither to a meaningful human life nor to social harmony.

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Photo Credit - Cornwall, Pauline Passmore



Materialism & the Loss of Soul

Kingsley Dennis

The non-material, or non-visible, realm does not lie dormant. It is active, constantly. It is what infuses and makes possible the world we know and see. The intangible realm of vital forces is what we often call the 'spiritual' dimension for within it lies the conscious intelligences that establish material life. Spiritual matters have long been an abstract thing for many people. Yet they are no longer to remain abstract – they are now to flow into culture not only through so-called 'spiritual channels,' but through all manner of ways, including people. The flow and merger between the suprasensory world and the sensory world (the realm of the phenomenal), has always been in operation. Only now, it looks set to increase.

Materialism is all good and well – yet up to a certain point. This is recognised by some as the 'Fall' – the deep immersion into physical reality. To a certain degree, this immersion into physicality was necessary for developing individualism and to perceive existence in relation to Source. Once this recognition is gained, then begins the 'return journey' back to Source/Origin consciousness. However, if a species remains too long within the grip of materialistic forces, then a hardening – or *deadening* – can occur that crystallises certain faculties and organs of perception, which leads to an evolutionary stagnation. As such, the stagnation of evolvment can be due to the over-influence of entropic forces. The impulse of spiritual knowledge (developmental forces) descending into the physical world has been opposed by other forces that do not wish for people to discover their inner freedom. Yet this time, this moment in human development, has been foreseen and, on some levels, even planned for. What is to come about has been viewed as inevitable by those who know what is at stake.

The entropic forces that exist in opposition aim to 'over-materialise' materialism. They intend to deepen the entanglement within physical matter, and to create artificial material forms that would not have arisen in the natural course of human evolvment. This is a matter of exercising certain powers upon the physical plane. This is being applied in such a way as to block a renewal of human culture beyond materialism and to direct it into a new form of materialism, a more etheric form that seems un-material. This is what I refer to as the 'fallacy of materialism' – the digital-virtual realms, whilst seeming contrary to physical-materialism, are in fact working to deepen human entanglement in material forces.

These digitised spaces, because of their sense of non-physicality, are really an etheric manifestation of materialism.

Or rather, a realm of theoretical materialism. Theoretical materialism signifies a reality construct that does not need to be physical to the touch, yet it is based on, or is a projection from, a material foundation. Within both the theoretical and regular mode of materialism, the human being is encapsulated within an amalgamation of material processes. It is also a world of facts and external evidence that a person becomes lost within. All life experience proceeds from this material realm, and this conditions the human being to gain a view of life that is factually based, and to accept that there is no other reality except this world of materialism and factual experience. Any notion of the soul or spirit – the transcendental impulse – is either regarded as being a by-product from material reality or is rejected altogether as a false notion. This is the power of the immersion into matter-reality.

Deep materialism finally becomes a cosmology of entropy and decline. It leads to mechanical, artificial modes of thinking that eventually brings about a stagnation in those forces driving human development. If continued, these materialistic forces carve out a path of technological advancement and evolution that further blocks vital, spiritualised forces. In this route, the human being strives for greater material benefits yet neglects the vital human forces of spiritualised connection. Our current epoch is concerned with the development of the material world; and if the human being is not to degenerate totally into a mere accomplice of machines, then a path must be found which leads from the mechanical impulse towards a life of the spirit.

However, entropic forces are in play that are opposed to forms of spiritualisation (spiritual freedom), and which work to reduce and, eventually, dispose of spiritual seeking and to replace it with an ethereal

and otherworldly ‘virtual paradise’ where all needs can be fulfilled-by-illusion. A part of this ‘supra-materialism’ is the notion of immortality that is arising through transhumanist tropes. This can be referred to as the *immortality falsehood* as it works not through the spirit-soul but through a prolongation of the physical life experience by merger with machinic forms. This is a mode of potential immortality within the physical sphere but not within the spiritual. In the end, it is an entrapment for it disavows the inner spirit release from the physical domain. This can lead to a state of soullessness within the human being as the contact with Source becomes, over time, diminished. Or, perhaps this materialistic, transhumanist agenda will attract those people already without full spirit-soul incarnation.

It may be that there are people walking around in physical incarnation, in physical bodies, yet who are lacking, for want of a better word, a *soul*. Rudolf Steiner made note of this a hundred years ago when he stated

‘...a kind of surplus of individuals is appearing in our times who are without Egos [‘I’], who are not truly human beings. This is a terrible truth... They make the impression of a human being if we do not look closely, but they are not human in the fullest sense of the word.’¹

Steiner warned us to be aware that what we encounter as human beings in human form may not always have to be what it appears to be. He stated that the outer appearance can be just that: appearance. He went on to state: ‘We encounter people in human form who only in their outer appearance are individuals...in truth, these are humans with a physical, etheric, and astral body, but beings are embodied in them, beings that make use of these individuals in order to operate through them.’² What this refers to is that human bodies can be vessels for other beings to operate through.

This makes us realise that the world of ‘spirit’ may not always be what we have thought it to be. In other words, it may not be all divine light and ascension. It also involves the aspect of *discernment*. For there are players and forces that wield a great deal of influence within the physical world. And some of these influences act through the presence of certain individuals that may appear outwardly ‘normal.’ In this light, a completely different kind of spirituality is at work in present-day humanity. It may be inferred, without sounding dramatic, that certain power groups, and their important individual members, are influenced (and perhaps dominated) by a non-human species of being that are intent

on implementing non-human objectives. Such groups and individuals would, in this case, exhibit a distinct lack of ‘soul’ – i.e., empathy and compassion – and would appear to others as displaying almost sociopathic tendencies.³ Yet at the same time, such people can appear unusually charismatic and are able to exert great influence over other people, especially with their words and speeches, whilst being themselves emotionally stunted.

To consider this further, such beings might be motivated in their actions to attempt to block other human beings’ connection to their own individual inner/spiritual impulse. By a range of actions, they could focus on distracting people away from the notion of a metaphysical reality and of their inherent connection to Source (or a realm of vital conscious intelligence beyond matter-reality). In extreme cases, such players might even target the bio-psycho human body in an attempt to sabotage the vessel so as to make it a less viable vehicle for soul-spirit incarnation. What else might they hope to achieve? Again, referring to Rudolf Steiner, he stated that: ‘Their objective is to maintain the whole of life as a mere economic life, to gradually eradicate everything else that is part of the intellectual and spiritual life, to eradicate the spiritual life precisely where it is most active...and swallow up everything through the economic life.’⁴

By hijacking cultural, social, and economic systems, the focus turns away from the inner life, which tends to be more active once people have satisfied their primary needs. Also, if there are uncertainties, disruptions, and fluctuations in these systems, then people can become psychologically influenced in a negative way. That is, for those people who come under the domination of such economic forces – i.e., are subservient through debt – they are more likely to experience a loss of personal empowerment and will. If we take only a cursory glance at the actions of many incumbent leaders, politicians, corporate businesses, financial institutions, and more, we can see a clear lack of any soulful behaviour or intent. Quite the contrary, many of these individuals and groups seem determined to curtail human freedoms, sovereignty, and inner empowerment. If Steiner were alive today, he would no doubt say that what we are currently witnessing upon the physical plane is an act of soulless terraforming of the planet and a controlling manipulation of the human life experience by nefarious forces that have anti-human aims and intentions. Perhaps this is why so many people today are experiencing depression, frustration, and apathy – a paralysis of will – from which they feel unable to resolve. This gets manifested as a sense of weariness and dissatisfaction that is projected out into their everyday lives.

Because of this, and other factors, the consciously aware person of today is being asked to step into their role as a physical representative of sacred life. It is important that metaphysical realities are never diminished or disowned, and that the life of the spirit remains healthy and strong in expression within physical life. If there is ever a struggle against the human soul, then we may be witnessing this in these current times. We would do well to remember that each person possesses that *special treasure* that can never be taken from them. And this is the true eternal and genuine immortality. These are the times to be soulful, and to bring forth the human spirit.

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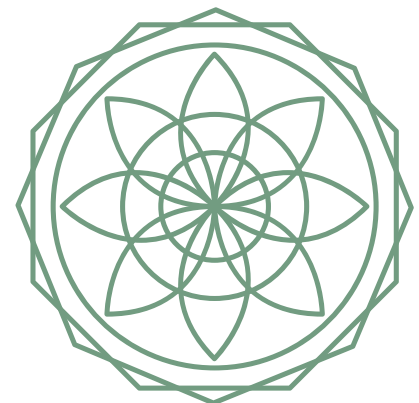
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Meeting the Dalai Lama

Peter Fenwick

At the age of 87, exciting new opportunities do not often come your way So you can imagine my feelings when I opened my emails at breakfast one morning in September and a few miraculous minutes later said to my wife “I’ve had an invitation. To go to India. To see the Dalai Lama.” “You’re joking,” said my wife.

But it was no joke. The invitation came via an American I didn’t know who was organising the trip and said the Dalai Lama had asked for me to come because he’d read about the work I had done on death and dying and realised that it supported his own knowledge that consciousness was not limited to the brain, but is filtered by it. The meeting he planned was to be a small, informal one at his palace in Dharmshala, and it was to take place in about a month’s time.

Naturally this was an invitation I could not refuse. Or so I thought until I told my family about it. Their verdict was unanimous. Of course, there was no way I could go, hobbling around as I did on my two crutches. Three separate plane trips, Inverness to London to Delhi to Dharamshala. And then back again. All for one short meeting. At my age! It was a crazy idea.

It was. But my family could also see and understand how much it would mean to me. Between themselves they worked out a system of carers – one of my London-based grandsons would come up to Inverness and escort me down to London where my son, who lives in Tokyo but would come over to London for the trip, would meet me and come with me to Dharamshala and back again.

There were six of us in the group, a mixture of neuroscientists and theoretical physicists. The group should have included Sir Roger Penrose but he is even

older and more infirm than I am, so his family put their feet down. However, he sent a written summary for the discussion.

Our meeting with the Dalai Lama was in his Palace in Dharamshala and lasted about two hours. We all introduced ourselves and then the Dalai Lama opened the discussion on consciousness. He already understood the quantum mechanical concept of entanglement and he had a discussion with me about what happens when we die. He was very clear that you MUST clean yourself of all attachments before death. Any attachment which you take through the death process with you will be taken into the first Bardo (stage) and so determine your next birth, you will not see the clear light of consciousness when it dawns so that you can then escape your multiple rebirths to this world. He stressed again and again the need for calmness, acceptance and peace as we die. He also talked about compassion, pointing out that a compassionate life was a good one but altruism was the highest virtue that we can attain to and it should be practiced all the time. He repeated again and again the value of altruism.

He stressed the danger of climate change, and the destruction of the human species, but pointed out that there were other planets! He saw consciousness as being fundamental to science but understood that we know very little about it. The brain manifests but does not create consciousness.





At the end of the meeting, I said that we in the Network would be very honoured if he would accept an Honorary Membership of the organisation. He turned to me with a warm smile and said he would be very pleased to accept.

We had asked him earlier if we could meditate with him at the end of the meeting and he did indeed meditate with us. This lasted for two minutes. It was very spiritually powerful and I had the feeling that he was planting a spiritual seed in us all.

He then said goodbye to each of us individually, putting a long white silken scarf round each of our necks. I received a great big bear hug.

After the meeting, we returned to our hotel where we had a de-briefing session. We all agreed that the meeting went extremely well and we were told later that HH would contribute to a book on consciousness for which we had all agreed to write a chapter. It was decided that next April we would hold a meeting in the Dalai Lama's stadium for about 2000 post-graduate students, as we felt that the younger generation had not yet been contaminated by a strict reductionist picture of science and would be open to exploration of this area.

I would like to give my special thanks to Hans for organising the meeting and to everyone who took part in it, all of whom played an important role. And to my lovely son who took care of me

throughout the week.

His Holiness on the topic: MIND and CONSCIOUSNESS

October 13, Thekchen Chöling,
Dharamsala, HP, India —

His Holiness remarked at the Mind & Life Institute Conference that “Scientists haven’t investigated consciousness very deeply. They tend to think of the mind in relation to the brain, and yet the mind is something other than that. The mind is not a product of the brain. It is its own entity. Today’s mind is a continuation of yesterday’s mind. The mind is something worth finding out more about.

“When it comes to the start of a human life, the meeting of the physical factors doesn’t necessarily result in a conception. A third factor is consciousness. And for this reason, it would be worthwhile investigating what consciousness is. “Trying to account for the origin of a person’s life only on the basis of their body would be difficult and unsatisfactory. We observe that twins, despite sharing a physical origin in the same womb, display differences in their personal characteristics.

“The nature of consciousness is said to be clarity and awareness and it is difficult to argue that this is a product of the brain.”

Richie Davidson interjected, “One of the things you’ve pointed out to us is that the scientific belief that the mind is the same

as the brain is a belief not a fact. This is at the heart of what we have gleaned from you. Indeed, we scientists have not made real progress in investigating this over the last 100 years.”

“The brain is part of our body,” His Holiness continued. “And consciousness depends on the brain but is still separate from it. Consciousness and the body are two different things. We experience peace on a mental level and by comparison physical comfort is not that important. In the modern world we have neglected to explore how to find peace of mind.

“We have five sense organs that give rise to sensory consciousness, but we also have mental consciousness. Meditation, for example, is a function of mental consciousness—and it’s worth learning about. “When we seek the source of consciousness, we find that it is a continuity. As I said before, today’s consciousness is a continuation of yesterday’s consciousness. Recognizing that continuity prompts questions about previous lives since there are young children who have clear memories of them. “The idea that the mind, consciousness, is a continuity also contributes to a sense that we can cultivate the mind’s qualities. At the same time, the mind is not a monolithic thing. There are levels of consciousness of varying subtlety. Vajrayana literature describes these levels in detail as well as the way coarse levels of consciousness dissolve into subtler levels.

One indication of subtler levels of mind can be seen in the case of people who are declared clinically dead and yet whose bodies remain fresh because the subtlest level of consciousness has yet to depart.

Practitioners of meditation familiarize themselves with the dissolution of different states of consciousness at the time of death, which enables them to recognise without effort when the innate clear light, the subtlest level of consciousness, manifests. “What we see here is a Yogi, a practitioner, using a naturally occurring process. He or she seizes the opportunity of the natural process of dying and maintains an awareness of the different stages of dissolution as they take place, ultimately reaching the stage referred to as ‘all emptiness’ or clear light. The yogi uses that state of pure luminosity to focus on emptiness. In other words, he or she uses the subtlest state of mind to realize emptiness. Such a yogi, partly guided by karma, is said to be able to choose where he or she will next take birth.”

Dr Peter Fenwick is Emeritus President of the Network.



On the Death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Sermon delivered by Rt Hon Lord Waldegrave of North Hill, Provost of Eton College, Eton College Chapel - 11 September 2022

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.

Photo Credits - Graham Keutenius, Eton Photography.

An old lady, a very old lady, has died. As you might expect, her children, her grandchildren, her great grandchildren, her friends and relations mourn her. They find consolation no doubt in the old lady's unshakeable Christian faith. Perhaps they remember the words of the preacher in the book of Ecclesiastes we have just heard read whose magnificent poem echoes down the centuries, and find solace after a long life well lived in his words from which none of us can escape: there is a time to die. Thus a beloved person is lost to those around her who loved her, and is mourned, as we all may hope and wish to be mourned.

That is all perfectly normal.

So what is it that is happening to us and to many, many millions of people not just here in the United Kingdom, but around the world, which makes this old lady's death leave us feeling so profoundly moved and so bereft? Why is it that we feel such genuine and heartfelt grief? This is not normal; this is extraordinary.

It is not that the old lady was some titanic writer or scientist, some politician or soldier who had led nations to triumph or glory, some Mandela or Tolstoy or Newton or Napoleon. Not at all. She was an honest, decent, hardworking woman with a sharp sense of humour and a heavenly smile; an iron memory for faces, a fascination with people, a great expertise in bloodstock, an affection for this place which she often visited, and a quiet but profound Christian faith, the rock on which she built her life. Could we find other people, whom perhaps we know and love ourselves in our own families with similar qualities? Yes, we could, though we would be very hard pressed to find someone who was her equal in expertise on breeding race horses.

So what is going on? Why is the death of this one old lady, our late Queen Elizabeth II, so profoundly moving? Not just here in Britain, but around the world? Because it is profoundly moving, and if you do not feel it, there is perhaps something a little missing in you.



The answer I think is this. Through the genetic lottery of hereditary monarchy she had, not of her choice, laid upon her a task, from which she could not honourably escape, of almost intolerable weight. The task was to inhabit a role - and I use the word borrowed from the theatre deliberately - a role which meant that every day of her long life was constrained and shaped and observed; which meant that she sacrificed virtually all her freedom and voluntarily circumscribed her own individuality; a role which made us all feel that we owned her.

What was this role, and who was the ruthless playwright who scripted it?

Well, the role was to embody, physically, the values and traditions of the nations of which she was sovereign. And do it forever, for all her life.

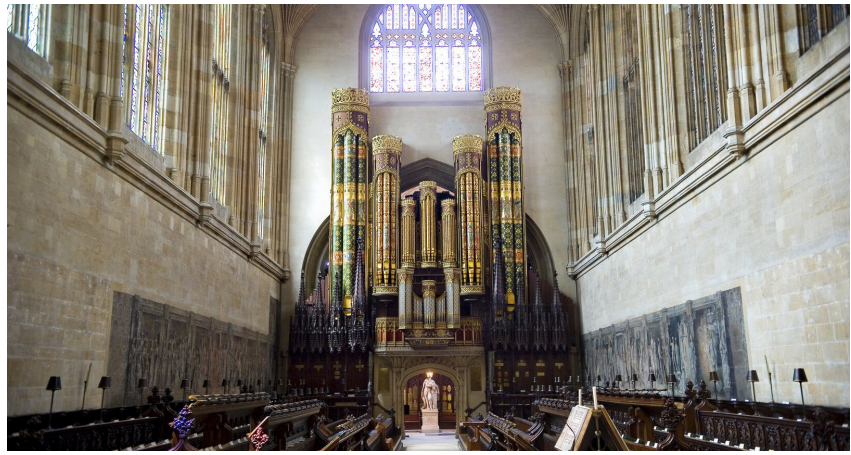
Who wrote this terrifying script? The answer to that is: look in the mirror. We did, her peoples. We insisted she undertake it, and were often very quick to criticise from the cheap seats if we detected - usually wholly unfairly - any falling off in her performance.

Could she have refused the part? Yes, in theory she could, her uncle did, though she regarded such escapism with contempt. Could she have made a mess of it and failed our expectations? Yes indeed she could have done - a good many of her ancestors did make a spectacular mess of it. But she - did not. Aged not much older than you boys, at her twenty first birthday, she looked her future in the eye, accepted it, and pledged her life to fulfilling the role we had laid on her for the rest of her life.

Now you may say - "it was just a role - you've said it yourself, Provost - all play acting- processions and stage- set palaces". But if you do say that you misunderstand in a profound way what it is that makes a nation, a people, a community, a family even, work.

Let me tell you one story from my own life to illustrate what I mean. When I was Minister of State in the Foreign Office during and after the fall of the Berlin Wall, I had the honour to receive in my grand office, which overlooked Whitehall and the Cenotaph, the first Foreign Secretary of free, non-communist Poland.

It was the day of the opening of Parliament. We held our talks, while outside there was the noise of the preparation of the great procession when the monarch, escorted by the Household Cavalry, travels in the royal coach from Buckingham Palace to Parliament. There were bands playing, commands shouted, the clash of arms coming to the Present. It became clear to me that my Polish



colleague wanted to watch the parade rather than to talk to me. So we put our papers aside and stood by the window and watched. He turned to me, this hero of anti-communist resistance, who had helped free his country and said: "Minister, what we are watching matters. The communists robbed us of our rituals".

He was right.

He might have quoted Shakespeare; Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida*:

*There is a mystery- with whom relation
Durst not meddle - in the soul of state,
Which hath an operation more divine
Than breath or pen can give expression to.*

No society or community can survive long without the rituals which embody what Shakespeare calls the state's soul -the ideals and dreams to which that society wishes to aspire, though all societies fail much of the time to achieve them. As another book of the Old Testament puts it: "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

Some countries choose as Britain does, to have a hereditary constitutional monarch whom we require to embody that vision, that soul of our community, of our nationhood. Without thinking, often, what we are asking, we lay upon an individual human being what is a tremendous duty. We choose the person in an ancient way, by heredity, and require them to undertake the near impossible task of representing the sort of values to which we aspire and then to keep those values themselves safe from what Winston Churchill called the rancour and asperity of party politics - rancour and asperity which are inseparable from democracy but which, unless they are bounded by some sense of shared service to the national community can shake a nation to pieces.

So there we have it. This old lady - one of us, one of the ordinary human race - had that burden laid upon her, that extraordinary duty - to represent the very

soul of the nation - of all the nations she served - to keep that soul safe and separate from the necessary power struggles beneath - and by becoming the very exemplar of service to give us something to love and to serve, and yes, sometimes something even to die for - and to do all this as a real, living, breathing, person. That is what she accepted all those years ago and having accepted the burden, she carried it all her long life without missing a beat.

That is what she did. And I think no one in the thousand years and more of our monarchy, ever did it better. That is why we, and all those millions feel bereft, and why we are right so to feel.

Now this strange ancient institution of monarchy provides also the antidote to the feeling of loss that so many feel. It comes, this antidote, much in the same way that it comes in many families. On the day that my own beloved mother died, some years back, another of her great grandchildren was born: life goes on. On the day that the Queen died, King Charles succeeded and in his own powerful and moving words on Friday made clear not only that he well understands the burden that he now carries on our behalf, but accepts it and will to the best of his own ability, carry it as his mother did. So we mourn, but we also celebrate: the story goes on. All the values of service, self-effacement, and duty, often so under-rated in the rat races for power, money or fame which surround us, find a new quiet champion on whom we place the old burden, and who we look to with hope to carry on the work.

So that is why so many millions mourn: it is our way of saying "thank you" and for showing that we understand how well that quietly heroic old lady represented to us and for us all that is best in us. It shows that we know in our hearts that without such a rock of service on which to build our fractious human society so much will be lost. It reminds us that without that vision of duty and shared obligation, the people may indeed perish.



John Kapp's Woodland Memorial Celebration

Phoebe Wyss

We celebrated John's departure from this life with an alternative memorial gathering that took place on 11th September this year in a 5-acre private wood where Nature has been left in charge. With its overgrowth of exuberant vegetation – ancient monarch trees surrounded by throne contenders struggling upwards to pierce the canopy, contrasting with the dark, dense undergrowth in which brambles and nettles shelter the secret life of rabbits, and deep in the soil damp fungal roots crawl with worm and insect life. John loved it there.

A stream flows downhill through this wood towards the grounds of Slaughman Manor - a 16th century moated grange now in ruins - bordering the wood on one side. And the area along the edge of the stream where there's a wide enough strip bare of undergrowth was chosen as the place to congregate. There John's memorial tree was found – an ancient oak overhanging the stream, likely to have been planted 600 years ago when the manor was built.

Invitations were sent out to all and sundry senders of cards and messages of condolence, and more than 50 people turned up, a motley throng reflecting the diversity of the many social and political action groups in which John was passionately engaged. Instructions on finding the location of the wood had been provided, and a list telling people what to bring – for example something to sit on and a contribution of food and drink for a shared picnic. The result was an informal free-and-easy gathering where people could do their own thing, which befitted a libertarian maverick like John.

Scattering the ashes was central to the event, and a hole was dug in the earth to receive the ashes at the foot of the chosen oak between its gnarled roots. John's photo was fixed above to the stalwart trunk, whose old cracked bark was being pierced by new shoots sprouting baby green leaves. Warm golden September sunshine filtered down all around through the foliage and there was a shimmering stillness in the air.

A playlist of music had been prepared on Georgia's (Phoebe's daughter's) phone which, thanks to new technology could be played at a volume high enough to

be heard even by those standing further away. As the human voice did not carry so well in the wood, a minimum of verbal communication was planned. Music speaks more deeply and fully than words anyway.

As a prelude to the ceremony, Janine, a shamanic healer and friend of Phoebe's, opened a sacred space around the oak tree by calling in the four directions with their elements of fire, air, water and earth. Then Phoebe stepped forward to lead a meditation in which she invited those present to move into a deeper state of awareness through connecting with the trees around them. She suggested they imagine themselves to be trees, feeling their spines straight and tall as tree trunks, their arms as branches, their heads somewhere high in the foliage and their feet grounding them in the stable earth below. Then they were invited to feel the continual rippling of the energies within them, to notice that as a tree they were not static but everything in them was continuously in flow... and to respond by gently swaying to the music.

Then Phoebe lifted the urn with the ashes and ceremoniously poured them into the earth so they merged with the roots of the oak tree. There was a pause in the music during which we all stood in silence with raised arms, and as this slowly came to an end, some people were moved to spontaneously approach John's tree one by one and touch or hug it.

The participants were then invited to form a circle in the largest clearing along the stream for a sharing. Some had prepared poems for John which they read out; others spoke spontaneously of their reminiscences of him in ways which



expressed a lot of love. For many his high energy and refusal to be daunted in his campaigning by opposition of any kind, was an inspiration. When this came to an end people dispersed to the picnic areas to create informal groups to connect and share the food and drink they'd brought. In one a camp fire had been lit.

The celebration came to an end with everyone coming together again in the large circle to join in singing some of John's favourite songs. These included 'What shall we do with a Drunken Sailor' and 'The Raggle Taggle Gypsies' and so John's woodland memorial event ended joyfully, with laughter as well as tears and with singing and dancing. This is the poem Phoebe read in the sharing circle:

God and I in space alone
And nobody else in view.
'And where are the people, O lord,' I said,
'The earth below and the sky o'er head
And the dead whom once I knew?'

'That was a dream,' God smiled and said,
'A dream that seemed to be true.
There were no people, living or dead.
There was no earth and no sky o'er head,
There was only myself - in you.'

'Why do I feel no fear,' I asked,
Meeting you here this way?'
For I have sinned I know full well-
And is there heaven, and is there hell,
And is this the Judgement Day?'

'Nay, those were but dreams,'
The great God said,
'Dreams that have ceased to be.
There are no such things as fear and sin.
There is no you - you never have been -
There is nothing at all but me.'

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

A Short Biography of John Kapp

John was born in Croydon on 17th November 1935. When war broke out he and his two-year old sister were separated from their parents and evacuated to a boarding school in Wales. His mother, who was by profession a Freudian psychiatrist, supported the war effort by working as a G.P. and his father was a professor of electrical engineering.

Following his father John studied electrical engineering, and after graduating worked for 20 years as a consulting engineer at home and abroad, including developing power networks in Saudi Arabia and Bali. A new life phase began in his forties, when, having been made redundant, he turned his hobby into a new career and founded a sailing club. There followed twenty fulfilling years in which he taught sailing and skippered adventurous yachting holidays around Europe, once even braving an Atlantic crossing.

Then, when he reached his sixties, a new life phase began. His wife Janet developed cancer, and John turned



to alternative healing methods when conventional medicine failed her. Janet died in May 2000, but John, who by then had 'swallowed the anchor' (given up sailing), put his energy into campaigning for the reform of the NHS. A right-wing conservative like his father, he'd always been active in local politics and for a term had served on the Council. Now he became the tireless writer and distributor of pamphlets canvassing for drug-free health treatments and the provision of free complementary health care to those who otherwise couldn't afford it.

In 2001 he met his second wife Phoebe Wyss. She'd been recruited to the team he'd formed to create a cooperative-run health centre in a large Victorian building he'd bought standing opposite Hove town hall. The aim was to introduce complementary therapies to a wider public and disseminate information about drug-free medication. During this time John attended many different courses to learn about alternative healing techniques and became qualified as a Family Constellation therapist and Mindfulness meditation facilitator. Right up to his last weeks of life he was still busy with his clients who came for the free sessions and courses he offered in his health centre.

John had also made it his life mission to promote his father's books, which had received meagre attention when they were published in the 1940's. He did so by creating a website and writing numerous articles for it to explain and defend his father's unconventional scientific theories. During 2021 he was busy writing a book for this purpose in which he also promoted his own unconventional ideas on cosmology, astrology and the politics of public health. Its title is 'Campaign for Open Science with Spirituality and without the Big Bang' and it's due to be published by the end of 2022.

John died on 3rd August 2022 in the Royal Sussex hospital following a stroke.

Phoebe Wyss is John's widow and a professional astrologer.

Velta Snikere Wilson (1920-2022)

Liz Till

Foreword by Bernard Carr. Velta Snikere Wilson, who died on December 9, shortly before her 102nd birthday, was our oldest and one of our earliest members, having come to London after the war. In later years she greatly enjoyed the meetings of the Hampstead group and brought many of her students as guests. She was a well-known Latvian poet, receiving the Latvian Literature Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019, and she contributed greatly to the Latvian Independence Movement. She was part of the Indian dancing troupe of Ram Gopal from 1956 to 1958 and one of the first independent Yoga teachers in London in the 1960s, still teaching it until several years ago. Her 100th birthday in 2020 was the occasion of a remarkable zoom celebration, with a contribution from the President of Latvia. A surprisingly large number of SMN members have become centenarians – including Sir Frederick Warner, Mary Scott, Mary Swainson and Lawrence LeShan – so membership seems to be associated with longevity. We are grateful for the following tribute from her friend and student Liz Till.



Velta was born on Christmas Day, so it's appropriate that her name means 'gift'. From early childhood, she entered meditative states spontaneously. Finding her sitting still and rapt at the age of two, her mother asked "Where did you come from, little one?" At primary school, she persuaded her mystified friends to sit and listen to the sounds of the subtle inner world as she practised Nada yoga and was surprised that they could not hear them. Aged 9, she resolved "to only speak the Truth, otherwise life is not worth living". Aged 13, she was told by her first Riga yoga teacher "You must have been a yogi in a previous life" since she already understood everything. The family ethos was intellectual materialism. Her father was an ENT consultant surgeon and her mother "the most elegant woman in Riga". She loved elegance but materialism did not satisfy her.

She honed her words, writing poetry from her very early years and studying philosophy and languages at Riga University. Her linguistic precision was valued as an interpreter for the British army in Vienna after World War 2 and this enabled her to financially support her parents and four siblings in their escape from Soviet-occupied Latvia. After marriage to a British army captain in Vienna, she settled in England but maintained her Latvian contacts and supported Latvians in their quest for freedom from the Soviet regime. In England she gained qualifications in physiotherapy, psychotherapy and autogenic training, working part-time for the NHS. She also studied comparative religion at King's College London and was a founder of the British Wheel of Yoga.

Velta's empirical exploration of consciousness was rigorous and never stopped. Through her Indian dancing with Ram Gopal and yoga, she appreciated the wisdom of the body and stressed that "here you have an object which cannot escape your observation and is a good focus for meditation." She instructed students to "be aware of four spaces: [1] the room you're in, [2] your body, [3] your inner world, [4] a space beyond individuality, aligning yourself with infinity." She taught hundreds of students to become teachers for the British Wheel of Yoga, using a practice based on the Yamas and Niyamas. They were expected to observe rather than believe and to make their own discoveries with an open mind. "Keep your attic window open" she said to sceptics of subtle knowledge. She taught large adult-education yoga classes from the early 1960s until 1990 and then small groups in her yoga room at home until 2015.

She also interpreted dreams to those of us who brought them to her dream groups, offered occasional relaxation/regression workshops to enable people to explore their past lives and (without announcing it) practised distant and in-person healing. When students had disturbing kundalini experiences, she referred them to Peter Fenwick, whom she trusted to discriminate between kundalini and psychosis, and she advised her teacher students to do the same. She was psychic and deposited records of her experiences at Lampeter University.

She hosted philosophy seminars on Patanjali's yoga sutras at her home in Crouch End,

which were the epitome of clarity. She said that glimpses of Samadhi opened up the possibility of matter arising from consciousness and stressed that accurate observation depends on the state of mind of the observer: "Yoga is not a collecting of information but a process of transformation; not a matter of skilful manipulation of reference libraries but of detaching layers of ignorance from oneself." She was very happy to observe – partly through her interactions with the SMN – that science was gradually developing subtler approaches, not limited by reductionist materialism.

Poetry was a continuing way for her to explore the deeper inner world of consciousness. "Velta here. ... A poem has arrived!" she would announce on the phone, poor sight having made legible writing very difficult during her last two years, so she needed scribes. She did not claim to create poems; she was merely attentive when they appeared in her consciousness. However, she often used her Occam's razor mind to remove unnecessary words and clarify the message she had received. It was, for her, an enquiry into the nature of consciousness: "If you want to understand something, write a poem about it."

Little movement was practical in her hospital bed at home, where she spent the last year of her life, but she continued to practise and teach yoga for the hands. She reminded visiting students and carers of the hand mudras and demonstrated graceful hand movements from Indian dance.

When asked about the transition at the end of this life, she said "I have always lived partly in another world". She viewed death "with curiosity". Asked for one piece of advice she wanted us to remember, she replied "Keep asking". She was unable to make sounds for the last four weeks of her life. During her last four days, she did not communicate or drink, but lay there, simply breathing. Trying to capture Velta in prose is impossible, so her poetry is the primary data. Therefore her last poem, a sutra recorded on 17 September 2021, seems an appropriate way to end this tribute:

*I was not asleep
And I was not awake
I was where things are made known
And I understood
What I knew not was there.*



Galileo Commission Summit V: Spiritual Awakenings Book Launch

Day 1: Saturday, 24th September 2022

Sue Lewis

The Summit was introduced and chaired by Marjorie Woollacott and David Lorimer, the editors of *Spiritual Awakenings: Scientists and Academics Describe Their Experiences*, just published by the Academy for the Advancement of Postmaterialist Sciences (AAPS). The book contains fifty-seven contributions divided into seven sections. The first session featured five of the twelve contributors to 'Part 1: Spiritually Transformative Experiences (STEs) Through Spiritual Practices', and the second session featured four contributors from Parts 2 and 3: STEs Occurring During or Awakening from Sleep or Spontaneously During Daily Activities. Their experiences are underpinned by the quest to 'Know thyself'. The event attracted a large, worldwide participating audience on Zoom.

Session 1

The first speaker, **Dr Athena Potari**, is a Fellow at the Center for Hellenic Studies at Harvard University, and founder of Atheonoa—a forum devoted to the study of Ancient Greek Philosophy as a non-dual wisdom tradition which combines scientific reasoning with the experiential realization of Logos and Being as Eudaimonia'. Athena, who launched 'A Call for a Renaissance of the Spirit in the Humanities' (*Paradigm Explorer* 2021/3, pp. 7-9; Official Launch 23rd April 2022), addressed the meeting from her office in Athens. A large white porcelain owl, sacred to Athena the goddess of wisdom, was aptly perched on her desk, and she set the tone for a day of intense sharing. Athena had been relentlessly seeking an elusive truth she was ready to die for when, one evening at her meditation group, in a deep state of absorption, she sank into an abyss of fire from which she arose to witness her true nature as she emerged into a place of being, eudaimonia—opening into oneness—awakened to consciousness in unity and liberated from seeking. At last she could be her authentic self.

Co-Director of the Choosing Earth project, **Duane Elgin MBA MA** is author of numerous articles and several books, his most recent, in 2020, being *Choosing Earth: Humanity's Great Transition to a Mature Planetary Civilization* (reviewed by David Lorimer in *Paradigm Explorer* 2021/2, pp. 55-56). In late 1977, Duane took a half-year off work

to focus on reading and meditation, gathering vast quantities of seemingly disorganized knowledge. Finally, a process of intense self-inquiry over three days culminated in transformative awakening to self, suffused in radiance, intelligence, creativity and love. Duane co-authored a book with Joseph Campbell (1904-87), who asserted that people are not so much seeking meaning in life as a deeper awakening to aliveness itself. With psychic sensitivity, Duane tunes into the literacy of consciousness and is a social visionary.

Whereas both Athena and Duane actively strove towards a higher state of consciousness, assisted by meditation practice, and altered their career paths after spiritual awakening, for **Professor Emerita Marilyn Monk** spiritual emergence came unexpectedly. In 1976, travelling from the UK, where she researched and lectured at University College London, to Australia, where she was brought up, she stopped off in India to visit a friend at an ashram in Pune. During her audience with the master, she was transported into an ecstatic state of being that would sit awkwardly with her career as a rational scientist working with facts and evidence. For Marilyn, who had experienced the awe and wonder of nature as a child and was a high academic achiever, her spiritual awakening, and its cynical reception by some of her colleagues, came as a shock, and she has had to learn how to balance her parts—scientist, poet and mystic—as complementary ways of knowing and being.

Bo Ahrenfelt MD, former psychiatrist and radio producer, witnessed thought transference among members of his family in Sweden, so his awareness of the inner life began early. He discovered Buddhism at the age of twelve, started meditating at twenty-six, and came to recognise the purpose of psychotherapy as being 'to restore the capacity for love' (citing Claudio Naranjo [1932-2019]). He likened his awakening insights to stations on the Hero's Journey. Of our interconnected consciousness, he said, 'we are all meeting in a soup where information is moving around and we need to trust the process'. His soup caught the mood of his audience and generated enthusiastic chat, as the soup became an 'ocean of oneness' and a 'sea of love'.

Dr Marjorie Woollacott described how, as a young neuroscientist, she had joined her sister on a meditation retreat out of curiosity. Unexpectedly, she responded to the swami's touch with a surge of energy radiating outwards from her heart to fill her whole being. Returning home, she began regular morning meditations, while still considering herself to be first and foremost a scientist. After leading a dual life for twenty-five years, she began to bridge the gap. As a Professor of Human Physiology at the University of Oregon, teaching courses on neuroscience and rehabilitation, she introduced complementary and alternative medicine and meditation into the curriculum. Thereafter, she became Research Director for the International Association of Near Death Studies (IANDS) and she is President of AAPS.

Participants were enormously appreciative of the honesty and integrity with which speakers shared their unique experiences, and Athena summarised our mood and expectations in the chat: 'In the age of Aquarius, Knowledge will be popularised again: it will no longer be dependent on detached, patriarchally-structured academic authorities over and above the people, but new institutions will arise based on popular call, support and need for practical, meaningful forms of knowledge and education. That is precipitated by the Internet and the unprecedented knowledge circulation it has enabled. This present forum is evidence of that shift'.

Session 2

Jessica Corneille MSc is a research psychologist working for Scientific and Medical Network (SMN), who is on the Steering Committee of the Galileo Commission. Jessica's lucid dream filled her with such living energy that light emanated from her body as the doors of perception opened, unveiling ancient wisdom and transforming her from an atheist into a spiritual being full of life, love, empathy and gratitude. The answers, she felt, were already within her before this altered state

of consciousness encompassed everything, bringing her lived experience into the world of science.

Spiritual Awakenings illustrates many scenarios. The contributions of **Dr Joan Walton**, who lectures at York St John University in the Department of Education, and **Dr Chris Roe**, Chair of Psychology at the University of Northampton, shift emphasis from specific life-changing and transformative breakthroughs to evolving spiritual consciousness with awareness of the role education can play when students are encouraged to be open to spiritual life and to discuss their experiences.

Joan found her upbringing by parents who were Christian missionaries somewhat stifling. At the age of nineteen, Carl Jung's autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, opened her mind to depth psychology and active imagination. Synchronicities became a daily occurrence as she made a commitment to be true to herself. The death of her partner and soulmate at the age of forty one affected her profoundly in ways too complex to describe in a short book entry. During her mid-thirties, Joan had been a social worker in a society that lacked care. As an academic she has developed greater empathy, spirituality and political awareness (see *Paradigm Explorer* 2022/1, pp. 3-6). Joan actively encourages students to formulate convincing arguments for researching and writing dissertations on topics outside the box that will be worthwhile additions to the pool of knowledge while also assisting their personal growth and spiritual awakening.

Chris took his first degree in biological sciences. So he was using quantitative-experimental methods in controlled conditions as a PhD student researching ways in which people might simulate psychic or mediumistic abilities. As he noticed that some participants were conducting their own experiments within his experiment, he recognised that humans are not data generators, but sentient beings each with their own agenda. A fellow student with a lifelong theoretical interest in parapsychology acknowledged his discomfort when meeting people who reported actually having psychic experiences. Chris recognised the shortcomings of a dualistic perspective that separated researcher from researched. One way of bridging the gap was to bring researchers into experiments, thus increasing their sensitivity to inner experience. From the first-person perspective, he concluded that human beings are meaning-makers rather than factfinders. But what defines meaning, which varies from culture to culture? Chris encourages students and colleagues to share their paranormal experiences, which are mostly less uncommon and more normal

than first perceived and often give impetus to growth and self-realisation.

Dr Gary E. Schwartz, Professor of Psychology, Medicine, Neurology, Psychiatry and Surgery at the University of Arizona, and founding president of AAPS, was raised in a reformed Jewish family that was atheistic and scientific. He had two near death experiences (NDEs), one as an infant of less than a year old, a second during his early teens, and an out of body experience (OBE) as a jazz musician playing *Summertime* to an ecstatic audience. He was inspired by Carl Sagan's ethic, 'I believe that the extraordinary should be pursued. But extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence', which featured in his recent talk to SMN (14 September 2022). Another significant influence was Huston Smith (1919-2016), the scholar of religious studies who also mentored Neal Grossman. Gary, a well-trained scientist whose eyes had been opened to the universal mind, asked the Universe to give him another name for God and received the answer, 'Sam'. Pre-Internet, few people, including Gary, knew that the Old Testament name Samuel derived from the Hebrew phrase 'Name for God'. Gary rounded off his entertaining talk with a poem that included the words, 'Soul is Wisdom, Spirit is Love', to which David added that Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) had referred to Divine Love and Wisdom as wine and bread.

Animated conversation followed. The academic lived with the sword of Damocles, poised between the need to filter out self-defensive sceptics before sharing anomalous experiences, to avoid loss of status, and the need to keep donors happy, to avoid loss of funding. Courses referencing the inner life could pass scrutiny, provided they attracted students and money, but many academics felt unable to express their spirituality until after they retired. Professor Emeritus John Palka reminded everyone that great scientists like Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1727) and Swedenborg had studied both the Book of Nature and the Book of Spirit before materialist and physicalist philosophies prevailed. Gandhi said: 'Love is an ontological force'. **Andrew, Lord Stone of Blackheath** summed up the first day in the chat: 'This has been not only fascinating but an important step forward'.

Sue Lewis has an MA in Western Esotericism, a BA in Spanish and French, Diploma in Astrological Psychology, Certificate in Transpersonal Perspectives.



Galileo Commission Summit V: Spiritual Awakenings Book Launch

Day 2, Sessions 3 and 4, 25 September 2022

<https://vimeo.com/753989178> and <https://vimeo.com/754012558>

Edi Bilimoria DPhil

Natalie Dyer, Research Scientist with Connor Integrative Health Network, chaired the session on spiritually transforming experiences (STEs) triggered through the Word, NDE or Psychedelic Experience.

Federico Faggin is best known for designing the first commercial microprocessor, the Intel 4004. He received the 2009 National Medal of Technology and Innovation, from President Barack Obama. He is currently president of Federico and Elvia Faggin Foundation, dedicated to the science of consciousness. One day with his family at Lake Tahoe, he experienced a beam of love that seemed to rush out of his chest. There was white light everywhere, and he realised that everything is made of that love and light. He felt connected with all that exists and realised that this was the deep essence of who we truly are. Incredibly, what made this experience so astonishing was that he was both the experiencer and the experienced. He was simultaneously the world and the observer of the world. He was the world observing itself.

Neal Grossman taught Philosophy at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is the author of *The Spirit of Spinoza: Healing the Mind* and *Conversations with Socrates and Plato*. Neal unashamedly stated that he was once a die hard materialist atheist, his way of understanding how humans are made was merely atoms and molecules. One day when in the library he picked up a book on Plato's Allegory of The Cave. This was a defining moment. Tears streamed from his eyes, his body started shaking, and in his mind he completely understood the meaning of the

allegory. His test, then, for any philosophy was whether it would be consistent with the allegory. Another cathartic experience was when he read Schrödinger's *What Is Life?* where the great scientist argued that consciousness is not in the plural.

Vasileios Basios, a member of the Board of the Scientific and Medical Network and the Steering Team of the Galileo Commission, conducts interdisciplinary research on the foundations of complexity science and nonlinear systems, having been tutored by Ilya Prigogine (Nobel Laureate) at the Solvay Institutes in ULB, and by Emiliós Bouratinos on meditation and philosophy. He realised that physics is not enough to answer the deeper questions of life and existence, and this constant seeking led him to the SMN. He drew a distinction between what physicists talk about over drinks in the bar and their assertions at work. Pointing to the problem with words and language, he emphasised the importance of the poetical and the mythical because they draw out the magic of words, not pixel by pixel. We are not here to 'shut up and calculate'; we are here to learn and play.

Joyce Hawkes received a National Honorary Award and was elected as Fellow in the AAAS based on her research. An NDE in the late 70s 'called' her to change careers and become a healing facilitator. She has a TEDx talk with over 1 million views plus television appearances and interviews. Joyce was employed as a research scientist for National Marine Fisheries Service in Seattle. While cleaning her house a thick glass art piece over the fireplace crashed on her head; whereupon

she found herself in a long, dark tunnel facing a shiny being and felt a presence of love. Later, in front of a sacred shrine in Portland, Oregon, she heard a female voice say, "You are called to heal". This is now her life's mission – to show that love supports us at all levels.

Dr Eben Alexander III, MD completed neurosurgical residency at Duke and a cerebrovascular fellowship at Newcastle General Hospital in the U.K., before teaching neurosurgery at the Brigham & Women's and Children's Hospitals and Harvard Medical School in Boston, achieving the rank of Associate Professor. He once held a strictly reductive materialist worldview resulting from his medical training. Inexplicable phenomena would someday be explained by a deeper understanding of the brain structure and function. His worldview was completely overturned in 2008 when he suddenly entered a deep weeklong coma due to a near lethal bacterial infection. Three doctors not involved in his care, but who were fascinated by his recovery said that the brain was in no shape for a spiritual experience; moreover, where did that recovery come from? During his coma he was rescued by a spinning white light packaged with musical melody which served as a gateway valve to a grander reality. His guardian Angel during his journey assured him that he was deeply loved and cherished. In his view, idealism, the notion of top-down causation-layers of information assimilation in the universe to which we have access as sentient beings is the best way of understanding ourselves and reality.

Dr. Natalie Dyer is President of the Center for Reiki Research; also an energy medicine practitioner and teacher specializing in Reiki and North American, European, and Tibetan shamanic practices. Her transformative experience occurred at age twenty-three years when she took the shamanic medicine *salvia divinorum*. As her awareness was leaving her physical body, she noticed two nonhuman beings or humanoids behind her, whose task seemed to be to limit her awareness by controlling what information entered her brain to be perceived – like an operating system and a controlling mechanism. As the Salvia continued in potency, she had a full ego death with no subjective sense of self, no life story and nothing but consciousness. Then as she reconnected with her body the two hominoids were back and warned her that, at her stage, she could not perceive this other reality and function there without going insane.

Chris Bache is professor emeritus in the department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Youngstown State University, Emeritus Fellow at the Institute of Noetic Sciences, and on the Advisory Board of Grof Legacy Training. Following the ground-breaking work of Stanislav Grof, his conviction was that psychedelics represent a profound revolution in philosophy and psychology because psychedelics allow the layperson to access dimensions and realms formerly the province of advanced contemplatives and mystics. Articulating and recording experiences provides more clarity of subsequent experiences. When used conscientiously with highly focused approach psychedelics allow a merging with what he called the Mind of the Universe; but it is indispensable to undergo the purification process when going deeper into these subtler states of reality.

Panel discussions centred around the sacred and inviolate nature of transformative experiences, the difficulties of expressing the ineffable in words, pros and cons of psychedelics and meditation.

Jude Currihan chaired the STE sessions Triggered by Psychic Experiences, pointing out that mind and consciousness are not what we have but literally what we and the whole world *are*. We are just waking up to the idea that we are essentially spiritual beings having a human experience.

Helané Wahbeh is the Director of Research at the Institute of Noetic Sciences, an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Neurology at Oregon Health & Science University, and President of the Parapsychological Association. Her journey started from age ten when she attended spiritualist meetings or seances where she found herself in dialogue with beings coming through relatives. But her major spiritual awakening began with the ‘dark night of the soul’ when her marriage broke.

She resorted to meditative practises to access transcendent states, to clear obstacles and thereby shifted world-view, which shattered the idea that the body is reality and instead affirmed consciousness as part of a magnificent whole connected with all other magnificent wholes. She developed channelling to access the infinite beyond and understood that conventional notions of reality based on the personal self were false.

Jennifer “Kim” Penberthy, Chester F. Carlson Professor of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences, and the Associate Director for Clinician Wellness at the University of Virginia School of Medicine was raised in Appalachia. She was able to hold both the views of her scientific household and the superstitions and beliefs of the local culture. In her mid 20s she visited the beach with her mother who then went to swim in the ocean. While dozing on the beach, she became aware of a crowd of voices in the distance and saw people gathered at the waters’ edge. Then she saw an older gentleman wearing a hat helping her mother out of the water. There was a lifeguard on one side and the older gentleman on the other side. When she finally asked her mother who was the older man with a hat walking with her out of the ocean, without hesitation, her mother replied. ‘That was my grandfather’. Kim’s abiding message is that materialistic scientific reality is limited and love is foundational in our lives.

Laurel Waterman, currently a doctoral student in Curriculum and Pedagogy at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, and a student member of the Academy for the Advancement of Post-materialist Sciences, described how the sudden death of her husband, spurred her insight into consciousness, previously, unquestioningly, believing that the brain creates consciousness ‘because that is what science says’. She read books on past life regression and decided to attend a Miracles Happen workshop, which included exercises in psychometry, exchanging objects with a partner. Laurel saw in her mind’s eye her partner boarding a cruise ship, and an elderly Chinese man in a wheelchair who her partner confirmed was her own father. Laurel’s partner further confirmed that the visions Laurel saw actually happened – the cruise ship, the elderly man, the wheelchair, and much else were validation of a series of scenes that were specific to dramatic recent events in her partner’s life. They were beyond coincidence. Laurel’s experienced a download of events outside of her that provided external validation of consciousness beyond the brain.

Steve Taylor PhD is a senior lecturer in psychology at Leeds Beckett University, UK, and a past chair of the Transpersonal Psychology Section of the British

Psychological Society. His books have been published in 20 languages, and he writes blog articles for Scientific American and Psychology Today. Unusual experiences started around age sixteen when he felt increasing interconnection with the world but often reverted to a dysfunctional alienated teenager, then lived an ascetic lifestyle going through episodes of depression and self-harm. A pivotal event at age twenty-two occurred in a bookshop where he discovered a book on mysticism containing passages that resonated deeply with him. Everything then began to make sense. He felt that he had arrived home and began to trust and accept his spiritual sensibility. Another powerful experience which provided a recalibration and realignment with his spiritual nature was in Germany when he woke up in the middle of the night, for no apparent reason, filled with a marvellous sense of well-being. He then knew that all was well in the world and that no matter how frustrating life can be, in some way, all of that is just on the surface. Below the surface, the whole universe is vibrating with warm radiance.

Panel discussions revolved around how to educate the world on alternative worldviews, how to enable people feeling in the closet to come forward and holism in education.

What is the underlying message from the above experiences? ‘Paranormal woo-woo’ is a common prophylactic term amongst invincible materialists to safeguard the public perception of science from the disease of believing in the supraphysical. But genuine seekers and scientists are too dignified to resort to cheap jibes and would in any case refrain from referring to scientific materialism as woo-woo. Why? Because materialism has contributed immeasurably to our physical conditions and wellbeing. But as all the above examples drawn from the personal experience of impeccably qualified individuals embracing the wide range of the exact sciences, life sciences, social sciences, and humanities have forcefully shown, there are realms of existence and levels of consciousness that materialism is simply unqualified to pronounce upon. Hence, there is an urgent, nay desperate, need for a trans-materialist or post-materialist science that can raise mainstream science to a higher metaphysical, a superior philosophic perspective; and here the untiring initiative of the Galileo Commission in projects like Spiritual Awakenings has provided sterling service in opening doorways to knowledge of the higher worlds, the spiritual existence, which must surely be the noblest task to which any individual or society could be devoted.

*Edi Bilimoria is a consultant engineer and author of the four-volume **Unfolding Consciousness**.*



Experiment in Pari

Galileo Commission Symposium

September 30 - October 2, 2022

Tim Houlding

*Let's introduce the major
players: Place; People;
Programme; Process;
Participation.*

*Photo Credits -
Chiara Caitlin Barbieri*

PLACE:

The serene hill-top village of Pari is situated in the heart of the Maremma region of Tuscany, Italy, surrounded by a stunningly beautiful landscape of woodlands, olive-groves and vineyards. The medieval village is home to The Pari Center, described by its founder, the late **Dr. F. David Peat**, as “an alchemical vessel”. David Peat was a distinguished Canadian physicist and educator and a close colleague of the late Professor

David Bohm, FRS. Peat writes: “To view creativity, both scientific and in the arts, the metaphor of alchemy allows us to perceive the creative act through a new lens. I have in mind the time when life, spirit, art and the seeds of science were one and unified.” David Peat sadly died in 2017, but his remarkable legacy is actively nourished by four generations of his family: his widow Maureen, their daughter Eleanor, grand-daughter Chiara and great grand-daughter Vittoria.

With grants from the Templeton Foundation and other institutions, the Peats have converted Pari's old schoolhouse, known as the Palazzo, into a truly gracious and spacious centre with conference and meeting rooms and an extensive library. Importantly, the Peat family has integrated intimately with the village denizens. Accommodation for conference residents is provided in village houses and the splendid family who run the village-centre restaurant were boundlessly welcoming and cheerful.

PEOPLE:

Under the auspices of the Galileo Commission, thirty participants from diverse European countries and the North American continent gathered to engage in a group Bohm Dialogue. Very sadly, **Marjorie Woollacott**, who was due to co-chair the event with David Lorimer, was unable to attend owing to the ill-health of a close family member.

The specific theme was: “The Politics of Knowledge: whose Knowledge Counts?” Sometime prior to the event, **Dr. Joan Walton**, who so ably facilitated all six Bohm Dialogue sessions, circulated a paper to us all entitled: “Engaging in dialogue to create a self-



reflective and inter-disciplinary science of consciousness” and this formed an over-arching foundation for our thoughts. Indeed, Joan’s circulated paper included an invitation to contribute brief commentaries and ideas to be distributed to all participants in advance of the event. Here are some of those thoughts in brief:

Dr Paul Grof and Mary Pearson encouraged us to integrate neuro-biology into the debate, including the David Bohm-inspired terminology that consciousness fields fluctuate between being potentially active, then actually active, when transacting with the brain.

Dr Helena Daly emphasised the crucial principle of balance, particularly the feminine/masculine, in healing what Helena calls a global “hole in the soul” with its consequent sense of rootlessness, anxiety, loneliness, despair and grave existential alienation.

Professor Les Lancaster, who is a co-director of the Alef Trust, encouraged us to consider the principle of reflexivity as a central, and therefore operating at many different scales, attribute of the Universe. Self-reflective dialogue is, therefore, fundamentally aligned with Nature.

Liza Horan contributed three magnificent photographs of locations in Scotland and Westport, Connecticut, USA. Liza included a brief, but powerful, poem entitled “Knowing”.

Professor Marko Pavliha drew our attention to the crucial domain of education and how we choose to shape curricula for a post-materialistic world. Again, he emphasised the self-reflective challenge that each of us faces in re-educating our subconscious mind.

PROGRAMME:

Amusingly, our welcoming supper on Friday, September 30th was ushered in with torrential rain and vivid thunderstorm- we all hoped that this storm was not the tearfully loud vocals of a disapproving Universe!

David Lorimer welcomed us all and Joan Walton gave us an outline of the programme and the principles of Bohm Dialogue. Each of Saturday and Sunday began with an optional meditation, then breakfast followed by an optional walking meditation. The three daily Bohm Dialogue sessions lasted 90 minutes each, interspersed with coffee, lunch and tea breaks.

An absolute bonus for us all on the Saturday morning was a piano recital by **Joseph Nowell**, given in the serene village church of San Biagio. Joseph, who is 28 years old, studied classical piano

in London and Siena and has extended his distinguished career into jazz. Joseph delighted us with Handel, J. S. Bach and Scarlatti, ending with Arvo Part’s “Fur Alina”. I found Joseph’s playing to be immensely moving surrounded by the church’s totally unpretentious architecture; its walls and high ceiling seemed steeped in soul. The effigy of the crucified Christ utterly conveyed the spirit of “embodied transcendence”, a phrase used movingly by David Lorimer.

PROCESS:

Professor David Bohm, FRS (1917-1992) is widely recognised and quoted as a rare example of a physicist who contemplated the ontology of the Universe at its deepest level. Throughout his life, he pondered deeply on creativity, meaning, wholeness and spirituality. His book: “Wholeness and the Implicate Order” (1980) is a must-read. So, too, and very appropriate in the context of the Pari Center, is: “Science, Order and Creativity” (1987) which he co-authored with David Peat. As Joan Walton quoted in her introductory paper, Bohm’s central theme is: “..... the unbroken wholeness of the totality of existence as a flowing movement without borders.”

Encouragingly, Bohm’s theme of fundamental indivisibility is being actively pursued in recent, very advanced work in physics which deals with complexity, chaos and fractal theories.

Bohm developed his dialogic method in his book: “On Dialogue” (1996), complemented by William Isaacs’: “Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together” (1999). Isaacs identifies four key skills, in brief:

- **Listening:** listen at a deep and collective level.
- **Respecting:** value others’ points of view; avoid diminishing the other.
- **Suspending:** become aware of, and suspend, one’s own assumptions, theories and certainties.
- **Voicing:** involve yourself in the present moment as a whole person; tune in to your deep self.

Joan Walton, as dialogue facilitator, made clear four ground-rules of Bohm Dialogue:

- 1) **Demonstrate respect and non-judgementality at all times.**
- 2) **One person only speaks at a time; avoid side conversations.**
- 3) **Limit length of time for any speaker; avoid “soap-box” presentations.**
- 4) **Be receptive to, and acknowledge value of, the silences; aim for suggested minimum of 20 seconds of silence to encourage deep listening and reflection.**

PARTICIPATION:

I sensed that most of us experienced some difficulty engaging with the rigours of Bohm Dialogue. Joan Walton was the most superb overseer of this challenging process. It is difficult to feel a sense of intimacy, and therefore safety, within such a large group at the outset. The point, however, is that this form of deep, reflective participation is a process which evolves in time, space, speech and silence. It is a delicate communion of self and other. The words and expressions that emerged within the first day’s three sessions included the following, deliberately placed on separate lines to symbolise a silence between each:

- Dare to share
- Voice
- Remember
- Rainbow
- Connection
- Vulnerability
- Tree with foliage to sky and roots to the deep
- Otherness
- Bridges
- Polarising
- Oneness with different facets
- Trust
- Vibration of softening
- Unveiling
- Cup-ful of ocean returning to source
- oOo-----

I’m going to interject here and celebrate the very relaxed and informal communal meal-times we all enjoyed. My own experience of the wisdom of many of our group was deeply affecting. Several members felt able to share their supra-normal experiences and I would argue that the two rather different dimensions of the Bohm Dialogue and the communal social experience were utterly complementary; each seemed to enfold into the other.

Sunday, October 2nd broke clear and Joan Walton lead us into dialogue number four. A thread of thoughts emerged which evolved into a very focused fifth dialogue which centred on OTHERING.

- Intuition
- Emotions
- Balance of heart and mind
- Vulnerability
- Neglect
- Othering: our propensity for discrimination, denegration and aggression

Dialogue number six, and here we used the talking stick, opened with a focus on: “where to from here?” The following threads emerged:

Can we find ways of communicating and negotiating?

How do we explore, celebrate and promote the increasing evidence of exceptional experience?

How do we warrant our beliefs and theories?

Can we move towards common ground and consensus?

Can science expand to admit the radical empiricism of experience?

-----oOo-----

Our final session was a Zoom meeting where we were able to share some of our threads with members of the Galileo Commission who were unable to attend. It was heartening to relay our thoughts, particularly to Marjorie Woollacott. Athena Potari gave us the lovely thought of: “The Ancient Future of Science” and Bernard Carr encouraged us with the thought that we are in the birth pangs of a new expanded science.

Events such as this take a very considerable amount of planning. Our profound thanks go to David Lorimer and Joan Walton. Eleanor Peat and her team were simply magnificent, so countless thanks to them for their unwavering hospitality, efficiency and cheerfulness throughout.

For me, was the Pari Experiment a supra-normal experience? Absolutely YES! As David Peat would have wished, here was true alchemy. My last words are to pay homage to two young members of our group, Jessica Corneille and Alex Gomez-Marin, who, to me, are the torch bearers into the longer future. Thank you both for your passion and intelligence; and I know both of you listen with your hearts!

Tim Houlding describes himself as an artisan, crafting things from timber, metal and leather since childhood. He completed a degree in medical physics, specialising in fluid dynamics. He graduated in medicine from Guy's Hospital, London. He then pursued a career in head-and-neck surgery at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford. A profound mystical experience in 1987 nudged him into depth-psychology. He maintains an avid interest in physics, the bio-sciences and psychology. He remains rebelliously curious!



Dr Bo Ahrenfelt reflects:

Finally, I have experienced a successful Bohm dialogue, for which I thank you all! I also took the time to reflect over my experiences.

I went home happily confused when I left Pari and what came out of that is for the moment the following:

First, a traditional insight which many of us have learned from good conversations, discussions or psychotherapy hours. The great importance of having enough “loading time” for the question or last input from other participants to settle and to permit myself to let it marinate my own mind and see what comes up. To get new ideas and perspectives, I need to move away from the quick ego response where I feel secure, but just end up in old and well-known patterns. Nothing new will enter the common stage or scene. Of course, it can still be interesting for others.

A longer pause, let say two minutes in a meditative state, after each has spoken would be helpful to pass through the very quick reactions from the affect part of the mind and move into the emotional part where it is possible to verbalize what is actually going on inside myself. And stay away from old patterns.

A true success is when everybody in the group has found new perspectives for themselves. It is the true gift of good group work. Big ears are needed!

Later in the process this will probably, in many groups, inspire or develop into a resistance phase. An early phase is usually verbal and filled with intellectual discussions. Later phases are more of feelings, action and suggestions for change of the working model. Back to a secure emotional state! The change suggested might be of the regressive kind, but can in other cases help the group and group leader into new roads. So, it is usually a good idea and interesting thing to explore

the emotions in the group at that point in the here and now. For example, to do a short sharing session: “How and what you are feeling right now in this process”. And then go back to the main path.

My understanding for what I call Isness, borrowed from Meister Eckhart, has deepened. Unconditional states of being have come into my forefront. Exiting but difficult to obtain. My perception in everyday life is a little bit clearer and more complex. So is my meditative state. I've come to realize that my big challenge right now is to be in Isness as long as I can in my everyday life. I got a fantasy that David Bohm had a similar idea to deepen a dialogue. Clinically, it's well known that we need to wait for the affect phase to finish to open up to more mature emotional perspectives. We need to wait for ourselves to enter into a state where we are in contact with our emotional and cognitive patterns to reach new insights and have the courage to take a path into new areas of our inner life. The onion metaphor, where we come deeper and deeper, but it's still onion.

I see our basic patterns as a process that guide our mind and an expression of identity and ego or I. It is not an easy task to question that and most of us get into a defensive position rather than a creative one. The Bohm dialogue is one way of trying to come closer to a creative position and to swim in the Great soup we all exist in, as I said in Pari. To be a fish soup in the midst of a meat soup is not an easy task. Or to be an individual within oneself, and All-is-One beyond space and time takes courage as a total ego surrender with identity loss is a lived experience.

With the experience I received in Pari I now wish for myself to be a part of a Bohm dialogue for 5-7 days.

I wish you all an interesting life until next time.

Network News

ATTENTION MEMBERS

PERSONAL NUMBERS AND OFFICE PROCEDURES

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- 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

Paul Filmore writes: The Dialogue one and a half hour sessions are purposefully set up as a different type of activity to other SMN activities. They are often started with an in-troduction by one or two members. The theme is agreed with the group, on the previous week. Sessions are very diverse, but have recently regularly been exploring a theme of strengthening practical spiritual resilience, partly through the sharing of personal experience. In the last three months, we have dialogued on:

- Practical solutions: What has gone wrong with us humans and why?
- How to scale up general public awareness of our spiritual interconnectedness?
- How we can practically and effectively communicate spiritual interconnectedness.
- Think tank: Young Peoples' 'climate anxiety' and how we can best provide support through spiritual interconnectedness appreciation.
- Is a child's spirituality diminished by years of formal education, in the same way as has been suggested for creativity?
- What faculties do we really need to be personally spiritual/ live a life of service?
- The Sufi Enneagram personality test and its practical use.
- An introduction to Gurdjieff: exploring 'essence and personality', but from a Gurdjieff perspective.
- The Christmas Story and its Personal Relevance to Spirituality Today

The group has benefited from the deep experience and often working practices that different people have shared. Many people come regularly, but a few drop in for a particular theme. All, including newcomers, are made very welcome. Please note, that these sessions are never recorded, to allow for natural creativity, personal change, and trust to mature.

Friday Evening Forum – The Virtual Bar



Paul Kieniewicz writes: Following the recent publication of “Spiritual Awakenings” edited by David Lorimer and Marjorie Woollacott, we spent several evenings exploring spiritual awakenings and altered states of consciousness. Several co-authors of the book – Marjorie Woollacott, Jessica Corneille, Les Lancaster and Oliver Robinson, discussed their personal experiences, inviting other in the group to share theirs. Oliver Olly Robinson spoke to us about his experiences with ayahuasca. For Olly, these proved to be pivotal on his spiritual journey. Our discussion delved into the content of ayahuasca experiences and their relationship to visions described in Hermetic and other esoteric traditions. In many ancient traditions, the use of consciousness altering substances was more widespread than is generally admitted.

Steve Taylor's talk on Awakening, delivered at the Beyond the Brain Conference prompted a discussion of the role of a belief system in a spiritual awakening. Whereas many people experience a spiritual awakening, a mythical or religious tradition offers a context that allows the subject to understand their experience and to derive greater benefit from it. Yet many such awakenings do not depend on the religious orientation of the subject.

Naomi Elliot introduced a discussion on Kundalini, also a topic of BtB. She described her kundalini awakening experience and subsequent spiritually transformative experiences that activated in her emotional and physical healing, understanding deep purpose, and the development of supernatural gifts. Once regarded as rare, kundalini awakening is reported more often among SMN members.

Professor Les Lancaster joined us and discussed the roots of Jewish mysticism, the Kabbalah, that played a major role in his spiritual journey. We discussed the mysticism of language that is the foundation of the Kabbalah. Les saw a close relationship between Jewish mysticism and neurology, relationships that resemble the structure of the brain.

Following Dr. Bernard Beitman's webinar on synchronicity, we had several evenings where members shared unusual coincidences and spoke about how those had determined the course of their lives, or at least played a major role in their spiritual journey. Sophia Demas and Bernard Beitman led the discussions. We hope to hold future "synchronicity cafés" on Friday nights.

On other evenings, Richard Alabone led a discussion on how DNA controls life by each generation copying the previous. The copying mechanism which creates a new fetus is the same mechanism we see in life where we have brain to brain transmission which we call telepathy. We discussed various aspects of epigenetics and what is known about the instructions for cell differentiation. I presented a talk on the morphogenetic field, an electrodynamic field that determines the development of an organism.

We looked at early work at the Harvard Medical School and recent research at UC Davis and Tufts University. It's a promising direction of research suggesting that much more than DNA determines how organisms develop. Alexander Robinson discussed the work of Wilhelm Reich. A contemporary of Freud and Jung, Reich focused on the energetic aspect of the libido. However, his work evoked strong opposition both from professionals and from governments. His work was banned in the U.S. and Reich was jailed.

Spiritual transformative experiences (STEs) are certainly topical, written about and discussed. We often hear such experiences from SMN members at our Friday evenings. One would like to conclude that STEs are becoming more common in the general public than in earlier times. This may be the case, in those days of greater social and environmental upheaval. However, the SMN is also a self-selecting group that tends to attract those who have had unusual experiences. Friday night is an opportunity for all who would like to share their STEs and through discussion to understand them better.

Sunday Evening Meditation



Peter Fenwick writes: the Sunday evening meditation group has been very well attended for the last few months. We usually have about 100 people at each session. Martin Redfern and Tuvi Orbach have been enormously helpful and run the technical side, showing the slides and playing the music for the evening. We have looked at a number of different aspects of meditation. The last few weeks

have been an exploration of the nature of the soul, and several members have contributed by exploring their own spiritual experiences for the group.

As Christmas Day fell on a Sunday, that week's meditation was postponed until Boxing Day, and the following week we held the session on New Year's Day – a good start to the year! We even had 80-90 people at these Christmas sessions, an indication of the importance that our meditation group has assumed for its members. We look forward very much to continuing our meetings during the spring. The Group is always open for anyone who wishes to join us.

HH The Dalai Lama becomes an Honorary Member

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, describes himself as a simple Buddhist monk. He is the spiritual leader of Tibet. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a man of peace. In 1989 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his non-violent struggle for the liberation of Tibet. He has consistently advocated policies of non-violence, even in the face of extreme aggression. He also became the first Nobel Laureate to be recognized for his concern for global environmental problems. His Holiness has travelled to more than 67 countries spanning 6 continents. He has received over 150 awards, honorary doctorates, prizes, etc., in recognition of his message of peace, non-violence, inter-religious understanding, universal responsibility and compassion. He has also authored or co-authored more than 110 books.

Since the mid-1980s and partly through the Mind and Life Institute, His Holiness has engaged in a dialogue with modern scientists, mainly in the fields of psychology, neurobiology, quantum physics and cosmology. This has led to a historic collaboration between Buddhist monks and world-renowned scientists in trying to help individuals achieve peace of mind. It has also resulted in the addition of modern science to the traditional curriculum of Tibetan monastic institutions re-established in exile.

From: <https://www.dalailama.com/the-dalai-lama/biography-and-daily-life/brief-biography>



Dr Jean Houston becomes an Honorary Member



Jean Houston, Ph.D., is a legend in her own time as a world-renowned scholar, futurist, award-winning author, and researcher in human capacities, social change, and systemic transformation. She is one of the principal founders of the Human Potential Movement and one of the foremost visionary thinkers and doers of our time. She is also a founder of the field of Social Artistry, "Human development in the light of social change." She was awarded the Synergy Superstar Award 2020 by the Source of Synergy Foundation for her exemplary work inspiring us to source our highest human capacities, and the Visioneers Heroine Award. A powerful and dynamic speaker, and renowned for her gifts as a mythic storyteller, Dr Houston holds conferences, seminars, and mentoring programs with leaders and change agents worldwide. She has worked intensively in over 40 cultures, lectured in over 100 countries, and worked with major organizations such as UNICEF, UNDP, and NASA, as well as helping global state leaders, leading educational institutions, business organizations, and millions of people to enhance and deepen their own uniqueness. She is the co-author with Dr. Anneloes Smitsman of the award-winning Future Humans Trilogy, as well as an author of over 36 published books and a great many unpublished books, plays, and manuscripts.



Dr Vandana Shiva becomes an Honorary Member

Dr. Vandana Shiva is trained as a physicist and did her Ph.D. on the subject “Hidden Variables and Non-locality in Quantum Theory” from the University of Western Ontario in Canada. She later shifted to inter-disciplinary research in science, technology and environmental policy, which she carried out at the Indian Institute of Science and the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore. In 1991, she founded Navdanya, a national movement to protect the diversity and integrity of living resources, especially native seed, the promotion of organic farming and fair trade. In 2004 she started Bija Vidyapeeth, an international college for sustainable living in Doon Valley in collaboration with Schumacher College, U.K. Dr. Shiva combines the sharp intellectual enquiry with courageous activism. Time Magazine identified Dr. Shiva as an environmental “hero” in 2003 and Forbes magazine identified Dr. Vandana Shiva as one of the top Seven most Powerful Women on the Globe.

Dr. Shiva has received Honorary Doctorates from University of Paris, University of Western Ontario, University of Oslo and Connecticut College, University of Guelph. Among her many awards are the Alternative Nobel Prize (Right Livelihood Award, 1993), Order of the Golden Ark, Global 500 Award of UN and Earth Day International Award. Lennon ONO grant for peace award by Yoko Ono in 2009, Sydney Peace Prize in 2010, Doshi Bridgebuilder Award, Calgary Peace Prize and Thomas Merton Award in the year 2011, the Fukuoka Award and The Prism of Reason Award in 2012, the Grifone d’Argento prize 2016 and The MIDORI Prize for Biodiversity 2016, Veerangana Award 2018, The Sanctuary Wildlife Award 2018 and International Environment Summit & Award 2018.

Imaginal Inspirations Podcasts

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

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

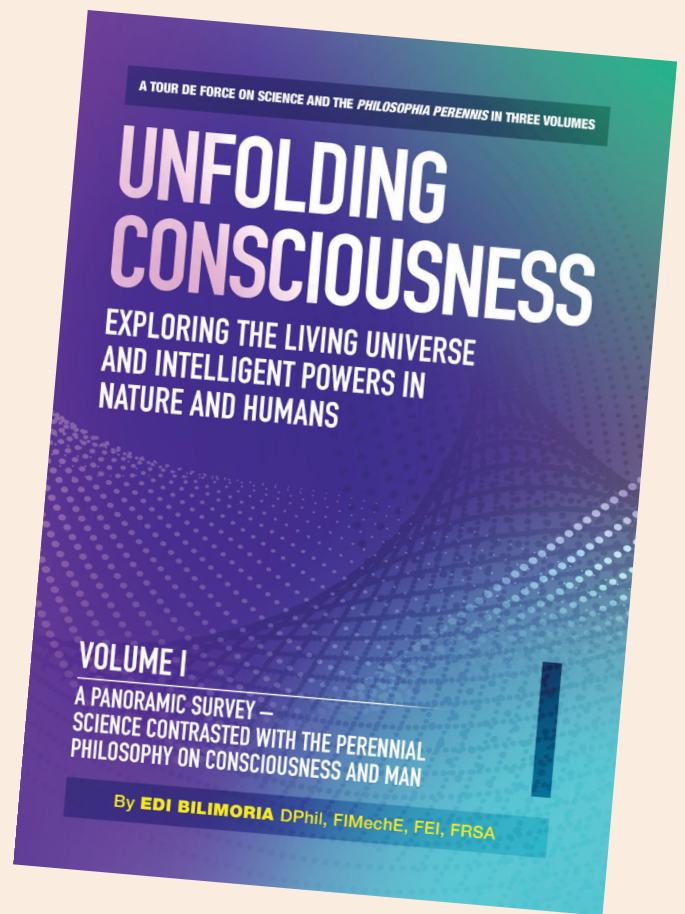
In this podcast series, David Lorimer talks to transformational authors and scientists about experiences, people and books that have shaped their lives and professional development.

Cumulative downloads to December 31, 2022, 15,780 with the average up by 300% to 510 per episode and weekly average nearly doubled to 224.

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

Recent episodes

- Dr Eben Alexander – *One Mind*
- Dr Natasha Tassell-Matamua – *Spiritual Experiences*
- Dr Jean Houston – *Evolving Wisdom*
- Dr Howard Eisenberg – *Dream it to Do It*



Network Book Prizes 2022



The quality and number of significant books published by Members in 2022 has continued apace and the outstanding book of the year is undoubtedly *Unfolding Consciousness: Exploring the Living Universe and the Intelligent Powers in Nature and Humans* in four volumes by Dr Edi Bilimoria, who also received the 2007 Prize for *The Snake and the Rope*.

In view of this Edi is awarded the Grand Prize for his masterly achievement running to over 1,200 pages and based on a lifetime of careful study.

We would also like to recognise other outstanding 2022 books with a Network Book Prize –

- *Meaningful Coincidence* – Bernard Beitman
- *The Restorative Spirit* – Mick Collins
- *The Story of Gaia* – Jude Currivan
- *The Superhumanities* – Jeffrey J. Kripal
- *Global Unitive Healing* – Elena Mustakova
- *Plantation of Humans* – James Tunney
- *Politics of Being* – Thomas Legrand
- *Dante’s Divine Comedy: A Guide for the Spiritual Journey* – Mark Vernon
- *Revelations of the Aramaic Jesus* – Neil Douglas-Klotz



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CLAUDIA NIELSEN

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exploring science,

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■ September 22

Key Concepts of a Whiteheadian Postmodern Paradigm



Dr JOHN BUCHANAN was the speaker for our September webinar. John is an independent scholar and his upcoming book, *Processing Reality: Finding Meaning in Death, Psychedelics, and Sobriety*, is based upon his continuing interests in process philosophy and transpersonal psychology.

John started by explaining how the psychedelic experiences in his youth were conducive to his search for answers to

questions he had regarding the nature of reality and the universe led him to the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead as set out in his book *Process and Reality*. This is a difficult text and John explained that his understanding relied largely on the teachings of David Ray Griffin, Stanislaw Grof, William James, Charles Hartshorne and others.

In *Process and Reality* Whitehead describes his philosophy of organism which proposes that an unconscious perception can provide direct access to the entire universe. In this philosophy experience is key, and all events in the universe are understood as experiences albeit it mostly non-conscious experience. Causality is central and all experiences are a consequence of previous experiences in one form or another. Whitehead introduced the concept of 'prehension', the means by which every new moment of experience 'feels' or 'grasps' the feelings and data from past events.

Consciousness for Whitehead involves a felt contrast between what is and what is not, a contrast with another possibility. It is predicated on consciousness as awareness, rather than the understanding of consciousness as a fundamental element of the nature of reality. For Whitehead, consciousness is a process. Everything in the universe, all events are processes, everything is experience, whether conscious, unconscious or non-conscious. The human psyche is understood as a series of momentary high-level experiential events mostly unconscious. These experiences integrate feelings not only from past events that led to them, but also from the outside world. These feelings from the outside world can percolate up into conscious awareness and form the basis for intuitions, parapsychological phenomena and access to the kinds of extraordinary experiences seen in mystical, meditative and psychedelic states.

God for Whitehead is immanent and transcendent. The idea of pantheism as expressed by David Ray Griffin is pertinent here. God is in the world and the world is in God but neither subsumes or overrides the actuality or value of the other. God's conscious experience pervades the universe since every event begins with prehensions of all past events, of which God is one. This means that our experience can be said to originate out of a direct feeling of God which also explain mystical experiences of God.

Whitehead's interesting philosophy is not easy to understand and John's presentation and answers in the discussion time which followed was helpful to clarify many of the more obscure concepts.

■ October 22

The Many Layered Mystery of the Human Journey



Prof. RICHARD TARNAS an old friend of the SMN, was the speaker this month. Rick is a professor of philosophy and cultural history at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, where he founded the graduate program in Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness. He teaches courses in the history of ideas, archetypal cosmology, depth psychology, and religious evolution. He is also the

author of two extraordinary books, *The Passion of the Western World: Understanding the Ideas that have Shaped our World View* and *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View*.

The message encapsulated in the talk this evening was the importance of our personal soul making. He referred to James Hillman who brought the term 'soul making' into depth psychology. The concept that we *are* souls, rather than *have* a soul was an important principle and Rick pointed out that our personal 'soul making' involves the development of our identity through which we become our authentic selves. This personal identity which is formed painstakingly through our good and painful experiences throughout life, includes becoming ever more conscious of the unconscious dimensions of our psyche. It was with the help of Jung that Rick built his argument.

Jung experienced a difficult and painful journey into the underworld which he felt at times led him close to madness. In an effort to understand what he was experiencing, he recorded this process meticulously in his *Red Book* (2013) and five insights into 'soul making' emerged.

The first insight is the basic idea that the course of an individual human life is a spiritually meaningful journey of transformation. This is an important perspective through which to view our lives and, as a psychotherapist myself, I found myself in agreement with Rick when he pointed out that mainstream psychotherapy today misses the mark by focusing mainly on solutions, ego strengthening and developing coping mechanisms to navigate life 'successfully' ignoring that suffering is part of soul making in our spiritual journey.

The second level of insight is a recognition of powerful archetypal forces that influence our spiritual journey of transformation. The ancients experienced these as gods and goddesses. Becoming conscious of those will show how much of our lives are shaped by these powerful archetypal numinous forces.

The third level is the awareness that our individual psyche is embedded in and deeply connected with the collective psyche which forms its foundational ground power.

The fourth level is the understanding that the life and soul of the collective is history as an unfolding psychological and spiritual process. The collective human soul and spirit is also on a journey and we individually, are participating in this journey.

The fifth level of insight is the recognition that our individual and collective journeys are embedded in the matrix of nature and the cosmos, the Anima Mundi.

These insights help us recognise that we are part of something much larger than ourselves. We influence and are influenced by this larger picture. On a personal level, the difficult experiences of loss, dark descents into the night of the soul, joys and successes are all part of the spiritual journey we and the collective are engaged in. A spiritual journey is a moral journey involving values, ideals and aspirations that shape who we are and where we stand to make sense of our lives.

Today, we see a kind of pressure towards the death of the old identity and the connection to the larger matrix of our being which we have marginalised and disenchanted as unworthy of moral and spiritual value which led to the exploitation that wreaked havoc on the natural world, on our identity as well as on the great wisdom traditions and the peoples of indigenous colonised societies of the world. We are all participating in this great moral spiritual journey of transformation that is crossing a threshold at the moment. We must bring our best to this tremendous drama!

■ November 22



Collective Near-Death and the Restoration of Holiness

Dr. MICK COLLINS had the chair for our presentation this month. Mick lived in a Tibetan Buddhist monastery between 1983-6, where he experienced a spiritual emergency. This transformative experience informed his vocation to train as an occupational therapist. He also spent ten years working as a Lecturer and Director of Admissions within the

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of East Anglia, in Norwich, UK.

Mick's doctoral thesis (2012), along with his peer-reviewed articles and book chapters are mostly focused on the activation of our transpersonal potential and the process of renewal within experiences of spiritual emergence and emergency. He is deeply interested in how our transformative experiences can inspire our collective efforts to tackle the multiple crises in the world at this time. Mick has written three books, *The Unselfish Spirit* 2014 (SMN book prize winner), *The Visionary Spirit* 2018 and *The Restorative Spirit* 2022.

Mick had a powerful dream 16 years before his spiritual crisis, in which he saw himself at a baptismal font with 3 monks and a small boy standing on tiptoes pouring sand into the font. This sand starts to move into a circle and turns into a little droplet of fluid, and he wakes up amidst an explosion of bliss in bed. Seeing baptismal font as

initiation into the mysteries, he understands this dream as a blueprint of what was to come in his life, and which came to determine his spiritual journey.

This evening he proposed the possibility that we may be facing collective Near-Death which based on what we know of personal near-death experiences (NDEs), will open us up to a sense of the sacred. Based on the current socio-political circumstances and planetary global warming it seems clear that the situation is precarious, we are sensing impending collapse. The world he said, is overly scientific, mechanised, industrialised. He quoted the prophetic insight from Maslow who said that 'without the transpersonal we become sick.' Something is needed that provides the insight that all life is interconnected, which for Mick is his way of seeing the thread of the holy. We feel a despair which is not productive on its own, we need to be creative and find a way forward and for Mick there is a real opportunity to be creative if we connect with the sacred. Mick reminded us that both Jung and Rudolf Otto were clear about the need to connect with the numinous, opening us up to the mystery of the holy which, depending on our state of consciousness, is always available to us.

From people who have had near-death experiences (NDEs) experiences, we learn that there is a life review which includes the impact one's words have on the people we speak them to during our lives. There is also an ineffable sense of the divine, a profound sense that we are held in love. These insights have the effect on people who have had NDEs so that they become radically changed. It is these insights that we need to take seriously and learn from if we see the crisis we are going through as a near-death experience of humanity. We should then be able to connect with the numinous, the overarching spiritual narrative and influence the outcome through our inspired thoughts and deeds.

Mick is guided by the teachings of Arnold Mindell who points out that for any social change to happen, all voices need to be heard. Extending this principle to divine democracy and the power of one's thoughts and deeds it seems clear that we are co-creating the world for better or worse with our thoughts and deeds. We need to become aware of our responsibilities and participate mystically in our future by means of our thoughts and deeds.

ONLINE ARTICLES BY ANTHONY JUDGE

■ **Cognitive Embodiment of Patterns of Governance of Higher Order**
Memorable navigation of viable global pathways from 4-fold to 64-fold and beyond
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/navi0864.php>

■ **Systematic correspondences for COP27? Satellite insertion into orbit.**
 Aerosol injection into atmosphere for geoengineering. Global inoculation. Mass impregnation of women. Incarceration. Pathological introspection. Compensatory ingestion of drugs, etc

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■ **Imagining Partnership of the SDG Goals as Phases of the Cross**
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MEMBERS' ARTICLES AND ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Available through links or from dl@scimednet.org

SCIENCE

Stuart A. Kauffman, Dean Radin

- *Quantum aspects of the brain-mind relationship: A hypothesis with supporting evidence* (9 pp., from *BioSystems* 2023)

Brian D. Josephson FRS

- *The Physics of Mind and Thought* (5 pp. from *Activitas Nervosa Superior*, 2019)
- *World scientists' warnings into action, local to global – Letter to Science Progress, 2021* (32 pp.)

Grahame Blackwell, PhD

- *Exploring a Scientific Paradigm: Relativity* (5 pp.)

HEALTH

James A Thorp, MD 8 pp.

- *Experimental, Never before Tested Novel Genetic Therapy Pushed in Pregnancy. The Most Egregious Violation of Ethics in the History of Medicine* (8 pp.)

PHILOSOPHY/SPIRITUALITY

Paul Marshall

- *Does Mystical Experience Give Access to Reality?* (16 pp., from *Religions*, 2022)

Roderick Main

- *The Many Faces of Panentheism* (25 pp from *Zygon*)

Kingsley Dennis

- *The Will to Purpose - Crossing Humanity's Coming Threshold* (5 pp.)

PSYCHOLOGY AND CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

Marjorie Woollacott, PhD and

Anne Shumway-Cook, PhD

- *Spiritual Awakening and Transformation in Scientists and Academics* (11 pp., from *Explore* 2022)

Karin Kamp

- *Are Sensory Experiences of one's Deceased Spouse Associated with Bereavement-Distress?* (22 pp. from *OMEGA--Journal of Death and Dying*)

Jeffrey Kripal

- *Archives of the Impossible: The Further Reaches of the Imagination* (16 pp.)

Isabel Rimanoczy and Ana Maria Llamazare

- *Twelve Principles to Guide a Long-Overdue Paradigm Shift* (23 pp., from *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion* 2021)

Marina Weiler, Raphael Fernandes Casseb, Alexander Moreira-Almeida

- *A Possible Case of Censorship of Submissions on the Nature of Consciousness* (10 pp., from *Journal of Anomalous Experience and Cognition*)

Alex Gomez-Martin

- *Anil Seth - Being You: A New Science of Consciousness – book review* (7 pp.)

Michael W. Scott

- *The Anthropology of Ontology (religious science?)* (14 pp. from *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*)

Lorna Green, PhD

- *The Transformation of Consciousness - A Revolutionary New Metaphysics Based on Consciousness, and with it Some Good Ideas Whose Time Has Come: Simple Luminous Clear, and Moreover, True - A Bridge Between Past and Future* (84 pp.)

Stephan A. Schwartz

- *Science Slowly Accepts the Matrix of Consciousness,* (5 pp.)

Gregory L. Matloff

- *Can Panpsychism Become an Observational Science?* (20pp., from *Journal of Consciousness Exploration & Research*, August 2016)

GENERAL

Jürgen Werner Kremer

- *Coming-to-Presence at My Place of Hope* (20 pp., from *ReVision* Volume 33 Numbers 3 & 4)

Edi Bilimoria

- *Queen Elizabeth II – A Legacy of Stability and Continuity* (2 pp.)

Alfred de Zayas

- *The United Nations Promise of Peace – Also in Ukraine* (9 pp.)





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· Sir Julian Rose ·

WEDNESDAY, 4 JANUARY • 7-8:30 PM (GMT)
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· Georgia Lambert ·

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Dr Steve Taylor · Dr Mick Collins · Oonagh Harpur · Zaida Hall

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book reviews

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SCIENCE-PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

EVOLVING OUR CONSCIOUS PLANET

David Lorimer

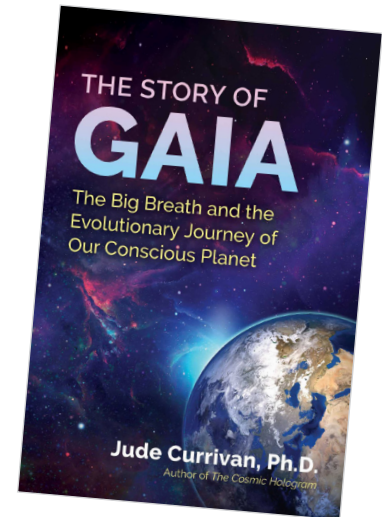
■ THE STORY OF GAIA

Jude Currivan Ph.D. (SMN)

Inner Traditions, 2022,
320 pp., \$19.99, p/b –
ISBN 978-1-64411-531-2

Jude Currivan's brilliant new book on the evolution of Gaia is an expression of a sea change that is underway as a new and more meaningful cosmological story begins to take hold. In his extraordinary book *Passage to Modernity*, Louis Dupré explains that Renaissance thinkers like Giordano Bruno postulated a world soul that 'rules and directs all things from within while surpassing each one of them': *natura naturans* unfolding into *natura naturata*. In this view, there is no separation between inner and outer, but the advent of mechanistic philosophy in the 17th-century changed all that. Mind is sundered from matter, and humans from nature; primary qualities are defined as the visible, tangible, measurable and quantifiable, while mind is relegated to the status of a derivative secondary quality. The first is objective knowledge, the second mere subjective opinion.

Many of the great Enlightenment scientists were Deists, and the transcendent notion of God as a great clockmaker removed from creation became popular. William Paley updated the cosmological argument from design early in the 19th century, and it is in this context that one must understand the impact of Darwinism as a fundamental challenge to the notion of design (Darwin had read this book at Cambridge). The order manifesting the universe comes about through chance and natural selection; mechanistic thinkers had already rejected the notion of cosmic purpose, along with Aristotle's final causation: it was no longer legitimate for the scientist to ask why, only how. This cultural trend reflected a welcome liberation from ecclesiastical authoritarianism, as scientists set out to formulate an account of the world and evolution based entirely on natural causes, with mind as emergent - and even



epiphenomenal – with no causal power. The logical endpoint for such thinking is the statement by Nobel laureate Steven Weinberg that the more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it seems pointless.

Over the last 100 years, pioneering thinkers have challenged this presupposition of a mindless and pointless universe. Henri Bergson's *Creative Evolution* springs to mind, as does the process and organismic philosophy of Whitehead and that appears in D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson's *On Growth and Form*. Then we have the work of Teilhard de Chardin on complexity-consciousness promoted after his death by Sir Julian Huxley, and more recently the emergence of the Gaia Hypothesis formulated by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis. Ervin Laszlo published *The Creative Cosmos* – and many books since – 30 years ago, while Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme elaborated 'the great work' of a new story based on a communion of subjects rather than a collection of objects. Elisabet Sahtouris has also articulated a new evolutionary vision prioritising a maturing into cooperation in *Gaia's Dance* and other books. And in physics, John Barrow, Frank Tipler, Martin Rees and Bernard Carr pioneered the anthropic principle of cosmological fine-tuning.

It is in this context that one can welcome Jude's widely acclaimed book, which is a sequel to *The Cosmic Hologram*, and based on the same underlying principles, perhaps most importantly 'that mind and consciousness isn't something we have;

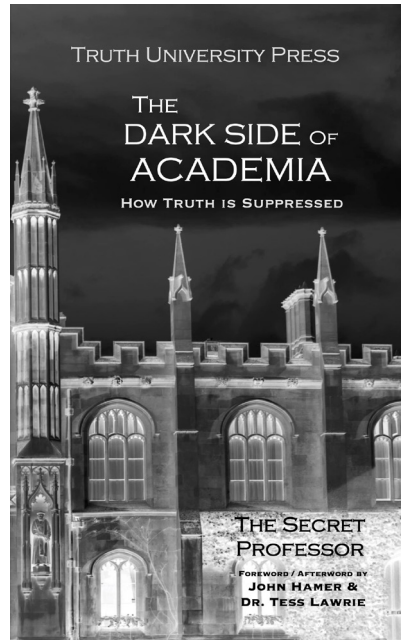
it's literally what we are and the whole world *are*.' Jude continues: 'the reality of our Universe, its meaningfully in-formed and holographically manifest appearance of space-time and energy-matter, emerges from nonphysical realms of causation and intelligence.' This was the vision of ancient sages as well as pioneers in quantum physics, expressed in Jude's reformulation of the big bang as 'an exquisitely fine-tuned and ordered Big Breath.' Beginning each chapter with a personal attunement, Jude eloquently tells the story of cosmogenesis and evolution with keen insight and understanding of technical scientific details backed up by recent research and consistent with the new story of the Universe as a unified and innately sentient entity that exists to evolve.

We find that harmony and harmonic resonances are universal in 'a Universe that exists and evolves as a nonlocally unified entity' with meaningful relationships at all scales of existence and where we humans are microcosmic co-creators within a macrocosmic 'Universoul'. The fundamental evolutionary impulse (pp. 103, 108-9) is to create complexity and eventually individuated self-awareness, using the simplest possible relationships and with minimum energy. Entropy becomes 'intropy', whereby the overall informational content (alooq with coherence) of a system always increases over time. This means that the neo-Darwinist view of beneficial random mutations as the primary driver of evolution is fundamentally flawed (p. 108). Instead, Jude's approach highlights intimate co-evolutionary and dynamic partnerships involving symbiosis and mutualism where 'cooperation and holarchic organisation... fundamentally drive evolutionary complexity.'

While mechanistic biologists regard the universe as alien, impersonal and dead, Jude proposes that it is inherently intelligent and alive, embodying an impulse to evolve having 'undertaken a great journey of experience, exploration, embodiment, and evolution—from simplicity to complexity, individuated sentience, and self-awareness.' (p. 132) She gives many examples of Gaia's extraordinary resurgence and resilience, sometimes taking millions of years, but always ultimately advancing and flourishing anew. We are now discovering the sentience of plants and the distributed intelligence of fungi in symbiotic partnerships co-evolving with soil microbes and pollinators. These relationships are evidence for 'the innate, dynamic, and in-formational interconnectedness and collaboration of the entire gaiasphere... pulsed, not by passive continuity, but proactively by change and challenge' resulting in evolutionary emergence. (p. 261)

It is these collaborative and synergistic principles that humanity now needs to understand and emulate, and which were already understood and applied in indigenous cultures. The journey from what Owen Barfield called original to final

participation is where we are heading, and as Jude also writes: 'from Unity, to Unity in diversity, to a re-membered Unity in belonging, and an ultimate return to Unity.' This is where we stand; this is our collective and emergent evolutionary challenge. Major books like *The Story of Gaia* can inspire and empower us to express and enact a higher, wiser and more integral intelligence. Over to us!



HOW TRUTH IS SUPPRESSED

David Lorimer

THE DARK SIDE OF ACADEMIA

The Secret Professor

Truth University Press, 2022,
231 pp., £12.99, p/b –
ISBN 978-1-739111-70-0

Insofar as the Network and the Galileo Commission question the predominant and exclusive validity of scientific materialism and its corresponding instrumentalist rationality, we represent a counter-cultural movement in advocating more integral ways of knowing and ontological/metaphysical reconstruction. We are wary of the influence of neoliberalism pushing universities in a market direction that makes students into customers and incorporates increasingly burdensome metrics around output and impact as well as a plethora of regulations. STEM subjects are prioritised, while Arts faculties are coming under pressure as irrelevant when they are in fact vital in transmitting what makes us human – this is why we have published *A Call for a Renaissance of the Spirit in the Humanities* (and see review of Jeff Kripal's *Superhumanities* in this issue).

The anonymous author of this book has worked as a successful academic with over 80 peer-reviewed papers and seven books. Her disturbing story of being suppressed, marginalised and restructured out of her post is an object lesson in university power politics aided and abetted by obsequious colleagues and bureaucratic administrators as an exercise in reputation management. The issue was that she wrote a newspaper article on inclusive leadership that came to be regarded as an implicit criticism of the vice-chancellor's authoritarian management style. At stake is the erosion of academic freedom and the very status of universities in relation to the pursuit of truth. Both institutions and journals—through editorial gatekeepers and peer review—tend to be inherently conservative and defend the existing paradigm instead of encouraging genuine innovation. Students are schooled within this paradigm and university careers depend on maintaining corresponding respectability and acceptability. Heretics like Peter Duesberg, Jacques Benveniste, Rupert Sheldrake and Brian Josephson are marginalised, attacked and excluded (p. 124). The book gives a number of interesting examples of such heresy, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, homeopathy, and the background to the fire of London demoting Sir Christopher Wren from his position as the principal architect of St Paul's Cathedral. Of a total of 224 design drawings, Hawksmoor was responsible for 100, Wren only 23. where it turns out that Sir Christopher Wren made only 23 drawings (10%) for the design of St Paul's Cathedral as opposed to 100 by Nicholas Hawksmoor out of a total of 224.

The author argues that the common denominator in the cases cited is 'a determination to preserve existing paradigms and theories', which also applies to the Shakespeare authorship question being off-limits in Oxford and other leading universities (see *The Shakespeare Enigma* by Peter Dawkins) and the suppression of histories that reveal the real secret history of power, as in Carroll Quigley, Anthony Sutton and more recently Nicholas Hagger. All this means that 'unorthodox scientific thinking can only surface in non-institutional publications.' (p. 125) As Iain McGilchrist has also discussed in detail, universities and institutions have become mechanistically hidebound and hierarchical, and the original spirit of enquiry and community has been largely submerged in corporate interests, as indicated, for instance, by the treatment of Professor Chris Exley—a leading researcher in neurotoxic effects of aluminium—when this might upset the cosy relationship with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation: 'truth has become secondary to protecting the commercial interests of the University.' (p. 143). Dr Tess Lawrie, who contributes the afterword, had an identical experience in connection with Dr Andrew Hill with her work on ivermectin, when his university received a large pharmaceutical donation and he changed his tune and the conclusions of an article.

The upshot is that we need completely new institutions with independent affiliation to replace ‘the current moribund system’ where research would be freed from vested interests and government agendas. This probably means smaller scale operations, and the Alef Trust springs to mind as a creative community of teachers and learners. Moreover, the female voice in academia needs to be more prominent at the top level as argued in the chapter on this topic, where it is evident that research by female academics ‘can open up areas of knowledge that were previously hidden from view.’ (p. 172) A structural issue relates to the marketisation of higher education. Institutions are forced to seek funds from foundations and industry that are in turn collaborating with powerful forces such as the World Economic Forum, which itself has a centralised and mechanistic top-down agenda. In the 19th century, the impressionists achieved this through the Salon des Refusés—we now need such new creative spaces for freedom of enquiry and expression ‘closer in spirit and size to the universities that took root in Europe in the 11th century.’ (p. 188)

A WHOLE NEW WORLD

Gunnel Minett

■ THE SOUNDS OF LIFE - HOW DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IS BRINGING US CLOSER TO THE WORLDS OF ANIMALS AND PLANTS

Karen Bakker

Princeton University Press,
Oxford, 2022, 352 pp., £ 20, p/b -
ISBN 978-0-691206-28-8

It is said that David Attenborough has done more for the environment with his films than any government scheme. For many it has been eye-opening to see that human beings are not the only social beings on our planet. This book takes us one step further by illustrating how animals that we know either make no sounds or do not hear, are nevertheless interacting with each other. They may be using sounds and possibly other modes of communicating in ways which we find difficult to explain unless we turn to quantum physics.

Alongside the technical development of microphones and listening equipment, scientists have developed a whole new discipline; that of *bioacoustics*, or sounds made by living organisms, and *ecoacoustics*, or *acoustic ecology* or *soundscape studies*, i.e. studies of environmental sounds.

It has been something of a revelation to science to find that animals, who it was assumed could neither make nor register sounds, actually are doing both, often in very organised and specific ways. Using

modern listening equipment scientists have discovered, for example: that a degraded ecosystem sounds different from a healthy one, that marine mammals employ different types of sound communication, that killer whale pods have different dialects, that whale babies babble and imitate sounds made by their family when they are a few months old, that some whales use sounds to navigate with echolocation, and that some whales sing in the infrasound range.

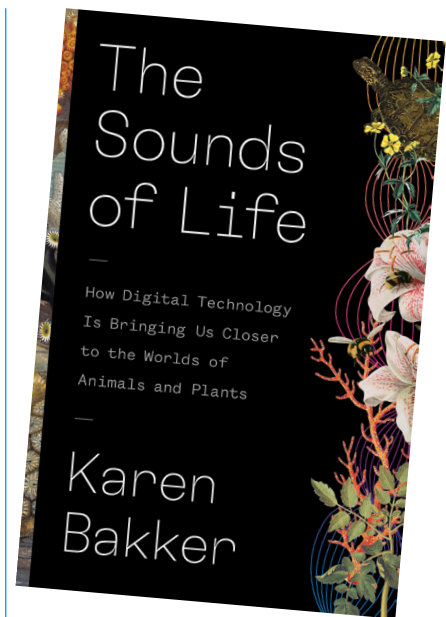
But it is not just the oceans that have a soundscape. The author goes on to describe the interactions of other animals which have only recently been understood thanks to new technology. When scientists recorded elephants at increased speeds, they discovered that elephants communicate with infrasound - below the frequency that humans can hear. They were able to document intricate and sophisticated social networks, which extended well beyond the core family group, encompassing scores of elephants across several generations.

It did not stop there. Scientists have also provided evidence that elephants can determine ethnicity, gender and age from acoustic cues. These studies have been so successful that scientists now are using similar tools and Google Translate to create a dictionary in order to communicate with elephants. This constitutes an innovative form of two-way communication with non-humans via AI.

Another area of bio-sound research concerns bats. Bats are capable of vocal learning, and use complex communication to guide social behaviour in a manner similar to humans. As in humans, baby bats learn by vocal imitation of adults. Bat songs, like whale songs, are also culturally transmitted and evolve over time.

The philosopher Thomas Nagel wrote a famous paper about what it is like to be a bat, to illustrate how difficult it is to see the world from the perspective of a different species. But even if we can't know ‘what it is like’ to be a bat, the paper gives us some facts about life as a bat: ‘the majority of the bats’ sounds arguing over food (the loudest calls), jockeying for preferred positions in their sleeping cluster, protesting mating attempts, and arguing when perched in close proximity....they help one another, remember who does them favours, and perhaps even hold grudges if not treated fairly.’ (p. 130)

Mirror self-recognition is seen as a proxy for self-awareness. For a long time, this has been regarded as a uniquely human ability. But, as the author informs us, recent research has shown that mirror self-recognition is a trait that we share with great apes, elephants and even magpies. So, it seems that as we learn more about the species that share the planet with us, the more we learn that we are not that different after all. For example, animals share linguistic features once thought to be uniquely human: these include previously unsuspected syntax in animal and bird



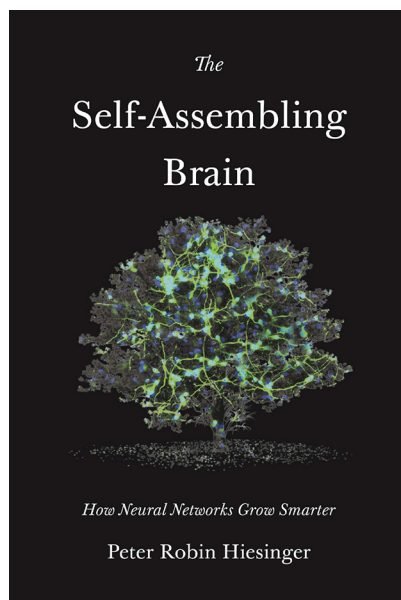
song, and even combinatorial processing in the vocalisations of primates and insects.

The goal in this research field, the author points out, is not to teach other species to speak human languages, but rather to design devices that can communicate with non-humans using their own modalities of communication. Many indigenous scholars also emphasise a notion of nonhuman sentience as a cornerstone of human-nature relationships: animals, plants, and even geological features, like mountains, are known as nonhuman persons—part of an extended family, sharing ancestry and relationships.

In 2017, UNESCO introduced a resolution on the importance of sound in today's world, which proclaims “*the sound environment is a key component in the equilibrium of all human beings in their relationship with others and with the world.*” (p. 200).

On an individual level we should all acknowledge that we need to re-think our attitudes to the environment we live in. As the book makes clear, we are not in any way isolated from the world around us. And with the chaos and destruction we see in parts of the world today, we should perhaps also recognise how much we can learn from animals and their way of life: they tend to be much more in harmony with nature. After all, even if we can't know what it is like to be a bat, reading this book we can easily conclude that there are many similarities in our ways of living. And we have the means, tools and knowhow to change and improve the environment for ourselves, the bats and all other living creatures. We owe it to them to do something before it is too late.

Gunnel Minett is the author of *Breath and Spirit* – <https://breathwork-science.com>



WHO IS THE SMARTEST OF US ALL?

Gunnel Minnett

■ THE SELF-ASSEMBLING BRAIN, HOW NEURAL NETWORKS GROW SMARTER

Peter Robin Hiesinger

Princeton University Press, 2022,
364 pp., £20, p/b -
ISBN 978-0-691181-22-6

How the brain works and how the neurons link up and develop is something that has intrigued science throughout history. What makes a neural network intelligent? Is it genes behind this process (connectivity) or is it the environment (learning)? Today science is busy trying to create 'artificial brains'. But is it really possible to create artificial intelligence, i.e. something that so far only exists in biology?

To date nobody has built a human brain, despite various attempts. A baby's brain has to grow together with the rest of its body, to develop from nothing but the 'genetic blueprint' it inherits from its parents. For this it needs both its genome, and time and energy to build the adult brain. It is a process that needs to take place in the right order, and at the right time.

The focus of this book is around this developmental process and is designed to highlight the different viewpoints from biologists and AI specialists. Is there sufficient agreement between the different disciplines to establish that we know how the brain is assembling itself, or do we still lack too many pieces of the puzzle?

To deal with these issues the author has created a fictitious discussion between a neuroscientist, an AI researcher, a

developmental geneticist, and a robotics engineer. (One explanation for this fictitious discussion is the author's own experience of not being able to have real-life discussions with experts from these different disciplines.) This technique enables the author to effectively highlight the differences between the disciplines: 'The idea that information unfolding based on genomic information cannot be mathematically calculated, but instead requires algorithmic growth or a full simulation thereof, is a core hypothesis of this book.' (p. 7)

The attempt to understand how the brain is able to assemble itself takes quite a bit of brain power. It is not 'just genes' that contain the blueprint for how to build a brain. Nor is it algorithms alone that lead to each phase of the development. 'As a brain develops, all neurons run through their programmes in an enormous coordinated and dynamic jigsaw puzzle.... The neuron lives in a dynamic normality that is characterised by continuous feedback with its surroundings and changing contexts that always seem just right.' (pp. 154-155)

To help us understand how the genome encodes the growth of a brain, the author draws on live observation of the much smaller number of neurons in the developing brain of a bee and a worm at the very moment their neural network self-assembles and becomes a brain.

One conclusion is that this brain development happens in close contact with the environment, i.e. both nature and nurture play a role. Even if the smallest components of a neural pathway system follow an algorithmic behaviour, the end result is not completely predictable. The author compares it with the outcome of an individual football match versus the overall performance of teams in a football league. Overall, we can see and predict a trend but that does not mean that we can do the same for each football match.

So where does the information come from and how does it get into the brain in order to shape it? It takes connectivity in the neural network as well as time and energy. The network also needs to learn. Another time and energy consuming activity. Exactly how this is done is where biological and artificial systems disagree. The biology argument is that it grows the AI claims there is an 'on' switch.

An important question which this book addresses is: can a self-taught AI device achieve 'human-level AI' without genes and development? Elon Musk, for instance, is already talking about AI implants in the brain as the next big thing. The final answer may well have a great impact on what our future will look like.

HEALTH AND HEALING

BEHIND THE LINES

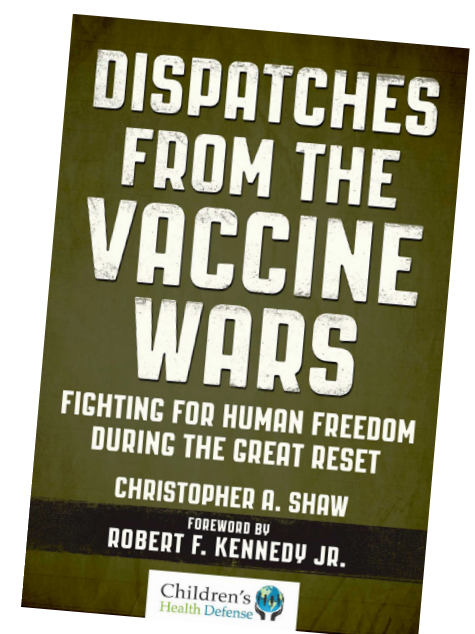
David Lorimer

■ DISPATCHES FROM THE VACCINE WARS

Christopher A. Shaw

Skyhorse Publishing, 2021,
599 pp., \$29.99, h/b -
ISBN 978-1-5107-5850-6

Prof Chris Shaw is a Canadian neuroscientist, some of whose research has involved the neurotoxicity of aluminium, particularly in vaccine adjuvants, bringing him right into the fray of controversy. This trenchant, well-informed and comprehensive book analyses the history of financialisation, politicisation and polarisation of vaccinology, a field that has reached an acute and critical phase over the last three years where the stakes have been raised immeasurably. Shaw describes the whole picture and the way in which narratives have been shaped and delivered to the public, recently fuelled by psychological manipulation through fear. The book begins with an introduction and overview, moving on to vaccination history, theory and practice, the official view of health consequences, more sceptical views on vaccine safety, then neurotoxic effects of mercury and aluminium. Pro-vaccine thought leaders are described, followed by resistance to vaccine policies, then characteristics of vaccines as an ideology and religion, with consequent vicious attacks on deviants and critics. Shaw then describes the symbiotic relationship between the media, the medical establishment, the WHO, Bill Gates, the WEF and the pharmaceutical cartel. The final chapters consider the trajectory of Covid research and policy within the context of permanent states of exception/emergency expressed in war



language, and the growing merger between vaccine resistance and resistance to corporate control embodied in The Great Reset.

Narrative control was and is crucial in the public domain where vaccines are touted as uniformly safe and effective on the basis of 'settled science' that cannot and should not be questioned. This characterisation is analysed in an original chapter on vaccine ideology and religion. Vaccinology as a scientific discipline should be subject to core scientific principles 'of observation, hypothesis generation, experimentation, data analysis, and interpretation of results based on other research in the field.' (p. 271) Structurally though, Shaw argues that it has come to resemble a cult or belief system with orthodoxy firmly upheld and heresy clamped down upon, as became clear to him with the reception of his research on aluminium adjuvants. Vaccine fundamentalism 'can tolerate no deviation from the true faith' where medicine has become a secularised religion. In his 2018 book entitled *Ideological Constructs of Vaccination*, Dr Mateja Cernic writes that 'simply put, one does not question vaccination. Ever, in any way whatsoever. If one does question it, one is sanctioned and expelled immediately. Questioning vaccination is the greatest sin, the greatest taboo in modern medicine.' (p. 280) As we have witnessed since 2020, medical apostates—however distinguished their prior track record—are repudiated and cast out, losing their positions, livelihood and even licenses courtesy of captured medical boards. The basic driver is a threat to industry profits, with earlier examples relating to other fields coming from the 2002 book *Trust Us, We're Experts*. In this respect, vaccine hesitancy is framed as a threat to profitability, and one 2019 article even describes it as a threat to health using the language of national security.

The public has been asked 'to take the safety aspect of the (Covid) vaccine on faith' with penalties for non-compliance and the eventual rollout of digital vaccine passports where basic human rights morph into temporary privileges granted by the State. The information war is in full flow, even to the extent of preventing open and honest debate between different positions using the weaponised suitcase term 'anti-vaxxer' (equated with 'anti-science') and claiming that any engagement represents an unwarranted concession (see tactics employed by David Gorski pp. 297 ff). The real issues are power and money, as explained in Chapter 12 on the nexus between the WHO, Bill Gates vaccine investments, the WEF and various Gates-funded institutions such as the Global Vaccine Alliance (GAVI) and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI).

These all sing from the same hymn sheet with overlapping goals (see chart on p. 386), and have been involved alongside intelligence agencies in various scenario planning exercises, such as the well-known Event 201 in October 2019. The keynote, as also for the WEF, is public-private partnership driven by corporate interests—witness also the UN

One Health initiative, funded by the same players and supported by the same major pharmaceutical companies. Shaw quotes an incisive analysis by Vandana Shiva where she observes that health is about life and living systems, whereas existing agricultural practice represents a war against life and biodiversity. Gates 'has created global alliances to impose top-down analysis and prescriptions for health problems' after giving money to define those problems and then using his influence and money to impose solutions. Furthermore, Microsoft's patent ominously numbered 060606 relates to monitoring human biological activity.

The bottom line is about the definition and nature of health within a structure of growing networked corporate power and centralisation, that uses the potential capacity of technology for control and surveillance. Shaw makes it clear that he supports the role of vaccinations in relation to infectious disease, but for the reasons he explains (p. 498), he thinks that they have been massively overused and overhyped, with the pharmaceutical interests dominating the entire medical and health system, especially in the US. We are now at a critical inflection point where we can succumb to fear and passively surrender our freedom to these predatory commercial forces, or we can resist this New World Order momentum—what Shaw calls 'a rolling world coup d'état'—by becoming part of the movement for regenerative agriculture and health. This resistance movement to medical fascism is beyond left and right, choosing solidarity over the corporate and government authoritarianism being implemented by public-private partnerships.

TRAUMA, ILLNESS & HEALING IN A TOXIC CULTURE

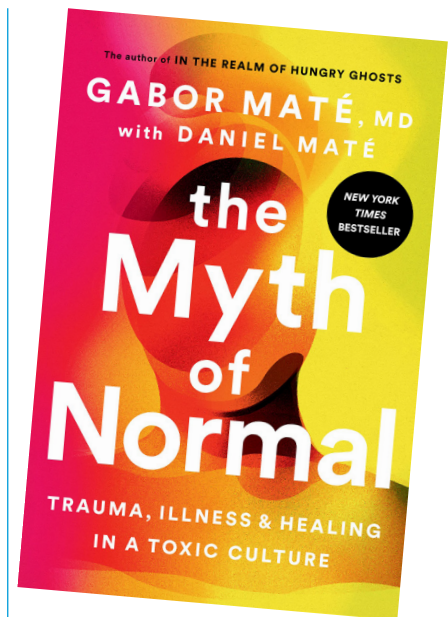
Sue Lewis

■ THE MYTH OF NORMAL

Gabor Maté www.drgabormate.com
with Daniel Maté
www.danielmate.com

Vermilion London, 2022,
497 pp., £25, h/b -
ISBN 978-1-785042-71-3

In a recent online interview, Gabor Maté told Tim Ferriss he had been planning *The Myth of Normal* for 10-12 years before Covid-19 forced him to cancel worldwide speaking engagements and stay home, giving him time to process the data and interviews he had gathered, and interweave his research with his personal story, his family's, and most importantly humankind's collective trauma. His son Daniel collaborated by reading the text, suggesting improvements in style and clarity of argument, crafting some sections from his father's notes and making appropriate contributions of his own, notably in Parts II and V.



Citing Galen of Pergamon, "The best physician is also a philosopher", Dr Maté asks why our collective health is deteriorating, despite significant advances in medical science, exposes how much we normalise in our society that is neither healthy nor natural, and proposes 'a new vision of normal that nurtures the best in who we are'.

Maté was born in 1944 Hungary to Jewish parents. Their living conditions were so dire that his mother asked a stranger to take him to a relative in better circumstances. Baby Gabor was traumatised by separation from a loving mother who wanted the best for her son. As one of the Jewish minority, he was bullied at school until his family left Hungary for Canada, in 1957. He qualified in medicine, became a family doctor, and subsequently worked for 12 years with drug addicts in Vancouver, coming face to face with the plight of Indigenous Canadians, the First Nations of the country that had welcomed him with open arms. He speaks with the voices of both victim and healer in a well-referenced book that is accessible to a wide readership.

Part I explores trauma, beginning with a trivial incident that ignites the author's abandonment wound, triggering an outdated childhood adaptation, so that he withdraws from the present moment to rerun a past wound. He invites readers to consider where they fit 'on the broad and surprisingly inclusive trauma spectrum', then defines what trauma is and is not, and describes its various effects. Freeze trauma, previously known as 'detachment', was barely acknowledged, let alone understood, before recent ground-breaking work by Peter Levine and others. Maté comments on the multigenerational nature of trauma without blaming genetics for our psychological difficulties because genes "are turned on and off by the environment". Genes may make us susceptible but they do not predetermine our lives. In this section Maté describes the machinery of stress, epigenetic markers,

energy flow, and much else. He highlights the importance of our contradictory needs of attachment (emotional closeness) and authenticity (being true to ourselves) and counsels us to leave behind blame, guilt, and shame, as we embark on the healing road.

As a doctor, Maté appreciates the achievements of medical science, but recognises the pitfalls of treating the symptoms of illness without inquiring into contributing circumstances and working with people in their social context. In Part II, he criticises his profession's approach to pregnant mothers, which contravenes their natural instincts when giving birth, and he acknowledges his own compliance with medical school training until he woke up to the harm it was doing to mothers and babies. Their relationship is hampered by popular parenting advice that ignores the emotional needs of small children. Education is pivotal to building a wholesome society, and Maté emphasises the importance of constructive play and healthy emotional expression and social interaction as well as useful skills and academic grades—a theme he returns to in Part V.

Freeze trauma is an insidious state of being that can linger for decades, stifling our progress, even when we have acknowledged our adverse childhood experiences, analysed them and lived a well-intentioned life. Such withdrawal is fuelled by cultural traditions that inhibit overt displays of emotion. So the workaholic Dr Maté would come home depressed, grumpy, and unresponsive to his wife's efforts to bring a smile to his face. Her anxiety was transmitted to the baby in her womb, while their elder son Daniel lived in a permanent state of insecurity and suffered recurrent nightmares. The trauma of Gabor and Daniel is touched upon here and in Part V. More will no doubt be revealed in their 2023 publication, *Hello Again: A Fresh Start for Adult Children and Their Parents*, a learning journey for father and son, to which Daniel makes a 50% contribution.

Workaholicism can be addictive like drugs, alcohol, moneymaking, gambling, retail therapy, and political ambition. Maté provides ample evidence that such addiction is stoked by trauma. Addictions are coping mechanisms we adopt to stem our pain and defend ourselves from that which is unendurable. They are central to Part III, and Part IV examines "The Toxicities of our Culture" that support addiction. We are bio-psycho-societal beings, indispensably connected to each other. Yet a former British PM is handsomely rewarded for giving talks that bleach "the 'social' out of society", side-lining chronic health problems as individual lifestyle choices, thereby detaching political leadership from social responsibility. Britain's recent appointment of a Minister of Loneliness has not escaped attention. American and Canadian leaders get similar drubbings for 'othering' people of colour and Indigenous communities, accepting sponsorship from fossil-fuel companies and ignoring their detrimental impact on the climate, rating competition higher than

cooperation, disregarding gender prejudice, and valuing profit above all else: 'greed is creed, and health nothing but collateral damage.' The tone is hard-hitting.

The final section of the book, Part V, explores "Pathways to Wholeness". Citing the Greek tragedian, Aeschylus—"we must suffer, suffer into truth"—and recognising that the Covid-19 experience has unmasked many of the iniquities of our society, making more people aware of the need to transform what our society considers normal, Maté presents a set of guiding principles to help our individual healing journeys. If past histories have devalued our sense of self-worth, especially 'in a society that capitalises on people's sense of inadequacy', we need to reprogramme ourselves, to be with our own suffering and the suffering of others because, in the words of playwright and physician Anton Chekhov, 'It is compassion that moves us beyond numbness toward healing'. Self-compassion loosens our tightness and opens our minds to others with curiosity, recognition and possibility. We share our interconnected pain and pursue our search for truth, however painful the process. We need to become a more trauma-conscious society, and Maté specifically targets the medical, legal, and teaching professions. He devotes a chapter to showing how shamans can enhance the performance of Western doctors, not only by introducing psychedelics to assist healing, but also by showing doctors how to clear the toxic energies they have absorbed from sick patients. 'Shedding toxic myths of disconnection from ourselves, from one another, and from the planet, we can bring what is normal and what is natural, bit by bit, closer together'. This is the message of a book that is huge in scope and deep in content.

Susan Lewis has an MA in Western Esotericism, a BA in Spanish and French, Diploma in Astrological Psychology, Certificate in Transpersonal Perspectives. Publications: Astrological Psychology, Western Esotericism and the Transpersonal (2015), articles and reviews.

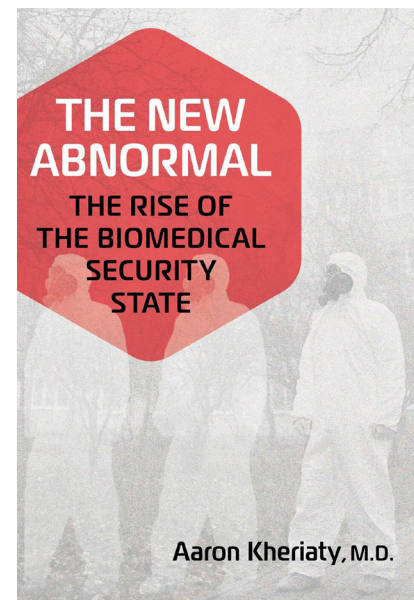
THE RISE OF THE BIOMEDICAL SECURITY STATE

David Lorimer

THE NEW ABNORMAL Aaron Kheriaty MD

Regnery, 2022, 278 pp., \$29.99,
h/b – ISBN 978-1-68451-385-7

Aaron Kheriaty was at the forefront of developments during Covid-19 as a professor of psychiatry at the University of California Irvine and long-time chairman of the ethics committee at the California Department of State Hospitals. He had a stellar reputation as a teacher and found himself in a situation where he had natural immunity following Covid infection with many robust scientific studies showing that 'natural immunity following infection was superior to vaccine



mediated immunity in terms of efficacy and duration of immunity.' (p. 100) Moreover, 'the largest population-based study [published in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*] comparing natural immunity to vaccine immunity found that fully vaccinated individuals were 6 to 13 times more likely to get infected than previously infected unvaccinated individuals.' (p. 101) This was the logical scientific basis for Kheriaty to challenge the university vaccine mandate, and many physicians were reluctant to sign exemptions for fear of losing their license. Moreover, he asked himself how he could continue to call himself a medical ethicist if he failed to do what he was convinced was morally right under pressure. He was immediately banned from working on campus or from home and was later placed on unpaid suspension that forbade seeing his patients or even engaging in other professional activities. This showed him that 'the university leadership was not interested in scientific debate or ethical deliberation.' (p. 109)

This is the personal background to this wide-ranging, brilliant and hugely important book on the rise of the biomedical security state and its implications for social organisation. The four chapters look at the origins of the current situation, a new societal paradigm, the coming technocratic dystopia, and ways of reclaiming freedom for human flourishing in a more rooted future. The prologue takes us to Nuremberg 1947 and the history of Nazi medical experimentation—23 physicians who justified their experiments in the name of scientific progress and the greater good (!) were indicted for crimes against humanity.. Fast forward to 2020, and we find ourselves in a situation where informed consent is jettisoned in the name of population health. Among the important and relatively unknown thinkers cited are Giorgio Agamben, Augusto del Noce and Stefano Zamagni, who gave an extraordinary lecture to the Simone Weil Center (her essay on the need for roots is an important source).

The starting point is that ‘Covid provided a useful opportunity for global elites with economic and political interests, in collaboration with the intelligence community and the police powers of the state, to accelerate the acceptance of a powerful and invasive digital infrastructure of biomedical surveillance and control....: this normalised subtle but powerful new methods of social control.’ (p. 6) The ‘New Normal’ is in fact, as the title suggests, The New Abnormal invoked by a state of emergency that still continues in the US. The danger is that continuous crises mean that the state of exception becomes the norm embedded within a vocabulary of war and security driven by fear. Health is imposed as a legal obligation for biosecurity purposes. Kheriaty gives telling examples from his own university micromanaging ZotPass system and the Amazon Associate Development and Performance Tracker, both run by bureaucracies with enormous power but – crucially – no locus of responsibility. As Lewis Mumford anticipated in his two-volume *The Myth of the Machine* over 60 years ago, what he called the megamachine is driven by ‘order, power, predictability and above all, control’ where humans are regarded as machine-conditioned animals with no inner life—what CS Lewis called the abolition of man.

Many wargame scenarios arising from the merging of public health and the military-intelligence-industrial complex have taken place over the last 20 years, effectively as training exercises where consistent themes envisage empowering centralised authoritarian governance and coerced mass vaccination: ‘humanity, as part of biological nature, must be managed and controlled through strict biomedical security measures.’ (p. 47) The ideology behind this is one of scientism as intrinsically totalitarian, as explained in Kheriaty’s article in this issue, and where misinformation is defined as contradicting the mainstream narrative. This enthrones consensus science as the only valid authority underpinned by ‘a myth of progress via radical rupture with the past.’ (p. 59) In both fascism and transhumanism, ‘nature is nothing more than a raw material to be reshaped by technology’ and any transcendent source of moral authority is rejected.

The next chapter analyses many elements of the Covid narrative, including shifting definitions of what the vaccine can achieve and the burying of data to combat ‘vaccine hesitancy’, despite rising evidence of adverse effects and now excess mortality (pp. 74 ff.). Then there is the collateral damage from government responses, such as lockdown policies, especially in terms of mental health. After taking on his university, Kheriaty joined efforts to battle the CDC and FDA’s one size fits all approach to public health and their predetermined behavioural outcomes. His lawyer Aaron Siri sent the CDC a submission with 56 studies on natural immunity, in which they showed no interest whatsoever. He also discusses the Pfizer data in terms of what they knew

but failed to disclose: that all of this took place within a context of regulatory capture, and it was shocking to learn that ‘in 2020, more than two-thirds of Congress—72 senators and 302 House of Representatives members—cashed a campaign check from a Pharma company.’ (p. 121). It is evident that root and branch reform of these corrupt systems is required, and Kheriaty makes a number of constructive suggestions in this respect.

The chapter on the coming technocratic dystopia draws on Orwell’s *Newspeak* and describes the Great Reset agenda mediated through public-private partnerships, agreements with the UN, and individual governments such as the UK (see my review of Iain Davis in PE 138). I agree that the endgame here is corporatism: ‘the merging of corporate interests and government, or more accurately, the control of governing institutions by corporate interests’ (p. 145). All of this will be further advanced by the leading business people and politicians attending the Davos meeting in January. In parallel, the WHO is preparing a new pandemic treaty for 2024, giving them unprecedented power over governments. Significantly, in Article 3 ‘the WHO wants to remove the terms “with full respect for the dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons” from its International Health Regulations and replace them with the fuzzy buzzwords “based on the principles of equity, inclusivity, coherence ...” Agamben forecasts that this new system will be ‘capitalism in its communist variation’, modelled on the Chinese social credit system and centrally enforced by digital means (see also ID2020 and its supporters). Kheriaty summarises by saying that ‘the WHO’s digital system of biomedical surveillance and control will be mandatory, transnational, and operated by unelected bureaucrats operating in a captured NGO that has already badly bungled the Covid pandemic response.’ (p. 152 and see also p. 161)

As a spokesman for the WEF, transhumanism and dataism, Yuval Noah Harari is a significant voice defining humans as hackable animals and dismissing soul, spirit and free will as illusions in the quest to engineer, ‘upgrade’ and ‘enhance’ bodies, brains and minds. In this respect, Kheriaty defines transhumanism as microwaved eugenics. One of his key insights articulates the differences between Hippocratic and technocratic medicine informed by the mechanistic metaphor, scientism and technological power. Here he draws on the brilliant talk by Stefano Zamagni (<https://simoneweilcenter.org/publications/2021/10/28/a-talk-for-the-simone-weil-center-on-pandemic-and-technocracy>) arguing (pp. 177 ff.) that the mRNA vaccine is in fact a technological device enshrining a technocratic understanding of the human being using ‘a command and control mechanism, hijacking our cellular biology and redirecting our body’s “machinery” for novel purposes – in this case, the production of the virus’ spike

protein, which is then expressed in our own cells.’ Crucially, he continues, ‘this process has nothing whatsoever to do with the natural workings of a healthy human body’, and its relationship to the body is one of power not assistance, with no consideration of its intrinsic and natural healing power. This is the logical destination of impersonally treating the human body as a machine requiring regular software updates.

The final chapter suggests a humane way forward into a more rooted future, while the epilogue depicts a fully-fledged technocratic digital system operating in Seattle by 2030. Kheriaty puts forward a number of proposals and steps, the first of which is to overcome our fear and to resist behavioural conditioning promoted by social psychologists in government ‘nudge’ units. Politically, we need to demonstrate that there are limits to what citizens will accept under public health emergencies and with respect to invasive digital technologies. Then there is institutional reform, already mentioned, plus the development of an open peer-review system and decentralised health agencies. Beyond this, Kheriaty makes the case for universal rationality and pursuit of truth grounded in a transcendent *logos* beyond mere instrumental rationality. He points out that reason is also contemplative – it should persuade rather than force. Allied to that is restoring the moral authority of values and the dignity of work while also recognising our need for roots and living from enduring principles. As I indicated at the beginning, this is one of the most thoughtful, well-informed and penetrating books on our current social trajectory by a man of real integrity that deserves the widest possible readership.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF TRAUMA

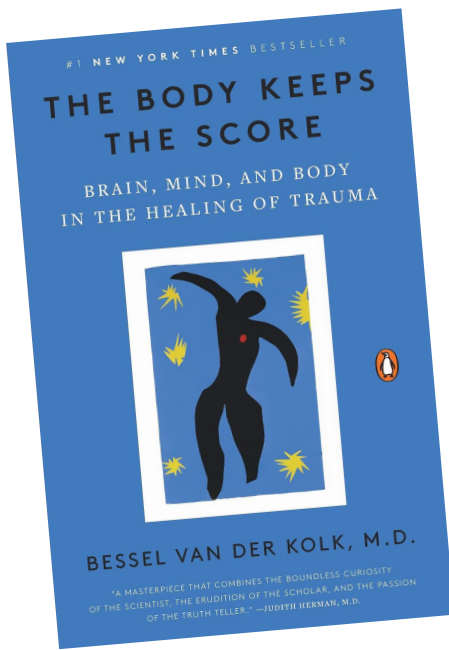
Damian Spindel

■ THE BODY KEEPS THE SCORE: MIND, BRAIN AND BODY IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF TRAUMA

Bessel van der Kolk

Penguin, 2014, 560 pp., €12.50 p/b – ISBN 978-0-141978-61-1

The role of the body in personal transformation and healing is no secret for practitioners of spiritual disciplines. *The Body Keeps the Score* is an explanation of modern discoveries about the brain and body as well as a broad review of techniques discovered in the course of van der Kolk’s career as a trauma therapist. In the last decades, these techniques have broken through the psychiatric paradigm showing the lasting value of engaging trauma with non-chemical means. That these techniques broadly align with spiritual practices across time and space while at the same time being augmented by modern technologies (such



as EEG) is of interest to those who would challenge the materialist paradigm.

The story begins with van der Kolk's engagement with Vietnam veterans in the early 1980s and an overview of the history of diagnosing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), starting with the first cases of shell shock in the First World War. Advances in brain science and a deeper understanding of the functions of the brain stem (basic housekeeping), the limbic brain (embodiment and emotion) as well as the prefrontal cortex (time, context and empathy) explain PTSD as dysfunction and disjunction between these functions. The body and the brain can no longer find a healthy response to the original stress—the artillery fire, the car crash, the abuse. Hyperarousal reactivated as a response prevents this. How the individual responds to a traumatic situation—focussed, collapsed or frantic—is regulated deep in the body by the vagus nerve, a nerve that stretches from the colon to the brain, registering heartbreak and gut-wrenching feelings. Hearts can be literally broken.

In the author's eyes, developmental trauma is a 'hidden epidemic'. A significant focus of the work falls on childhood trauma, abuse and neglect and how this can lead to disorganised relationship maps and a disorganised, dissociated self, at points so far gone as unable to recognise oneself in a mirror. To address these traumas, one needs to understand how basic attachment and deep emotional attunement through ritual (both individual and communal) can help restore a broken self to a more coherent person, an *agent*. It is important to understand how foundational the visceral and kinesthetic sensation of our bodies is key to a sense of self and what we experience as 'real'. It is this understanding of self and trauma that opens the way to treatment and healing.

Another key in unlocking trauma can be

found by better understanding the difference between the memory that tells the story of the trauma and the memory that stores the trauma in images. Here too, as with the body and mind, a bridge needs building. One key finding made here is that the "talking cure" will not always help, that finding words can be transformative but that action, too, is needed. The truth may be unspeakable and it will take time to allow oneself to know what one knows, gently, oscillating between remembering the past and living the present.

Having shown the latest scientific findings on the nature of trauma, van der Kolk shows how different practices can help return to the body to find a place of healing and proceeds to review 'paths to recovery' and methods to regain self-leadership. He recommends befriending the emotional brain and dealing with hyperarousal by learning to train the brain via the body - breathing, chanting and moving and strengthening the body self-awareness through mindfulness puts us in touch with the inner world. Relationships with others, a guide or a mentor, to help understand the "inner music" and indeed communal involvement can help here too.

The book concludes with a review of recent discoveries such as eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR), neurofeedback, yoga and an articulation of the need for self-leadership, an enhanced form of agency: ways and means of bringing the dissonant voices and body together and developing some sense of coherence and ownership.

The body therefore not only stores the trauma but also provides the means to resolve the trauma. The body keeps the score but we can understand and manage the accounting. Deep body work—meditation, trance, yoga and ritual—allows the traumatised to access, see, integrate and live with trauma. As in times past, pharmacology can help. There is much sadness in this book, as each case study unfolds, but also much room for optimism.

This work is particularly valuable as it picks up a thread of shamanic practices identified from within the paradigm and constraints of contemporary Western psychiatry. Interestingly, it is predicated on basic principles such as the psyche as a self-regulating system. This system may need an intervention of sorts to resolve blockages and reconcile opposites, such as the opposition between mind and body in initial disassociative phases of trauma, but also those in our memories, both narrative and traumatic. I am reminded of Kalsched's work and the second union of alchemy, bringing soul, spirit and body together, and would recommend this book to all who would like to better understand the role of the body in trauma, the healing of trauma and seeing a rediscovery of ancient practices in our times, from within Western paradigms.

Having studied Philosophy and Religious Studies, Damian Spendel now works in finance and practises martial arts in his spare time.

A DISASTROUS DECLINE IN CHILD-REARING

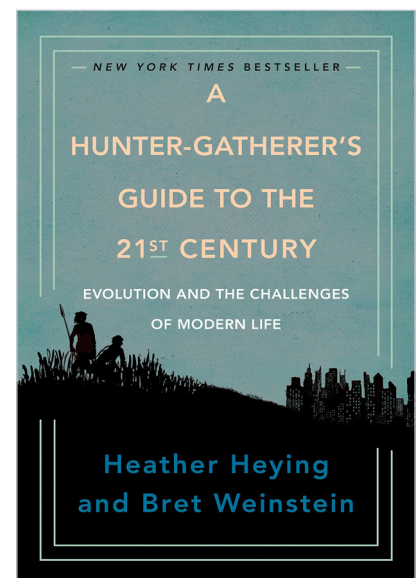
Steve Minett

■ A HUNTER-GATHERER'S GUIDE TO THE 21ST CENTURY, EVOLUTION AND THE CHALLENGES OF MODERN LIFE

Heather Heying and Bret Weinstein

Swift Press, 2022,
301 pp., £ 12.99, p/b -
ISBN 978-1-80075-094-4

This book was written by a pair of American evolutionary biologists who are also a married couple. It deals with how our evolutionarily ancient bodies are out of sync with the 'hyper-novelty' of the modern world, especially for 'WEIRD' people, i.e. Westerners, Educated and living in Industrialised countries, which are Rich and Democratic. I found it a rather mixed bag: on the positive side, they are stoutly anti-reductionist and they argue passionately that children should be given the freedom to self-regulate, against the modern hyper-cautionary approach to child rearing. On the other hand, they indulge in a lot of rather 'preachy' social conservatism. They express, for example, views on monogamy and pornography which would not be out of place in an evangelical church in America's 'bible belt'. Their endorsements of the virtues of study trips to the rainforest and the outdoor life generally are rather reminiscent of the ethos of scouting. But even worse (from my point of view), they totally ignore the most glaringly negative example of hyper-novelty to which the modern infant is exposed; namely the replacement of the alloparenting hunter-gatherer group with the isolated nuclear family. (That is if the infant is lucky—even worse these days, they may have the misfortune to be born to a socially isolated single parent!)



To start with the positive, let's look at their commendable anti-science and anti-reductionism. They say; 'We are not "finely calibrated machines". We are embodied beings.' (p. 62) They attack social Darwinism and add that; 'Scientism is a bastardisation of the tools of science, just as social Darwinism is a bastardisation of Darwin's ideas, and a woeful misunderstanding of evolutionary theory.' (p. 61) They also lambaste WEIRD parents for paying more attention to the easily collected metrics around their child's health than the child's actual condition. However, this determined anti-reductionism does seem to slip when they make a few casual remarks about the self: they say that despite having a 'continuous lifeline' from birth to death, the transformations which occur, especially '... from childhood to adulthood, mean that we are not the same beings as we were, ...' And, if we try to hang onto '... a previous identity, we will restrict our future.' (p.162) I, and many others, on the other hand, believe that the notion of the emotional continuity of the self is part of a consistently anti-reductionist stance.

A second big positive is the authors' promotion of autonomy and self-regulation for children: '... when children are actually allowed to roam freely, in groups, and engage in long periods of unstructured play, the bullies and jerks are more likely to lose power than gain it, and everyone learns how to both create and follow rules that work.' (p. 148) They are of course aware of the delicate balance between giving children enough space and freedom to experiment while protecting them from real dangers. They argue, however, that our societal pendulum has swung too far toward total protection. The result is that children grow up fearing that almost everything is a threat. They've never been allowed to engage in the physical and psychological rough and tumble which should be part of the maturation process. Consequently they 'end up children in the bodies of adults.' (p. 149)

The authors very reasonably state that: Of all the systems essential to the functioning of humanity, parenting may well be the most compromised by the hyper-novelty of the 21st century.' (p. 136) They also encourage people to seek out alloparenting for their children from grandparents, older siblings and friends (p. 143). As a remedy for the massive dysfunctionality of modern parenting, this is, frankly, rather pathetic: the anthropologist Robin Dunbar has established that, for 200,000 years, homo sapiens has lived in groups of up to 150 people. This was the basis for real and effective alloparenting in the human species, as expressed in the (often quoted, but never implemented) African saying: 'it takes two people to create a child but a village to raise it.' It is this community of a hundred plus people that the infant human brain (soon after birth) is searching for. Not two, or worse just one, working parents, harassed by financial, employment, accommodation and health worries and stressed by the total absence, or inadequacy, of the social

support network, which human parents are genetically hard-wired to expect. The authors of this book never refer to this acute and highly damaging 'hyper-novelty' concerning modern parenting, let alone suggest any solutions. (I've directly addressed this problem and suggested a viable solution in two separate books'.) In keeping with their social conservatism, all their advice is predicated on the assumption that human child rearing will take place exclusively in the isolated nuclear family.

'Gazing at the Stars' and 'Social Gardeners from the Stars'. Both can be found on Amazon.

Steve Minett PhD is the author of Consciousness as Feeling: A Theory of the Nature and Function of Consciousness. The book is available as a cost-free, electronic copy. It can be downloaded from his website using the following link:

<https://consciousvm.wordpress.com/my-book-on-consciousness-theory/>

PHILOSOPHY- SPIRITUALITY

THREE WORDS

David Lorimer

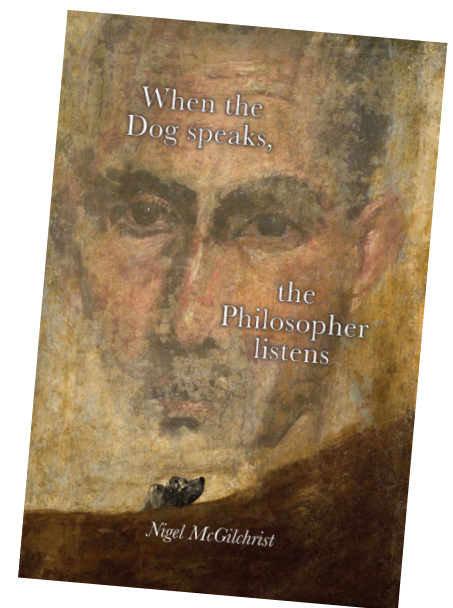
■ WHEN THE DOG SPEAKS THE PHILOSOPHER LISTENS

Nigel McGilchrist

Genius Loci Publications, 2022,
287 pp., £30, h/b –
ISBN 978-1-3999-2242-5

My old friend Nigel McGilchrist—brother of Iain—has written an exquisitely crafted and beautifully illustrated masterpiece on Pythagoras while at the same time articulating his own mature philosophy of life. The book was written at his home on the Greek island of Kythera and is deeply informed by Nigel's extensive expertise in art, architecture, landscape and the history of the islands of the Aegean Sea. All this contributes to the vivid sense of time and place evoked in the course of the narrative. Carefully chosen photographs and classic works of art make a vital contribution to the whole by adding an illuminating dimension of understanding. The title comes from a well-known story about Pythagoras recognising the soul of an acquaintance in a dog, and indeed Nigel's first acknowledgement is to his own dog Livia – more on this episode below.

The book begins by situating the reader immediately within the geography of the Greek archipelago, but more widely in its cultural interaction and mercantile exchange with North Africa and Asia. It draws attention to the significance of the extraordinary Phoenician voyage around



Africa that took place as far back as 600 BC that constitutes an illustration of expansion of perspective through exploration. Nigel identifies a number of qualities of Greekness, then the central chapter is entitled 'Pythagoras Distilled', before he moves on to problems with Pythagoras and the transmission of his insights, then his significance for today. Pythagoras received a great deal of inspiration from the East, but was able to translate and transpose it into wholly new forms. The overall argument recalls Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*.

Nigel describes Pythagoras as a horizon: 'he was the first mind we know of in the West to think in a truly integral manner about our world, our place within it, and its place within the cosmos. He was the first person to talk about all this without resorting to myth, anthropomorphic deities or allegorical narrative. And he was the first person to show how it was beauty that gave meaning to this whole – the beauty of underlying harmony and of a universal mathematical order.' (p. 232) He is surely right in arguing that the genius of Pythagoras lay in bringing the outer and inner worlds together and of understanding their relationship: 'both the world as understood by the mind and the world as lived by the soul, outer nature and inner life; science and spirit.' (p. 233) Here is one of a number of places where Nigel's exposition runs in parallel with Iain's work on left and right hemisphere intelligences, though this is never explicitly stated.

The Three Words referred to in the title of this review are *kosmos*, *armonia* (harmony) and *philo-sophia*, each of which were given new meaning by Pythagoras and reflect the architecture of the Greek mind in terms of structure, clarity and balance. Nigel observes that 'architecture is the visible and material expression of a way of thinking: yet at the same time it actively shapes our thinking. It is in a constant and living dialogue with the mind.' (p. 62) Greek architecture highlights structure and corresponds to the value given

by Pythagoras to proportion, number and geometry. Pythagoras enjoined us ‘to see and understand’, and it is here that the first of the three words comes in. *Kosmos* is both order and beauty (‘to see order and to feel beauty is to be human and alive’ as Nigel puts it) and is at the root of the word *cosmetic*: ‘our cosmos is defined both by order and by its beauty’ - and we now live in an impoverished imaginative world that has remembered the first and forgotten the second. Fascinatingly, the word *armonia* originated as a woodworker’s close-fitting joint, translated by Pythagoras into proportion and music. *Sophia* was likewise a term originally derived from craftsmanship denoting know-how but developing into wisdom. Crucial to Nigel’s argument is philosophy defined as ‘receptivity to knowledge and insight’, ‘a deep attentiveness to experience and awareness of the phenomena that surround us.’ (p. 105) Hence the importance for Pythagoras of both sound and silence. Musically harmonious relationships arising from exact proportions are experienced as beauty—also by Einstein as physicist and violinist. Silence enables us to attend and listen to intuitive promptings.

Nigel has an original take on transmigration of souls arising from his consideration of Pythagoras recognising the soul of his friend in a dog, as reported by Xenophanes. He sees this process ‘as an expansion of our being into a greater dimension... [and] as a metaphor of our growing consciousness’ as well as an inescapable communality of being that should elicit compassion: ‘It pushes us to see how our lives are related in a way similar to the individual leaves on a tree yet at the same time indissolubly interlinked through their participation within the greater organism.’ (p. 128) The soul, for Nigel, ‘is in the business of learning. It is as if our consciousness travels; and as it journeys, it grows.’ More subtly, he argues that it is the unfulfilled parts of us that return for further purification, winnowing or filtering out as ‘we create what we are’ and return to the life-bearing tree after each season of life. (p. 130) Later, in a chapter on the soul as work of art, he observes that ‘both life and death are processes of tuning, tempering and purification.’ (p. 236)

Even at the remove of over 2,500 years, the essential philosophy of Pythagoras can guide us in a way of life exhibiting ‘both intellectual and spiritual integrity’ and summarised by Nigel as follows

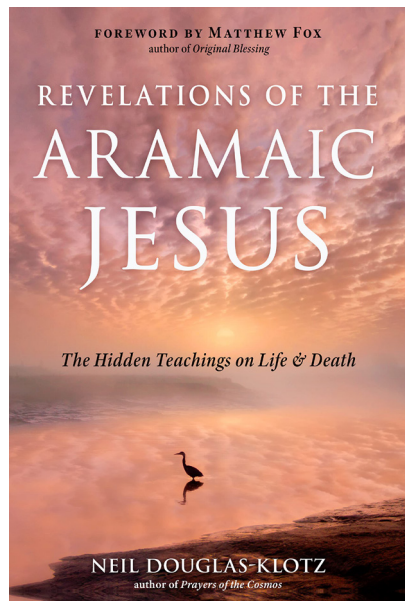
- *Do no deliberate harm to any living beings—human, animal or plant—the principle of kinship*
- *Foster and hold to harmony as the greatest aspiration of our earthly life and seek to understand its meaning—this brings together the moral and the aesthetic*
- *Look for beauty in all aspects of life: create it and cultivate it with care—beauty also gives meaning to life*
- *Respect silence and remain always receptive to intuition*

- *Train and free the mind to think and reflect—for spiritual growth and fulfilment*
- *Be open always to other ways of seeing and thinking*

In his epilogue and appendices, Nigel reflects on truth and beauty, coming to agree with the famous lines from Keats which T.S. Eliot apparently found incomprehensible:

*Beauty is truth, truth beauty – that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.*

He also draws some fascinating parallels between Pythagoras and Lao Tse. They both sought ways of bringing humanity into fruitful harmony with the principle of heavenly order, and in this respect they both emphasise being and the need for spiritual listening to bring oneself into the flow. There are many other richly developed themes that space does not allow me to elaborate here. To read this extraordinary work is an odyssey in itself, an initiation into the way Pythagoras saw and understood the world, pivotally transforming the outlook of his time in ways that reverberate into our own, while also reminding us of the wholeness and balance we now need to recover at a different turn of the spiral: it is up to us to see and understand anew.



HIDDEN TEACHINGS

David Lorimer

REVELATIONS OF THE ARAMAIC JESUS

Neil Douglas-Klotz (SMN) –
Foreword by Matthew Fox

Hampton Roads, 2022,
253 pp., \$19.95, p/b –
ISBN 978-1-64297-041-8

Over the past 30 years, Neil has written a series of revelatory books on the Aramaic spirituality of Jesus, opening up new depths of meaning and subtlety in his teachings. As also in the Gnostic Gospels, Jesus comes

across primarily as a wisdom teacher and way-shower for us to follow in his path. Matthew Fox points out in his foreword that ‘much too much of religious language has become rote’, while Yeshua’s original Aramaic words are charged with spirit and touch the heart directly. Moreover, some key Christian concepts emerge re-energised from this study, and this transmission can speak to us across time concerning the perennial challenges of the human condition. As Neil observes, ‘relationship, love, knowledge, work and purpose still claim our main attention.’ We still exist between the polarities of heaven and earth, light and darkness, self and other, but we also have/are consciousness (Light) and the capacity to know at different levels.

Neil explains that our small self is *naphsha*, while the force behind it and ‘the ultimate source of “I-ness” ‘ is *ruha*, literally free flowing breath always connected with the source of reality *Alaha* as the soul—hence Jesus stating that I am in the Spirit (Father in John, Abwun in Aramaic) and the Spirit is in me reciprocally. This is the key insight and realisation/gnosis of all the great mystics and is channelled through the heart. At the time of Jesus, people felt themselves less separate and individual than we do now, which corresponds to the three evolutionary phases in Owen Barfield referred to by Neil as original participation, separation and individuation, and final participation which Jesus himself attained and which is an essential remembrance for contemporary integration and spiritual well-being (interestingly, to be tempted is to forget). Neil provides many contemplative exercises to help readers in this respect.

The main text begins with beautiful explanations of the Lord’s Prayer and the Beatitudes. Here forgetfulness is also equated with unripeness, while ripeness—*tubw* —is a blessed state of being fully present with eyes to see and ears to hear: ‘ripe are those who dissolve their small selves within breath, they live in the shimmering “I can” of nature and the cosmos.’ (p. 50) Peace as *shlama* is touching the source of everything, remembering ‘both our shared origin and our shared impermanence’ (p. 61): ‘a deeper connection with our soul (*ruha*) opens us to the vision and power (*malkuta*) of Reality itself’ (p. 65) and trust in its [lamp of] guidance. The Beatitudes in Luke warn about wilful unripeness, while also showing how this can be overcome and a state of balance reached where we can remain awake and shine our light through works of service and love.

Darkness and light represent not knowing and knowing, while blood in Aramaic ‘can also mean wine, juice, sap, or essence.’ (p. 138) Jesus invites his followers ‘to fuse yourselves with what I’m saying’ so as to learn his way, which reminded me of passages in the Gospel of the Beloved Companion where he says that following his words is the way, the truth and the life rather than he as a person as

fundamentalists would interpret the 'I am' sayings in John. The challenge for us is to live as an individual 'in a fully ripe way in time and space, in the community of humanity and nature, while also constantly connected to the timeless Reality.' (p. 145) To return to the *ruha* is to find silence and repose represented by Shekinah, 'the "settling" or "dwelling" of the divine presence or *in'ana* [also abiding].' (p. 149) Neil explains that 'the small self exists to be a mirror to reflect the Only Self.' (p. 150) This is attained through a breath of focused emptiness and ripe direction expressing both individuality and the universality of 'always connected'. Yeshua speaks from within that Reality, the *ruha* 'embedded within and connecting all beings.' (p. 172)

Interestingly, the Aramaic for vine *peteta*—refers to any hollowed-out channel that allows flow through it. Hence, 'connecting the I to the only I is the vine, rooted, giving, opening to life.' (p. 182) We are branches that must remain connected to this vine if we are to bear fruit and achieve fullness or completion (*tamla*), a key phrase in the Gospel of the Beloved Companion and other Gnostic texts where Mary Magdalene is said to have realised her I Am and become the 'completion of completions.' (GBC Ch 42 ff) The emphasis in *Acts* is 'direct transmission of the experience of the breath spirit of Yeshua rather than ideas about him... the breath connected to all Breathing life.' (p. 198) Our task is no different from what Yeshua experienced and taught 2,000 years ago, namely to become aware of our own awareness and individually aware of our life within universal soul. We can be hugely grateful for Neil's scholarship and dedication in bringing us this vital message through his life's work.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE IN CRISIS

Gunnel Minnett

■ SPIRITUAL AWAKENINGS, SCIENTISTS AND ACADEMICS DESCRIBE THEIR EXPERIENCES

Edited by Marjorie Woollacott, PhD and David Lorimer

AAPS Press, 2022,
270 pp., £12.32, p/b -
ISBN 978-1-735449-14-2

This book deals with phenomena which have been known throughout history but which until recently have been rejected by most non-religious people. In particular, for scientists and anyone interested in an academic career, the subject has been pretty much a taboo. This book deals with experiences which can only be described (including by those who have had the

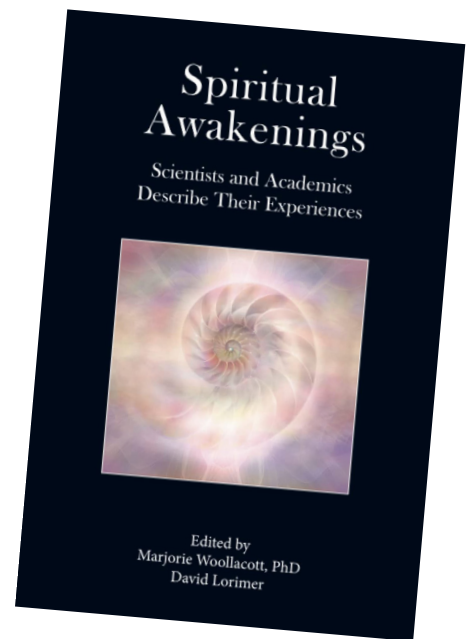
experiences) as extraordinary. They provide some sense of spiritual awakening. What they have in common is that they have the power to completely transform the life of the experiencer—so strong that they can't be denied or explained away. Consequently, they may 'force' the person to change their understanding of the world. One major reason why they have been rejected, outside the religious sphere (and in particular science), is that they are difficult, or impossible, to explain with conventional Newtonian science.

This is probably why this book has been produced. It contains a number of accounts from people who have had what they describe as a 'spiritual awakening' in the form of one or several extraordinary, inexplicable and life-changing experiences. This is also why the book provides the full academic/scientific 'credentials' of the people having these experiences to show that they are not gullible people, ready to call the experiences inexplicable simply because they don't know better. However, these experiences are, as yet, not possible to fully explain by conventional science and are therefore, by definition, not accepted by science. The remedy for this somewhat schizophrenic approach is to collect more evidence, to the point where such experiences can no longer be disputed.

A common theme in the book is that the potential experiencer approaches some form of mind-changing technique, such as; meditation, mantra repetition or similar, often with a certain level of suspicion (wearing their scientific hat). But, once they have had a spiritual awakening experience, it tends to 'take over' and have a mind-changing effect of some kind. Fortunately for us, these scientists are often able to handle and describe their experiences in language accessible even to those who've never had such experiences.

The experiences are divided into seven groups depending on circumstances around what triggered them and how they developed. *'For some individuals there were multiple subtle experiences, one cascading on top of another, and it was hard for them to distinguish the relative importance of each in the awakening process and the subsequent transformation of their world and their lives. The first may have been the experience of a paranormal event, such as a sense of the presence of a deceased friend, and this may have opened a door to their exploration of practices like meditation, which further shifted their world view and accelerated the ongoing transformation in their life. For others, the awakening was like a volcano erupting, sometimes with murmurs or tremors in advance, but with the energetic fireworks that immediately transformed their worldview and their entire life course.'* (p. 243)

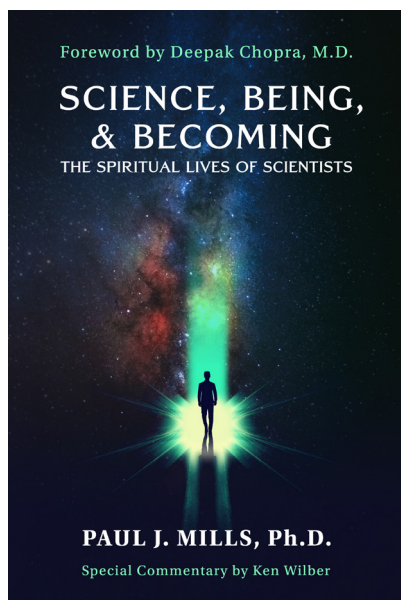
The ability to handle and share these kinds of intense experience is really valuable. For example, it can be a real dilemma to have such strong experiences



without <https://m.media-amazon.com/images/I/51aTm35nMGL.jpg> being able to understand or process what has happened: many of the accounts in the book describe some kind of life crisis, often prompting the experiencer to seek help from conventional institutions that do not recognise 'Spiritually Transformative Experiences' (STEs).

Breathwork is an area where people tend to open up on a level that may lead to spiritual awakening. In his book 'Spiritual Emergency, When Personal Transformation Becomes a Crisis' (1989) Stan Grof gives examples as to how potentially positive life-changing experiences can end up as tragedies in the absence of the right support. Without proper guidance, such strong mind-altering experiences may result in diagnosis of 'psychosis' in an A&E department, where the most likely remedy will be medication and/or time in a psychiatric ward.

This is why this book is important. Allowing people from 'within' science to describe such experiences - still regarded as 'outside' science - is a big step toward bridging this contradiction. Historically it may not have been as important for scientists to deal with these kinds of experiences, because they were automatically referred to religion i.e. it was not considered relevant to science. For anyone willing to accept 'interventions by God', this may have offered sufficient explanation to enable the experiencer to integrate the experience into their lives. But for many in today's world, it may not be sufficient or satisfactory to hear their intense experiences being referred to as God's work. We are used to more fact-based explanations and it is high time that spiritual awakening experiences were taken up by science and exposed to the same strict investigation as other scientific research. As the book clearly shows, these 'inexplicable' experiences should be seen as an invitation to explore the mind and psyche further rather than being rejected as non-scientific.



THE SPIRITUAL LIVES OF SCIENTISTS

David Lorimer

■ SCIENCE, BEING AND BECOMING

Paul J. Mills PhD

Light on Light Press, 2022,
221 pp., \$17.99, p/b –
ISBN 978-1-958921-05-0

This is in many ways a companion volume to *Spiritual Awakenings* edited by Marjorie Woollacott and myself and reviewed elsewhere in this issue. Neither knew of the other's book until publication, so maybe this is a sign of the times, that a shift is going on where scientists and academics are increasingly prepared to talk publicly about their spiritual experiences. We already know informally and as a result of surveys that they are reticent in speaking to their colleagues for fear of making what Max Velmans has called 'a career-limiting move', which explains why many people wait for retirement. Transformative stories can come out around the dinner table but certainly not at departmental meetings—Athena Potari recalls the fury of the head of the Philosophy Department in Oxford when she proposed in a seminar that philosophy might be about experience, as was the case with ancient Greek *gnosis*.

This book is based on interviews with over 30 (mainly US) scientists, and is structured into six chapters, with a foreword by Deepak Chopra and a commentary by Ken Wilber. It also has four spotlight articles on perspectives on transpersonal, metaphysical and mystical experiences, the evolution of consciousness towards wholeness and unity, Eben Alexander's wise advice to scientists thinking of pursuing the journey, and the role of compassion along the journey of consciousness development. Individual chapters incorporating extensive quotations from interviews address the need to transform materialist science, heeding the call to become

spiritual scientists, how interviewees are sharing their insights, the role of mentors, personal and professional challenges to commitment and transformation, giving back to the next generation, and putting consciousness development into perspective.

Paul describes his own journey beginning with learning transcendental meditation – he is Professor of Public Health and Family Medicine at the University of California San Diego with over 400 scientific publications. Early on, he experienced a vast consciousness that communicated with him telepathically. This consciousness was patiently awaiting human awakening to the real nature of cosmic Light and Love that are ultimately to manifest in physical existence. His early work was on the neurophysiology of meditation at the Maharishi International University, and he writes that he wrestled with how many of his own metaphysical experiences to include in the book, while remarking that all interviewees are 'interested in seeing an end to the metaphysical and/or mystical being so off-limits to western scientific enquiry.' (p. xxx) When he arrived at the University of California San Diego, while interviewing with the leadership of the psychiatry department, he was rebuffed and told meditation research would not be permitted, although years later the department established one of the largest academic mindfulness meditation programs.

The starting point of Ken Wilber's commentary on recognising and evolving our spiritual and human natures is 'an expansion of self-identity from an isolated, separate self sense to of oneness with this ultimate Reality, and, therefore, also a sense of being one with the entire universe'—a non-dual state within an overall system of states and structures of consciousness involving first-, second- and third-person perspectives. Such non-dual experiences are described by many interviewees whether in the context of Zen, Advaita or other traditions. This is well put by Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj when he writes that the vastness is his home, the vastness is myself and the vastness is also love. The Jnani 'is the supreme and also the witness. He is both being and awareness. In relation to consciousness, he is awareness. In relation to the universe, he is pure being.' (p. 65) This expanded self-identity leads directly to empathy and compassion by overcoming the ego's sense of separation and isolation.

Robert Atkinson's spotlight article provides a useful framework developed from Joseph Campbell and variously expressed: by van Gennep as separation, transition, incorporation; by Evelyn Underhill as awakening, purification, union; in Jung's individuation as the birth of the ego, death of the ego, birth of the whole self and representing the storyline of beginning, middle and end. This is transposed by the author into beginning, muddle (!), and resolution within a framework of the call to wholeness, the path of purification or cleaning up and healing, and a return to wholeness and integration also represented by Owen Barfield's final participation. It is this experience of wholeness that 'heals the divide

between science and spirituality, reason and faith, separation and union.' (p. 98) This is what needs to happen at an institutional level, and is central to our work.

Readers will find much support and nourishment from the life stories recounted in this book where the role of spiritual practice in relation to scientific activity is clearly and individually articulated, involving as it does the transformation of the scientist. The consciousness development journey has been extensively mapped by Ken Wilber, Sri Aurobindo and others where our divine and human natures are able to coexist and be fully expressed.

In concluding, Paul observes that there is an isomorphism between individuals transcending 'their egoic small self perspective' to embrace their universal Self with science transcending its materialist perspective and embracing ways of observation and knowing based on love and compassion (p. 202). Such a new science supporting spiritual awakening is in fact an evolutionary imperative to overcome the hazardous narrowness of purely mechanistic and instrumental thinking with its corresponding exploitative mentality. This inspiring volume points the way.

A PERSONAL JOURNEY

Oliver Robinson

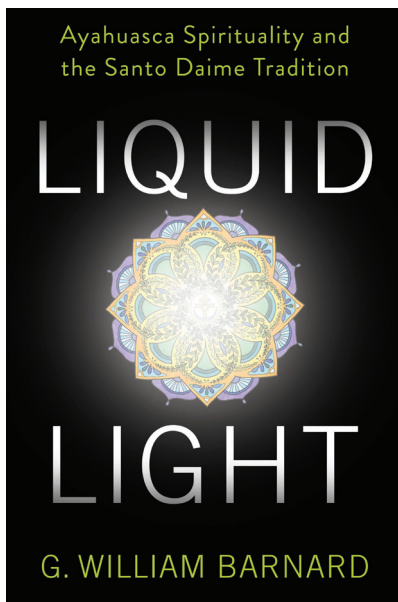
■ LIQUID LIGHT: AYAHUASCA SPIRITUALITY AND THE SANTO DAIME TRADITION

G. William Barnard

Columbia University Press, 2022,
360 pp., £28, p/b –
ISBN 978-0231186612

G. William Barnard, a Professor of Religious Studies, has written this fascinating account of his own journey through the Santo Daime religious tradition. Santo Daime emerged in Brazil in the 1930s as a syncretic religion drawing together Catholicism and Shamanism. Its religious ceremonies involve the ingesting of ayahuasca—a plant-based psychedelic containing DMT, which has been used for thousands of years in South America to elicit spiritual visions and insights, prior to becoming a central part of the Santo Daime religion. The book takes the reader through William Barnard's initial encounters with Santo Daime followed by his time as an active and committed member of the religion, and is interspersed with philosophical and scientific reflections.

I found William Barnard's descriptions of the ayahuasca (Daime) experience to capture it about as well as language can. It is a profound revelation that is impossible to convey in words, but they can signpost nonetheless. Here is an extract from Chapter 1:



'I began to be tossed and turned in an extremely powerful and turbulent inner river of Force and Light that sent me forward through a series of nonordinary temporal moments and spaces that were punctuated with Power-filled visionary perceptions that would almost force themselves into my conscious awareness, coming with an insistence that was impregnated with Meaning and Beauty (here We Are, Revealing Ourselves)... it was as if each "world" that I entered into (or that entered into me) was tuned to a different key than my ordinary world – each world has its own inherently unique vibratory signature...'

In a later chapter, he describes how the ayahuasca provides access to "a vast, multidimensional 'realm' of nonphysical reality." He describes encountering all kinds of nonphysical entities in this multidimensional realm, including entities with long spindly fingers that seem to want to help examine him, and a demi-god being who "crackled with Power and Light." These claims may seem outlandish to those who have not taken ayahuasca or DMT, but for those who have, including me, it is a just description of the facts of the experience. My own journeys have included similar encounters.

The book contains philosophical reflections on the nature of consciousness and mystical experience through the lens of William James' and Henri Bergson's writings. These two philosophers provide a sense-making framework that William Barnard uses to comprehend his Daime experiences. The book also discusses the religion of Santo Daime itself. He emphasises that it is a hard and challenging path, not for the faint of heart, which leads to slow but steady personal development. The aim, which he feels is achieved over time, is to become "increasingly translucent conduits of Divine Power, Light, and Love". The religious structures that surround the use of this ayahuasca in Santo Daime provide for stability, support

and communality around the transpersonal journeys, which can be disorienting and challenging. Such a steadying social system may be missing if individuals take ayahuasca outside a religious tradition or a support community. William Barnard discusses his discomfort with the more ritualistic aspects of the religion over the years, but also says that adhering to the religion and learning to love the more challenging aspects has been central to overcoming his ego.

Other parts of the book discuss journeys to the Brazilian rainforest, the ritual of making Daime, coming to terms with the Christian aspect of Santo Daime, mediumship within the tradition, the meaning of divinisation, and 'miracoes', which are visionary experiences initiated by ceremonies that bring knowledge, insight or a creative inflow, such as fully-formed songs that appear ready to convey to the outer world.

This is an important book. It provides a rich and powerful tapestry of personal experiences and theoretical considerations that convey an insight into one of the few modern religious traditions to have built their sacraments around a psychedelic. Psychedelics are becoming ever more popular, and the realisation will inevitably grow that communities and ritual are essential for psychedelic work to be safe and catalytic for development. This will lead to more religious organisations emerging to hold the space around plant medicine work. Santo Daime provides an important model to emulate. It might just be a vision of the future.

Oliver Robinson is Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Greenwich, and author of Paths Between Head and Heart and Development through Adulthood.

PSYCHOLOGY- CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

A PATH-BREAKING STUDY

Vasileios Basios

■ UNFOLDING CONSCIOUSNESS: EXPLORING THE LIVING UNIVERSE AND THE INTELLIGENT POWERS IN NATURE AND HUMANS IN FOUR VOLUMES IN FULL COLOUR

Edi Bilimoria (SMN)

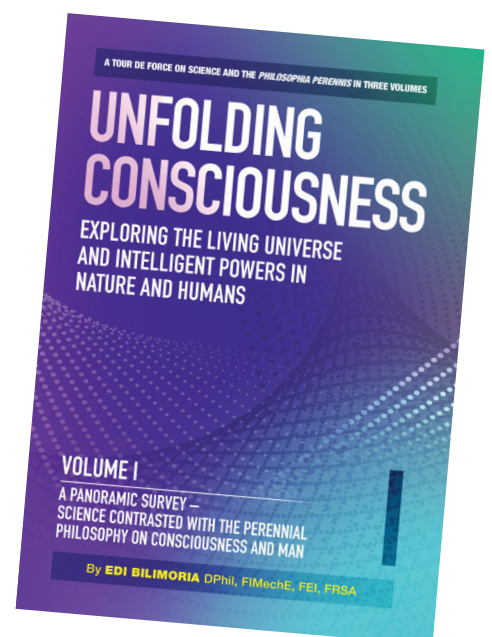
Shepherd-Walwyn Publishers,
2022, 1,232 pp., £98.50, h/b –
ISBN 978-0-856835-35-3

There are very few books, if any, that can serve both as path-breaking, inspiring and motivating texts as well as a complete and comprehensive four-volume textbook for the student of the unfolding Science of Consciousness. Edi Bilimoria's *Unfolding Consciousness* is such a work and a prime example of an up to date and well-studied treatise on the subject that is both engaging and informative.

Undoubtedly, we live at a historical moment where scientism is rapidly exhausting its power to propel a worldview by which the nature of human beings, and beings at large, has been rendered irrelevant to the unfolding of the cosmos. It is exactly this utilitarian, one sided, myopic view of science that Bilimoria in his quadrilogy dissects and deconstructs in order to establish science in its truth-seeking role. It is little wonder that the prevailing modes of knowledge, which treat nature and life as a mindless, random and mechanical blind evolutionary process, put us in such dire straits today. The author aims at revealing the true nature of science and at correcting its path. Indeed, he succeeds in this via a meticulous exposition of the root causes and shows us how we can put science back on its tracks, so that it reveals truth, rather than being exploited merely for its utility.

His abiding goal is solely to uplift, with utmost seriousness, both science and the perennial philosophy to their mutual benefit. He offers us a brilliant articulation of principles and ontological arguments that elevate the dignity of human beings in a world still largely driven and riven by scientism at the expense of eternal verities. Bilimoria heralds indeed a new kind of science and offers a great service in bringing forth such an enlightened view of science.

One of the notable achievements of this book is to show, with every evidence and testimony from science, philosophy, and neuroscience, that establishment science makes unsupportable assumptions;



specifically that materialism, essential in its rightful context, is nonetheless an unsupportable worldview to explain the profound aspects of life and especially the enigma of consciousness. Reading this work, along with Emilios Bouratinos' *Science Objectivity and Consciousness*, Iain McGilchrist's *The Master and His Emissary*, and Arthur Young's *Reflexive Universe*, one clearly finds a golden thread that helps us understand how our consciousness operates in a dual-aspect yet unified, monistic, fashion. For me, these books can provide the prerequisites of the curriculum that will constitute a sound and creative foundation of the fast-approaching new Science of Consciousness.

What Bilimoria offers is a meticulous exposition adorned with an engaging literary style and real jewels of wisdom from Eastern and Western perennial wisdom in a unique and rare synthesis. It is by no means accidental that the author of this quadrilogy is a prominent example of this new consciousness that is arising. He is a first-class engineer and concert level pianist with great decades-long service to a number of learned societies whose inter- and multi-disciplinary erudition shines throughout this work. That's why he can balance left and right brain hemispheres, East and West cultural heritage, philosophy, art and science.

The first volume is exactly what the title announces, *A Panoramic Survey – Science Contrasted with the Perennial Philosophy on Consciousness and Man*. This is a bird's-eye perspective dealing with the real fundamental questions of existence and human nature. He takes us on an enlightened exposition of the inevitable underlying assumptions and limitations of any human endeavour, and in particular the esoteric core of science and religion come into focus. He gives a detailed and informed timeline on how, and why, we arrived at today's state of affairs in terms of the physical and biological sciences. As I read this part of the quadrilogy I became aware that the fine line of a liberating and fruitful approach to such ever-present, difficult to the core, questions rests on the primacy of discerning. In other words, the author guides us to take science and tradition very seriously, but not at all literally.

The second volume, *Peering Down the Microscope – Man's Internal Landscapes* deals with the human condition. This reminded me of the freshness of Pico della Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, why one has to become a philosopher to receive the pure joy of realising and traveling through our inner landscapes. But Edi Bilimoria offers also an important addition and critical comparison with the teachings of the East. Something to cherish and read over and over again is his 'take' on *Antahkarana* (the bridge between the mortal and immortal aspects of man's being—from the small 'I' to the infinite 'I').

And in the third volume *Gazing Through the Telescope – Man is the Measure of All*

Things is where his synthesis becomes even more forcefully inspiring for the future of scientific thought. It is a tour-de-force from the summits of modern science to the core problems ahead, the "hard problem" of consciousness, i.e. from external sensation to internal experience, the awakening of our latent faculties and his knowledgeable articulation of what awaits us—embarking on the unfinished journey of our limitless evolution. What really surprised me pleasantly and deeply enlightened me in this part was the author's insight into a double-edged approach to the nature of consciousness as an "Element". This was backed by his very convincing discourse as to how the World as Mind—a fundamental precept of the perennial philosophy—is strongly alluded to by mathematics.

Here Bilimoria is in good company, Sir Roger Penrose, Max Planck, Erwin Schrödinger, Gottfried Leibniz, Isaac Newton (to name a few) are all found in agreement with the Platonic/Mathematical essence of the cosmos. Yet, the author offers his fresh and novel support to this thesis in a clear and convincing way.

'Mathematics', a word invented by Pythagoras along with 'philosophy', comes from *mathesis*, the desire to learn the act of knowing. In that sense there is a subject and object interplay inherent in the world. Definitely, it is not the mathematics we learn at school. The mathematical nature of the cosmos is something that has to do with its ontological basis, consciousness, argues Bilimoria in this part. This brings us to an especially important point in contemporary thought. As Kurt Gödel and Gregory Chaitin have demonstrated, and have proved mathematically, truth cannot be entirely enclosed in any formal axiomatic system, no matter how complex this system may be. Which points to the fact that there is always an inner, experiential aspect of mathematics. Today, when the whole of science tends to be reduced to mere information, starting from quantum mechanics, up to biology and 'big-data', the next generations have to deal with the vexing dogma that 'information is all there is'. If all is information, then who is the One who is informed? I can imagine Bilimoria tasking them with this question. Then the readers of this luminous quadrilogy of his will have a good companion in the near and far future, to help them to realize the need of asking the right questions for what really matters.

The fourth volume comprises the Index (104 pages), Definitions, Glossary, Profiles and Bibliography. It provides a comprehensive 'roadmap' allowing readers to navigate their way seamlessly through more than 2000 references, copious tables and diagrams (many in colour), plus individual chapter summaries and sidenotes.

In summary, these volumes, spanning the time periods from antiquity to the modern age, possess a breadth and profundity one rarely sees in modern esoteric literature. They expound the esoteric philosophy and

occult sciences from arcane sources to the latest expositions from worldwide sources and diverse cultures, whilst substantiating their indispensable complement (not alternative) to science, at the same time supporting their affirmations with evidence and references. Given the original writing and novel manner of presentation, readers will not only find this work challenging and enjoyable, but eminently useful in their own research into consciousness and its limitless unfolding.

Dr Vasilieos Basios is a senior researcher at the Physics of Complex Systems Department of the University of Brussels, conducting interdisciplinary research on self-organisation and emergence in complex matter as well as aspects of the foundation of complex systems.

THE HUMAN AS TWO

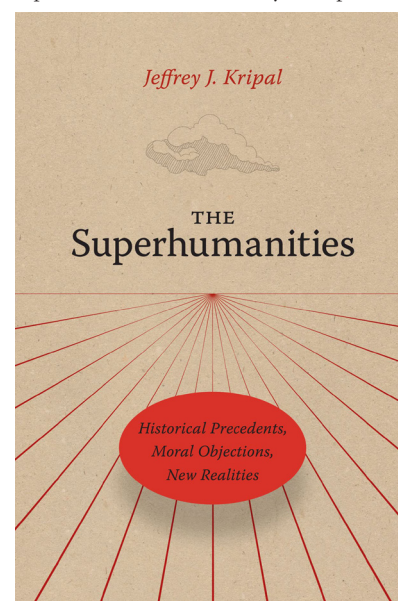
David Lorimer

THE SUPERHUMANITIES

Jeffrey J. Kripal (SMN)

Chicago 2022, 277 pp., \$xx, h/b – ISBN 978-0-226-82024-8

Earlier this year, we launched the Galileo Commission *Call for a Renaissance of the Spirit in the Humanities*, which is exactly what Jeff advocates here in his brilliant new analysis that makes for required reading. The humanities are still dominated by an inadequate and oppressive metaphysical materialism with its trajectory towards the post-human or the trans-human, rather than arcing toward the superhuman, the state of mind corresponding to superconsciousness as experienced by all the great sages and prophets in every tradition and characterised in the West as *gnosis*: the highest form of direct knowing and the true end of philosophy. The fundamental issue is ontological as well as epistemological, deriving from lived experience as demonstrated by examples in



Jeff's previous book *The Flip*. The title of this review is also indicative of its thesis, that 'there is something cosmic or superhuman smouldering in the human'—our core identity as transcendent divine spirit is exactly that, while the second element is the empirical and socially constructed ego self. This empirical self is taken to be the only reality and object of study within the contemporary humanities, who follow Kant in asserting that we 'do not and cannot perceive or know things as they really are.' (p. 97) Yet the experience of non-dual gnosis contradicts this premise, since 'the *nous* is both the organ that perceives reality and reality as it really is. It is what it knows, and it knows what it is.' (p. 46)

Jeff begins by explaining the origin of this study, before moving on to the history of religions as a case study for the superhumanities, then the resistant immunological responses of the intellectual and academic body, followed by his thesis on the human as two in terms of an aphatic anthropology, with a corresponding theoretical approach rewriting the real. His style is accessible, even lapidary in its concise economy of expression. He asserts that there is in fact no religion without the dimensions of the miraculous and the transcendent in developing our innate capacities. These capacities that are fully realised in the sage were articulated in the Hermetic Italian Renaissance that marked the birth of the humanities. Modern scholars like Wouter Hanegraaff understand this point: he writes that enlightened teachers directly know/experience 'the supreme universal Source of Light and Life', which is in fact the ultimate end of human existence—we are already that, even if we don't realise.

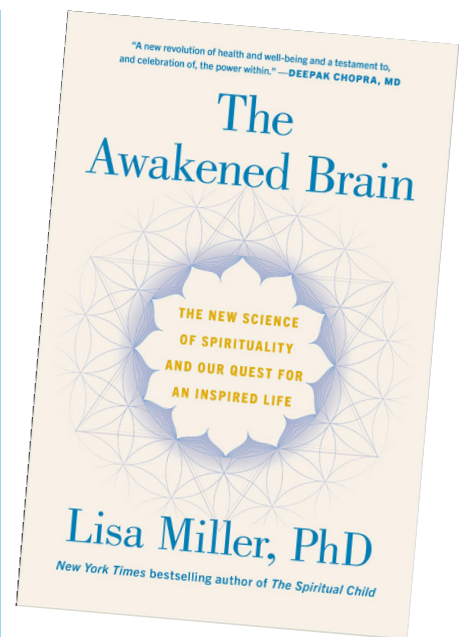
Emerson certainly did, as also Friedrich Nietzsche and William James. They engaged in 'a radical new order of knowledge of an empirical-imaginal nature,' (p. 62) anticipating disciplined reflexive practices that can lead to an evolution of consciousness. This is articulated, as Jeff suggests, in the non-dual teachings of Nisaragatta Maharaj, which are grounded in the Self as *Atman* and which would regard 'humanist assumptions about identity and embodiment as simply mistaken forms of ignorance (*avidya*) and illusion (*maya*)' (!). (p. 69) Liberation is *from* the person by realising that you are *not* a person, but a temporary embodied manifestation of one underlying permanent Reality (p. 71).

Modern materialism is in fact a colonisation of the humanities by disenchanted European epistemological traditions and metaphysical assumptions. The upshot is to reduce the self to the social, moral and political by means of what Jeff calls a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' rather than of trust. He quotes Rita Felski on the limits of critique with its 'near total dominance of disenchantment, deconstruction and denial' (p. 81) representing the academic predominance of left-hemisphere functions. He goes on to a detailed discussion and, indeed, a re-visioning of Nietzsche by emphasising

his work on spiritual evolution towards the superhuman rather than his undoubted influential contribution 'to relativist, perspectivist, or anti-foundational modes of knowledge' (p. 85). Nietzsche 'claimed to experience the real outside any and all *a priori* categories.' (p. 99) Similar insights are articulated in Hegel and James; here is Hegel writing that unbroken continuity is the essence of being and that 'we are literally in the midst of an *infinite*, to perceive the existence of which is the utmost we can attain.' (p. 106). Likewise, James postulated a metaphysical ground of manyness-in-oneness.

The human as two represents the subject/object split of ordinary human experience, but, crucially, this split '*can be transcended in extraordinary human (or nonhuman) experience*' (italics in original). Gustav Fechner, Charles Taylor and Schopenhauer make a similar case—'we continue to exist only as the *one* eye of the world that gazes out from all cognising creatures.' (p. 123) Jeff also quotes Al Ghazzali and Suhrawardi as well as mystics in the Christian tradition. However, modern biblical criticism has been a force in denying the miraculous by embracing a reductive humanism and ignoring such sources as Herbert Thurston's documentation of exactly such miraculous phenomena. Jeff's rewriting of reality discusses the five humanist critical traditions of psychoanalysis, critical race theory, postcolonial theory, queer theory, and eco-criticism. He points out an unconscious logic that 'blocks every attempted expression of the superhuman', a logic that contributes to the role of the Academy with respect to our present crises around meaning and truth in its failure to engage with the full range of human experience. (p. 121) The Network and Galileo Commission seek this engagement as part of 'an insurrection of suppressed knowledge'—we need an ontological insurgency and metaphysical rebellion to 'challenge and transform our cultural imaginations, which have been running on mechanistic and materialistic assumptions about a "dead" natural world that is there for our economic gain and exploitation.' (p. 201)

This ultimately involves de-colonising reality itself and enlarging our understanding of human identity, and hence of meaning and purpose. This is a major and indeed essential cultural enterprise, and this book is an extraordinary *tour de force* to this end. The stakes could not be higher and the way ahead is clear, as indicated by the superhuman. Agnosticism is simply inadequate, since we need to 'make a different claim on the real... the refusal to do ontology is itself a surrender to the present reigning ontology.' (p. 221) We ourselves embody this superhuman evolutionary possibility in realising ourselves as co-creative expressions of the same super-presence—both immanent and transcendent. Metaphysical reconstruction is nothing less than an evolutionary imperative in our time.



TWO OPTIONS FOR HUMAN KIND'S FUTURE

Larry Culliford

■ THE AWAKENED BRAIN

Lisa Miller
(with Esme Schwall Weigand)

Penguin Random House, 2021,
272 pp., £10.99 p/b -
ISBN 978-0-141991-03-0

Spirituality is usually evident whenever deeply personal experiences take on a special universal quality, and psychology professor Lisa Miller courageously treats us to numerous such synchronicities in her own life, profound moments (in part related to prolonged unsuccessful infertility treatment) that led to her involvement in the epidemiological and neuro-imaging studies reported here. It makes for a beautiful story, interwoven with those of some of her patients, and a pivotal encounter with a group of Native Americans. Her conclusions are solid, '*The protective benefits of spirituality* (against depression) *are incontrovertible*' (p. 145), and all-encompassing, '*The awakened brain... gives us a new paradigm for being, leading, and relating that can help us act with greater clarity and capability as we face humanity's great challenges.*' (p. 9).

Supporting this claim, in this revealing and insightful book, in a way reminiscent of Iain McGilchrist's exposition of the different types of left and right brain hemisphere function, Miller describes two types of awareness by which people conduct themselves. **Achieving awareness** encourages people to organise and control their lives, with the main concern being, *How can I get and keep what I want?* **Awakened awareness** (using different parts of the brain) allows people to see more, to integrate information from multiple sources of perception, helping

them feel better connected to the whole, to nature and to each other, so that they experience themselves, rather than doers, as *seekers*, tasked with finding their own uniquely meaningful pathway through life. According to Dr Miller, ‘We look across this vast landscape and ask, *What is life showing me now?*’ adding that it’s important to integrate the two. The final three of the sixteen chapters are given over to each of the three key ways Miller describes as bringing the wisdom of our awakened brain into our daily lives: *awakened attention*, *awakened connection*, and *awakened heart*. There are excellent pointers here. but I can think of other wisdom exercises and spiritual practices that would surely help too. And I have some further thoughts...

Dr Miller’s ‘achieving awareness’ is associated with *chronos*, linear clock time, by which we abide in order to get and keep what we want in terms of fortune, fame, power and possessions. ‘Awakened awareness’, on the other hand, relates better to *kairos*, circular sacred time, when things happen unpredictably, serendipitously, always at the perfect moment, bringing about *synchronicities*, meaningful coincidences that help direct us in finding and keeping to our destined path. Humankind is facing a crisis. Dr Miller’s insistence that *everyone* has the neural circuitry underlying “*a natural inclination toward and docking station for spiritual awareness*” (p. 8), makes me think that every person on the planet has a choice to make between two valid options.

Option One is to continue with ‘achieving awareness’ dominating our lives, getting what we want (or think we want)—continuing to wreak havoc and destruction on the planet, persisting in competing with one-another, living lives ruled by fear, mistrust and eventual stark deprivation through the cumulative effects of technological advances, war, climate change, epidemics of depression, anxiety and addiction, viral pandemics and the rest. Should it happen, the wise will accept this impending catastrophe because it is reality, not make-believe, and primarily because it is just. Through ignorance and folly, people are bringing disaster down upon their own heads. It may seem more tolerable because the survivors who will thrive into the longer-term future will probably be those indigenous peoples of the earth who have the knowledge, skills and wisdom to husband nature’s gifts, not plunder and destroy them. They have been marginalised and mistreated, and their special relationships with the land and living creatures ignored, for far too long.

The alternative, Option Two, requires people to foster ‘awakened awareness’ within ourselves, to teach and encourage others in similar vein— to develop an over-arching sense of unity, oneness, kinship, and thus an outlook of altruism, of loving one’s fellow humans as oneself, whatever differences of age, skin colour, nationality, creed, politics or anything else may threaten division; to foster kindness and tolerance; to treat nature and

the planet with restraint and respect; and to rediscover the joys of frugality and humility, the release from permanent striving. Option Two, avoiding the intolerant, short-term, self-seeking approach of Option One, is the way of wisdom, compassion and love.

The way forward cannot successfully be prescribed by government agencies or other global institutions, however well-meaning. What happens depends on *individual* decision-making. This is our responsibility. Every person on the planet, consciously or otherwise, faces the two options of achieving and awakening. As far as the Universe is concerned, there is no right or wrong here; both are equally acceptable. As Dr Miller says, both ways of engaging with the world are necessary and must be integrated; the question is, ‘Which dominates?’ ‘Which takes precedence in the heart and mind of each person?’

Although some may find the prospects associated with Option One harrowing, it is not necessary in the long run to feel greatly stressed about one’s personal response. If you think you’ve chosen the wrong option today, you can reverse your decision tomorrow. Dr Miller says that if we quieten down our ‘achieving’ brain sufficiently, our ‘awakened’ brains will inform us spontaneously either of what to do, or of what simply to wait patiently, courageously and confidently for, indicating somehow what the universe will be conspiring for our individual and collective benefit. All we need do is humbly acknowledge the wisdom we are continuously being offered and live by it; respect and follow the signs and synchronicities; make a commitment to shift our life balance from achieving to awakening. Give ourselves time, and it really shouldn’t be all that hard.

I highly recommend this rich, entertaining, emotionally engaging and intellectually satisfying book.

Larry Culliford is the author of books that include, *The Psychology of Spirituality*, *The Marriage of Philosophy and Psychology*, *The Big Book of Wisdom*, also *The Little Book of Wisdom*. See: www.LDC52.co.uk. He also manages the website for the *World Wide Wave of Wisdom*: www.wwwow.net.

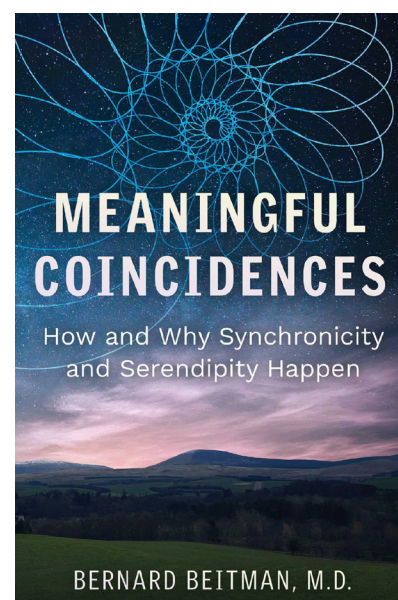
NOT JUST A COINCIDENCE

Gunnel Minnett

MEANINGFUL COINCIDENCES, HOW AND WHY SYNCHRONICITY AND SERENDIPITY HAPPENS

Bernard Beitman M.D. (SMN)

Park Street Press, 2022,
208 pp., £ 12.99, p/b -
ISBN 978-1-644115-70-1



Most of us have experienced coincidences in life, says the author of this book. They can be unexpected meetings, conversations, or some form of ‘sign’, connected to past or future events, that somehow have changed our life-paths. Such coincidences are perhaps more common than we think, since most of the time we don’t pay attention to them or we do not ‘believe’ in such coincidences. But once we do start paying attention, coincidences can start to influence our lives in a positive way, although the opposite can also be the case.

In order to understand what a coincidence is, the author starts out with a definition. He explains the anatomy of a coincidence, the various types of coincidences people experience along with the patterns of their appearance and also how sensitive we may be to detecting coincidences. But all this is not sufficient to explain how we recognise and identify coincidences. We also need to understand what they are and how they can appear. For this the author looks at statistics and concludes that not all coincidences are ‘real coincidences’. With a sufficient number of people on the planet, what seems to be random and/or chance is bound to happen, based on pure statistics.

Beitman also refers to the extremes of coincidence, events which some people might call ‘God’s will’ or some form of ‘pre-destined events’. Both of these categories can, however, may not be helpful or meaningful since they seem to remove personal involvement or responsibility.

‘Genuine’ coincidences, on the other hand, are often connected to some form of important event, or emotional reaction in a person’s life. One reason for this is that the chances of experiencing coincidences are closely linked with a sense of connection with another person, emotionally or physically. A typical such example is identical twins.

To explain meaningful coincidences the author draws parallels to Jung's concept of Synchronicity and 'Unus Mundus' and the Psychosphere (or Noosphere). *'I propose the existence of our mental atmosphere, the psycho-sphere, that surrounds us like our air atmosphere and in which all beings are immersed. Within the flux of the psychosphere, varieties of energy and information move the way gases, clouds, wind, water vapours, particles, and electromagnetic radiation move in our atmosphere. The energy-information of the psychosphere includes the full spectrum of human ideas and feelings and behaviour.'* (p. 115)

By becoming aware of the origin of coincidences we will hopefully realise how we are all interconnected, the author argues. As a consequence, we can increase our chances of becoming aware of our ability to jointly change the negative patterns that our collective minds are creating in the psychosphere. Rather than sharing patterns of war, inequality, destruction, etc., that currently prevent us from acting in the best interest of all the inhabitants of our planet, we can jointly change to more positive thought patterns.

The author has high hopes to expand research into coincidences. He encourages readers to join a worldwide project to collect data and develop methods for data interpretation. Once we know more about the anatomy of coincidences and their potential effects, we will improve our chances of changing our destructive behavioural patterns before it is too late.

ECOLOGY-POLITICS

AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND HEALTH

David Lorimer

AGROECOLOGY AND REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

Vandana Shiva (Hon SMN)

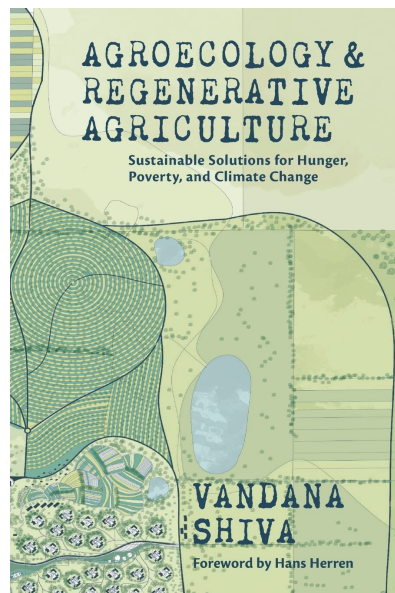
Synergetic Press, 2022,
333 pp., \$24.95, p/b –
ISBN 978-0-907791-93-5

TERRA VIVA

Vandana Shiva (Hon SMN)

Chelsea Green, 2022,
250 pp., \$22.95, p/b –
ISBN 978-1-64502-188-9

The future of food has featured prominently in the news over the last few months, especially in relation to nitrogen emissions from Dutch farmers leading the government to drastic action that will put them out of business. As these books show, such problems are associated with intensive industrial agriculture with its high-cost chemical inputs and toxicity. Meanwhile, the corporate food complex promises such solutions as fake meat, regarded as a huge



investment opportunity by Wall Street and the Gates Foundation. As Vandana Shiva shows in both of these brilliant and incisive books, this trajectory is in fact unsustainable and we need a fundamental paradigm shift in agriculture, food and health, all of which are systemically interrelated and derive ultimately from the health of the soil, as Sir Albert Howard spelled out in his 1940 *Agricultural Testament* based on his experience in rural India.

These books are essential briefings informed by agroecology, systems science, biodiversity, indigenous knowledge, localisation, ecofeminism and biodemocracy. Fundamentally, Vandana's approach is to work with Nature to regenerate ecosystems rather than the current corporate approach based on centralisation, power and control, which has led to a monopolistic concentration vested in a small number of increasingly large companies. The first book is effectively a textbook with in-depth coverage of the key issues, while the second is more autobiographical and is subtitled 'my life in a biodiversity of movements'—an extraordinary account of Vandana's engaged activism on a large number of interrelated fronts since the 1970s. She really works as a Force of Nature, much to the discomfiture of industrial agriculture which has attacked relentlessly. In this respect, she is just as resilient as Nature herself. When awarded a Bullshit Certificate in the form of cow dung by the industry for her promotion of organic agriculture, she celebrated by composting the gift!

It is important to understand Vandana's diagnosis of the relationship between agricultural systems, food and health as detailed in the initial chapter of the first book. Here she analyses multiple crises in agricultural systems and the urgent need for a paradigm change. These include loss of biodiversity and species, climate instability, soil erosion and land degradation, water depletion and pollution, and the spread



of toxins throughout the food system. Then there is the public health crisis not only of hunger, but also over-consumptive malnutrition through junk food (a record 2 billion are overweight, while 1 billion are undernourished) and an epidemic of chronic lifestyle disease. Finally, the third crisis relates to the farmers' livelihoods, debt and death by suicide due to high-cost inputs and displacement—the current policy trajectory is dictated by corporate interests and captured international agencies and institutions, all in the interest of further monopolisation and higher profits. Moreover, they would rather see farmers move to 'smart cities' to be replaced by further mechanisation.

The books clarify the contrast between industrial and regenerative agriculture approaches. Interestingly, Vandana's training as a physicist enables her to draw a comparison between the seed and quanta, both of which 'take us beyond the mechanistic, fragmented, divided, inert, linear, deterministic world of reductionist science, and the industrialisation and commodification of life which is destroying the fragile fabric of the planet and society.' She continues, 'in different ways, both the seed and the quanta create a world of relationships, of connectedness, of dynamic evolution and ever new potential.' (TV, p. 23) She points out that living organisms 'are complex self-organising systems. Whether genes are added, edited, or removed through genetic engineering, it disrupts the self-organising capacity of living systems.' (ARA, p. 63) This represents the difference between reductionism and holism. Holism insists that seeds and living organisms are not computers: 'the complex self-organisation of living systems is written by the living system.' So to mistake one for the other is in fact a category error: organisms are emphatically not mechanisms, as Iain McGilchrist also comprehensively argues.

Vandana's work with Navdanya focuses on reclaiming the seed from the clutches of what she calls seed imperialism: 'Seed is

the source of life. Seed creates, recreates, regenerates, and multiplies itself. Seed is autopoiesis, the poetry of life, written by the orchestra of life, in interconnected autonomy; it is a self-organised interbeing, self-regulating and coherent, from the molecule into the cell, to the organism as a whole.' (TV p. 92) With its agenda of genetic engineering and the patenting of life protected by intellectual property rights drafted by the industry, Big Ag is driven by monoculture and monopoly fuelled by an ideology of manipulation where uniformity—sometimes called 'harmonisation'—is used as an instrument to impose control. Four giant corporations now control 60% of the world's seed supply within a system based on high-cost chemical inputs leading to indebtedness, bankruptcy and the suicide of hundreds of thousands of farmers in India, not to mention the UN report stating that 200,000 people a year die from acute pesticide poisoning. (ARA, p. 201)

Vandana shows how the principles of the Green Revolution are based on violence and extraction, especially in relation to water—75% of freshwater is now used by agriculture. The new Green Revolution is based on genetically engineered seeds where the seed—for instance bT cotton—itself becomes a toxic pesticide designed to be resistant to glyphosate. This process drives evolutionary pest resistance, actually requiring increased pesticide use and hence driving up company profits. Arguably more alarming is the research by Dr Zach Bush and Stephanie Seneff detailing the actual biochemical pathways of glyphosate damage in protein synthesis (hundreds of cancer lawsuits are also still in the pipeline). Initiatives such as One Agriculture, One Science and One Health are based on nothing other than 'capitalist patriarchy's domination and control', all funded by the very companies and foundations who will directly profit. Such centralised systems of control are destroying the biodiversity of crops and ecosystems, indeed of life itself. Their dystopian vision 'is intolerant of diversity, democracy and sovereignty, extinguishing seed freedom, knowledge freedom, food freedom and health freedom.' (TV, p. 112)

More generally, it is critical to understand that all the [systemic] emergencies we face 'are rooted in the industrial, mechanistic, militaristic, anthropocentric, patriarchal worldview of humans as separate from nature, and superior to other beings who can be owned, manipulated and controlled for profit and power; of men as superior to women; of whites as superior to the diverse colours of humanity. The global interconnected crises are also rooted in an economic model based on extractivism, the illusion of endless growth and limitless greed, which systematically violates the integrity of the species and the limits of the ecosystem.' (TV p. 140) This brilliantly eloquent summary says it all. In addition, we should move away from measuring yield per acre towards assessing nutrition per

acre in terms of crop diversity.

The regenerative revolution has now become an imperative, despite industry propaganda that more of the same is required. The regenerative paradigm also championed by Wendell Berry, Fritjof Capra and the late Brian Goodwin and Mae-Wan Ho is 'holistic and aligned with nature and her ecological laws' as maintained by rural women over thousands of years of sustainable agriculture policy. (TV, p. 140) In practice (TV, p. 165) this means adopting nature-centred and people-centred food systems based on diversity rather than monocultures; decentralisation and localisation in place of centralisation and globalisation; ecological processes instead of industrial farming processes; food rights and food security rather than free trade as the basis of distribution; democratic control rather than corporate control of food systems; patent-free and genetic engineering-free farming to ensure the respect and protection of all species and the integrity of ecosystems and cultures; cultural diversity in place of the global monoculture of fast foods and industrial food chains; small farms and small farmers in place of corporate farms and absentee landowners; and finally fair trade, not free-trade, to ensure farmers and producers get a fair return.

Even this quite extensive review hardly does justice to the depth and comprehensiveness of Vandana's thinking and its implications for the future of agriculture, food and health that is currently locked in a vicious cycle maintained by corporate lobbying power and international regulation—the 'Poison Cartel'. Until such a regenerative agriculture and food revolution takes place, the outlook for the future of human health is poor (see projected costs on TV p. 243). She writes that we need a new pact with the earth based on a new vision of planetary citizenship: 'a pact based on reciprocity, caring and respect, on taking and giving back, on sharing the resources of the world equitably among all living species. It begins by seeing and cherishing the soil as a living entity, a *terra viva*, whose survival is essential to our own.' (TV, p. 233) The multifaceted crisis 'has created a new opportunity to effect a paradigm shift from the mechanistic, industrial age of separation, domination, greed and disease, to the age of Gaia, of a planetary civilisation based on the consciousness that we are one earth family, that our health is one health rooted in ecological interconnectedness, diversity, regeneration and harmony.' (p. 244) I say, let's commit ourselves to manifest this essential vision, and I urge every reader to study at least Vandana's *Terra Viva* and to join the movement for worldwide agroecological regeneration. Our future depends on it.

A NEW DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM

David Lorimer

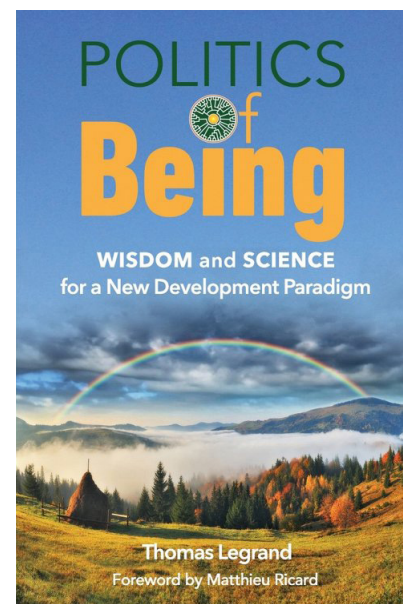
■ POLITICS OF BEING

Thomas Legrand (SMN) -
<https://politicsofbeing.com>

Ocean of Wisdom Press, 2021,
 500 pp., \$24.90, p/b -
 ISBN 978-2-9577583-0-2

Yesterday I received the newsletter from the Royal Society of Edinburgh referring on the front page to Scotland's tech opportunity and envisaging its bright future. This focus is a typical one, implying that progress is primarily technological when, as Dr Albert Schweitzer pointed out, socialisation is more important and spiritual progress critical. Then, some 25 years ago, Ervin Laszlo wrote a book entitled *The Inner Limits of Mankind*, which could form the subtext of the present work. Thomas Legrand has a PhD in economics, and works in the field of sustainability for UN agencies, private companies and NGOs. Significantly, he is closely associated with the work of the late Thich Nhat Hanh and lives near his monastery at Plum Village. Matthew Ricard writes the foreword, observing that one of the main purposes of spirituality is 'to actualise the potential of goodness and wisdom that is present within us... setting out on a path of transformation, from delusion to wisdom, from self-centredness to altruism, from entanglement with suffering to inner freedom.' In this respect, a quotation from Elinor Ostrom's Nobel Prize in Economics lecture runs like a *leitmotif* through the book: 'a core goal of public policy should be to facilitate the development of institutions that bring out the best in humans.'

Most readers will agree with Thomas's argument and that we cannot avoid a profound cultural change, 'a change of mindset, worldviews, and values, or, at a more fundamental level, a shift in



consciousness.’ (p. 1) His diagnosis—also that of Arnold Toynbee over 50 years ago—is that there is an imbalance between outer and inner development that urgently needs addressing, so that we can constructively manage our technological power in a world of increasing complexity and interconnectedness. As the Dalai Lama has also remarked, ‘the fundamental problem is that at every level we are giving too much attention to the external, material aspects of life, while neglecting moral ethics and inner values.’ (p. 4) We now need to be asking ourselves about the nature of an emerging planetary wisdom culture underpinned by the politics of being, as explained in this radical and pioneering work. In order to contextualise what follows, Thomas shares his own journey of personal transformation.

The first part of the book highlights our obsolete development path and the evolutionary crisis that we face where a focus on being is proposed as the new development paradigm (also referred to in The Earth Charter). As Elena Mustakova also argues in her book *Global Uttive Healing* reviewed in the last issue, spiritual values are the foundation of the politics of being outlined in the second part with chapters on understanding, life, happiness, love, peace, mindfulness and light. The third part considers a wide-ranging agenda for action across the board in the fields of childhood and family, education, work and organisation, health, food and agriculture, nature, justice, economy and governance—all with many specific and concrete proposals. Finally, Thomas considers the politics of being in practice—we live in one world as many nations, and we need leaders of integrity who have developed their inner being.

Although immensely timely, the political and economic establishment lags far behind this prophetic study that nevertheless indicates a viable—indeed necessary—way forward from ‘egcosystem to ecosystem’, drawing on the evolutionary vision of the Baha’is, Sri Aurobindo, Teilhard de Chardin, Edgar Morin, Barbara Marx Hubbard and Charles Eisenstein. We need to nourish three essential connections: ‘to ourselves, to other human beings, and to non-human beings’, all in terms of our true nature. This is the inner path to sustainability that instantiates such higher values as truth, freedom, justice, respect for life, happiness, love, peace. (p. 63) As Gandhi reminded us, ‘there is no way to peace, peace is the way.’ As many other commentators including the late Hazel Henderson have also argued, we need to replace GNP and adopt new indicators focusing on well-being, flourishing and quality of life that also encourage our individual spiritual and ethical development within the context of what Thich Nhat Hanh called inter-being.

It is important to emphasise that individual and collective evolution go hand in hand (p. 338). This entails a shift of emphasis towards our relational nature based on community, mutuality and reciprocity.

Thomas proposes that each nation should cultivate its own self-awareness in terms of history, culture, contributions and evolutionary potential, which requires inspiring ‘Being Leaders’ with spiritual intelligence (p. 357) to come to the fore. Thomas is both an optimist and a realist, one who has taken a bold and visionary step into the future, opening up a new path which he summarises in 10 core messages underpinned by both science and spiritual wisdom. A first step is to raise awareness of the principles that he outlines, bringing them into the public arena so that people can help co-create what Charles Eisenstein calls the beautiful world that we know in our hearts is possible, but which requires our full commitment if such a new system is to be manifest.

NOBIS NON DESISTENDUM EST – WE MUST NOT GIVE UP

Sue Bayliss

■ COMMANDING HOPE

Thomas Homer-Dixon

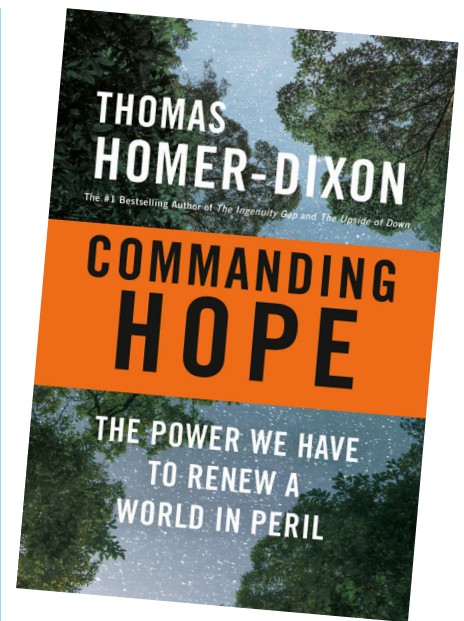
Penguin Random House, 2022,
451 pp., \$18, p/b –
ISBN 978-0-307-36317-6

This is a book to inspire us and encourage us to take action against the very real threats of climate change, nationalist authoritarianism, and economic instability. Born in Victoria, British Columbia, Thomas Homer-Dixon directed the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Toronto before joining the faculty at the University of Waterloo where he founded the Waterloo Institute for Complexity and Innovation.

He argues for hope that is honest, astute and powerful. A clear vision is needed based on understanding the grim realities that face humanity. We have to reconcile honesty and hope. A distinction is made between the passivity of ‘hope that’ and the proactive ‘hope to’. I loved the quotation from Gabriel Marcel: ‘Hope is for the soul what breathing is for the living organism.’ The kind of hope Thomas advocates is one that leads us out of despair and resignation and into positive action.

Uncertainty, though often a cause of fear, creates the space for hope and its partner, imagination. He writes: ‘Imagination . . . is a continually unfolding mental experiment that’s oriented towards the future, towards opening up possibility; it’s engaged and active.’ Thomas notes that there have been ‘leaps’ in social systems such as the end of apartheid and the fall of the Soviet Union that were not foreseen.

The problems we face as humanity are pressing and yet are largely being ignored. ‘For all intents and purposes we have behaved like a voracious superorganism, spreading across the planet’s surface and multiplying our numbers, activities and artefacts to fill almost all the useful space



in the biosphere’ and ‘throughout our species’ history we’ve consistently displaced our problems beyond what I call our ‘awareness horizon’.

Alongside the stresses climate change is imposing on our biophysical systems, Thomas outlines the ‘tectonic stresses’ affecting our social systems such as widening inequality and the rise of authoritarian leaders. Techno-optimists cannot offer us real solutions to these problems which require us to realise that ‘humanity’s problems will only be manageable at a deeper social level, when humanity actually perceives itself, at last, as a whole—as an interdependent species confronting a common fate.’

What stands in the way of the change of worldview that the author advocates are vested interests. Those who hold the most social power tend to resist radical change and prefer to tinker at the edges. Worldviews underpin institutions and their technologies impact the physical environment. The interrelation of these three entities creates a worldview-institution-technology (WIT) and these WITs can be seen as ‘the primary ‘unit of selection’ in the evolution of our societies.’

The WITs that rule our world today are no longer fit for purpose and need to be ‘selected out’ and replaced by ones that will enable human and other than human flourishing. The belief in economic growth is obsolete. It is still seen as providing happiness, freedom, and peace as well as social mobility, but today it is no longer viable given the degradation of our planet. ‘Today’s conventional growth can end voluntarily, if we deliberately move the global economy onto a new path through economic and social innovation . . . ; or it can end involuntarily—probably with social catastrophe in its wake. But either way it will end.’ Thomas offers a quotation from the cartoonist, Walt Kelly which I find very pertinent: “We have met the enemy and he is us.”

So how do we find solutions that are both enough to make a real difference and are feasible? Thomas notes that people are now more pessimistic about the future than previously. He believes that understanding the worldviews of those who deny climate change can help us to engage with them more effectively. The University of Waterloo has developed some tools to map different worldviews. State space maps ideological differences and cognitive affective maps show where an individual stands on a variety of issues. I found these innovative ways to map our mental and emotional inner landscapes very helpful.

Homer-Dixon proposes four principles upon which we could base a new universal worldview. They are opportunity, safety, justice and a shared global identity. As our world crisis deepens, opportunities for change increase. 'This weakening (or even breakdown) of the current order creates possibilities for 'catagenesis' . . . which is a process of rebirth through breakdown.' Ultimately the issues humanity could come together around would be love for our children and the wish to provide a viable life for them. Better still would be a love for all life on this extraordinary planet.

Thomas Homer-Dixon ends the book on an upbeat note with a call to action: 'Let's not aim for what's merely feasible and falsely hope it will be enough. Instead, with commanding hope, let's aim for what we'd all consider enough—a future in which our children and life on this planet can flourish—and then strive to make that future our reality.'

Sue Bayliss is a holistic therapist and writer.

THE ALLEN DULLES IMPERIUM

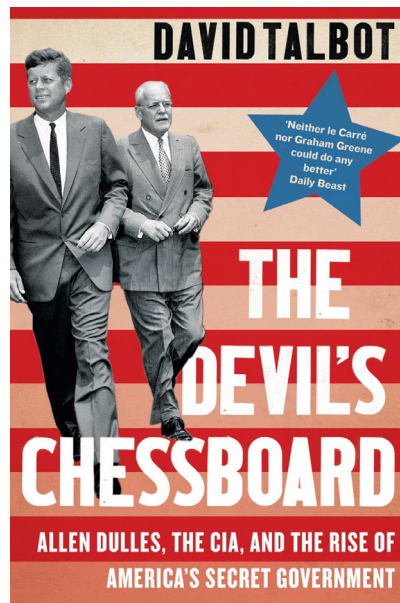
David Lorimer

THE DEVIL'S CHESSBOARD

David Talbot

Collins, 2015, 686 pp., £12.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-00-815968-9

Subtitled 'Allen Dulles, the CIA, and the rise of America's secret government', this is a gripping and important exposé of the clandestine activities of Allen Dulles during and after the Second World War—a man described by the author as 'one of the wildest masters of secret power ever produced by America.' Both Dulles and his brother John Foster, who was Secretary of State during the Eisenhower years while Dulles ran the CIA, came from a Wall Street corporate law background with influential networks and interests. The title of the book is evocative as both brothers were obsessive chess players in their youth, and political realists such as Brzezinski have used the game as a metaphor for geopolitics. During World War II, Dulles operated his own covert intelligence and foreign policy independently of the President's directives, socialising with, supporting and



even rescuing a number of high-ranked Nazis on the ostensible grounds that the real post-war enemy would be the Soviet Union and that Germany would need well-placed and savvy individuals in government. At the time, he was effectively proposing a no-fault surrender in defiance of Roosevelt while claiming that he had the President's full support. He was aware of, but chose not to report on, what he knew about the Holocaust. Contrary to orders, he made sure that Himmler's former Chief of Staff, General Karl Wolff escaped justice 'and went so far as to bury incriminating evidence.' (p. 88) Interestingly, Carl Jung sized him up accurately—Dulles's wife and mistress were both Jung's patients.

During the Eisenhower years, the brothers wielded enormous overt and covert power as the motive of national security loomed larger and trumped moral conscience. The CIA increased its influence and outreach with minimal supervision. Commercial interests of large US corporations like United Fruit exerted considerable influence on political interventions, both in the Middle East and South America. The 1953 intervention in Iran to oust democratically elected Mohammad Mossadegh is characterised as the struggle between imperialism and nationalism, and in a number of cases nationalism was mistaken for communism. Officials remaining loyal to Mossadegh were kidnapped, tortured and murdered, and Dulles managed domestic news reporting of the coup to divert attention away from the agency. The systematic deposing, hounding and eventual death of Guatemala's Jacobo Arbenz is covered in some detail, as is CIA support for Dominican Republic despot Rafael Trujillo, even to the extent of arranging for the kidnapping and handing over of Jesus de Galindez to gruesome torture and death because he had written an accurate and systematic account of the dictator's many abuses.

Dulles presided over the development of the CIA's MKULTRA mind-control programme as an attempt to reengineer brain

and behaviour with the goal of 'bending a subject's mind to the agency's will', also experimenting with LSD to see if it could be used to programme zombielike saboteurs or assassins. At the same time, they were developing interrogation techniques that came to be known as extreme rendition, with the help of more than 1,600 ex-Nazi scientists (!). Extreme measures were invariably justified in the name of national security on pragmatic grounds, as were relationships with organised crime, as documented in recent books by Whitney Webb. One of the operatives involved was Frank Olson. He began to have qualms about this work, and he met an untimely end plunging to his death from the 10th floor hotel room where he was being held by the CIA. Needless to say, this was classified as suicide—Olson knew too much and had become a security risk.

The campaign against Castro is central to the narrative, as it also involves JFK and the Bay of Pigs fiasco, which was part of an overall intelligence plan to kill the Cuban leader. Already in JFK's 1960 campaign, warning bells were sounding for Dulles when Kennedy said that he felt it important that 'the President of United States personify the ideals of our society, speak out on this, associate ourselves with the great fight for equality.' (p. 351) In saying this, he was aligning himself against Western imperialism in the name of freedom and independence—literally a red flag for the old guard, who were in the meantime involved in the demonising and eventual assassination of the democratically elected Patrice Lumumba in the Congo, which, disgracefully and deceptively, they kept hidden from the incoming president, who was eventually shocked to the core when the news reached him indirectly.

As far as the Bay of Pigs was concerned, Dulles tried to force the president into military intervention by way of escalation, accusing him of a failure of nerve, even though the agency knew in advance that the operation was doomed to failure without reinforcements. Kennedy resisted such aggressive pressure, as he also did to his enormous credit during the Cuban missile crisis. The resentful military, however, considered Kennedy himself a growing national security risk and kept seeking nuclear confrontation. JFK's commitment to peace was regarded as naïve and weak, and the plot to assassinate him began to take shape. Talbot's detailed analysis of all the anomalies and inconsistencies is highly informative. Dulles continued to operate behind-the-scenes even after being removed as director of the CIA, and after JFK's assassination played a leading part in the Warren Commission, which many commentators felt should have been called the Dulles Commission: 'the man who should have been in the witness chair wound up instead in control of the inquiry.' (p. 572) It also turns out that David Rockefeller, who played a leading role in the Council for Foreign Relations, would sometimes personally bankroll CIA operations with off-the-books cash.

The overall picture of Dulles is devious in the extreme, and it is interesting that De Gaulle was one of the people who really understood what was going on. After Kennedy's assassination, he observed that 'they don't want to find out. They won't allow themselves to find out.' The relevance of all this to geopolitics in 2022 is the role of the CIA in Ukraine since at least 2013, including the ousting of its pro-Russian leader in 2014. Both my friend Jim Garrison and Jeffrey Sachs have given informative briefings on this background in the context of the expansion of NATO eastwards, in spite of assurances given to Gorbachev who was seeking co-operative accommodation with the West rather than a perpetuation of the Cold War. Veteran Secretary of State George Kennan issued this prophetic warning in an article in the New York Times in 1997: '[B]luntly stated...expanding NATO would be the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold War era. Such a decision may be expected to inflame the nationalistic, anti-Western and militaristic tendencies in Russian opinion; to have an adverse effect on the development of Russian democracy; to restore the atmosphere of the cold war to East-West relations, and to impel Russian foreign policy in directions decidedly not to our liking.' Gorbachev's last book, reviewed in these pages two years ago, called for demilitarisation when there seemed to be no end in sight of militarism and violence. They continue to be preferred options, and continue to benefit the same power elites frequented by Allen Dulles. All this makes sobering but necessary reading.

FACING UP TO CLIMATE CHAOS

Matt Colborn

WHY CLIMATE BREAKDOWN MATTERS

Rupert Read

Bloomsbury, 2022,
212 pp., £19.99, p/b -
ISBN 978-1-350-21201-5

This important book invites us to consider our response to possibly catastrophic climate breakdown. Read is an Oxford philosopher who also helped to found Extinction Rebellion. He begins with an outline of our current crisis, namely, the sixth extinction. This situation could very easily lead to 'eco-driven social collapse.' (p. 3) Read advocates urgent and significant adaptation to a world that is transforming rapidly around us. He also sees a desperate need for a wholesale transformation in worldviews, in the direction of what he terms 'eco-logical thinking.' (p. 7)

In chapter 1 he suggests that climate breakdown represents a fundamental failure on the part of humanity to safeguard the wellbeing of our children. This is because it will 'kill far more in the future than it has done yet.' (p. 26). Our descendants, Read

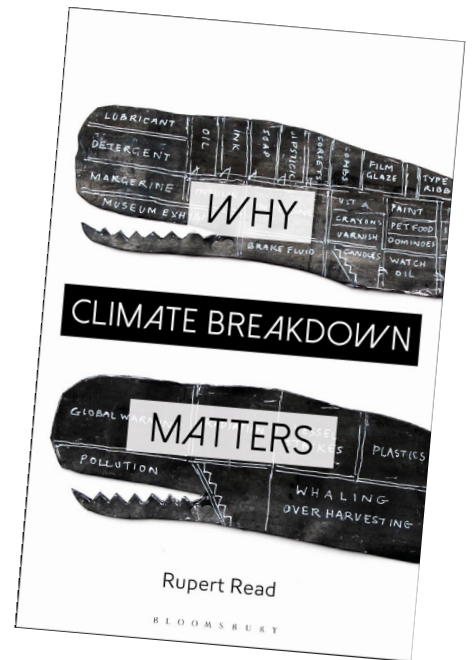
suggests, represent our most 'fundamental care.' We should also have known better. In the second chapter, Read characterises climate breakdown as a 'white swan,' something that was predictable from our actions. You can't pour gigatonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere for decades without consequences. The chapter finishes by considering the ubiquity of climate denial. Climate change is still a 'spectre' for many, not seeming quite real (p. 41).

Next Read considers the failures of international agreements, including Paris, and the denial of planetary boundaries on the left and right of politics. A big problem is the doctrine of perpetual economic growth, still common across the political spectrum. He also suggests that the doctrine of progress obscures the fact that life is getting worse on balance.' (p. 64) He is significantly critical of the kind of identity politics that he sees as divisive and over-focussed on the self (p. 65), although more supportive of efforts to redress colonial injustices. He is also highly critical of the technology-worship of contemporary culture. Again, an ecological focus is key.

These large-scale failures of philosophy and practical action will likely lead to one of three possible futures (chapter 3). The first possibility is that society will profoundly transform itself in a sustainable direction (Read calls this 'butterfly'). The second is that our current society will collapse, to be followed by a successor civilisation (dubbed 'phoenix'). The final possibility is that humans, and possibly the whole biosphere, will become extinct ('dodo'). Read suggests that far more work needs to be done to ensure that any potential successor civilisation is relatively benign.

These options may seem daunting, even terrifying. He sees individual grief as perhaps essential to grasp the enormity of climate breakdown. Grief signifies a change in the world's character. Because of the reality of deep interconnectedness, grieving is an appropriate reaction to destruction of the living, more-than-human world. Read suggests that profound grief over our situation could help fuel a constructive, collective response to it. He also sees hope in positive past responses to disasters (chapter 5). I'm less optimistic. Other disaster analysts have suggested that the outcome of crises often depends upon contextual factors such as leadership, preparation, the presence or absence of personal antagonisms and the availability of alcohol. [1] Social collapse is likely to be chaotic, not favouring cogent responses.

Read wants to reclaim our 'profoundly social nature.' (p. 99) He argues that the basic unit of human society is not the individual but 'embedded communities.' (p. 110, chapter 6) This is meant as a contrast to the atomised individualism of free-market economies. Communities are the basic unit, Read says, because they live on while individuals die.



Choosing *either* individuals or communities as fundamental seems an unnecessary binary choice. Affirming individual autonomy seems to me an important corrective to the more negative, oppressive aspects of collectivism, including peer coercion, groupthink and various strains of totalitarianism. What is needed is a view that integrates the contingent, paradoxical existence of relatively autonomous individuals and groups. Something like Arthur Koestler's nested holarchies, with individuals seen as 'holons,' both parts and wholes. [2]

One of the most interesting parts of the book is an analysis of cetaceans (chapter 6), with a view to what this can tell us about ourselves. Read is here advocating renewed interest in indigenous societies, extended to non-human beings. He suggests that engaging with 'indigenous wisdoms' might be necessary to challenge our deep-rooted assumptions.

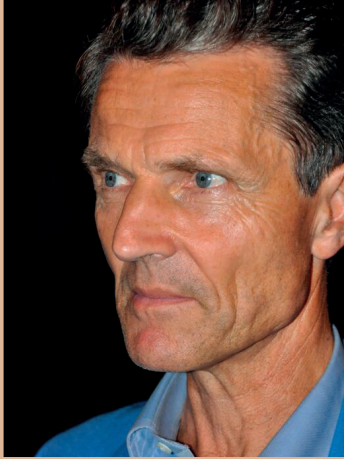
In chapter 7, 'How to Live in Truth Today' (p. 129), Read considers ways that we might respond to climate breakdown. We need to wake up to our predicament, act practically, and publicly discuss our fears. We need to think about 'lifeboats,' and ways to avoid these becoming 'viciously exclusive' (p. 135). These lifeboats might be analogous to Mediaeval monasteries, preserving knowledge through a dark age.

Essential reading for troubled times.

[1] Learmonth, E. & Tabakoff, J. (2013). *No Mercy: True Stories of Disaster, Survival and Brutality*. Text Publishing.

[2] Koestler, A. (1967). *The Ghost in the Machine*. Allen Lane.

Matt Colborn, MSc., D.Phil. is a writer with an academic background in cognitive science and consciousness studies. He is the author of *Pluralism and the Mind* (2011) and is a tutor on the Alef Trust's Masters' degree in Consciousness, Spirituality and Transpersonal Psychology.



David Lorimer

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

If any member would like to review any of the unreviewed titles in this section, please email dl@scimednet.org

BOOKS IN BRIEF

SCIENCE/ PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

■ The Mind of a Bee

Lars Chittka

Princeton University Press 2022, 260 pp., £25, h/b – ISBN 978-0-691-18047-2

Scientific research on bees has been going on for well over 100 years – Maurice Maeterlinck's book *La Vie des Abeilles* came out in 1901. This authoritative study describes the state-of-the-art of the field in an accessible fashion that opens up new vistas for the general reader. Just as Thomas Nagel asked what it was like to be a bat, Lars Chittka – who is professor of sensory and behavioural ecology at Queen Mary University of London – asks what it is like to be a bee, with the caveat that all animal perception is mediated by different sensory capacities. The overall impression enhances our understanding of the pervasive intelligence in nature, as also witnessed by recent work with fungi, plants and trees. The author discusses colour perception, instinct and intelligence along with communication, spatial intelligence and relationships with flowers that form part of social learning and swarm intelligence.

He shows that there are even 'personality differences' between bees, and explains the extraordinary capacity of honeybee antennae, whose sensory hairs can 'smell, taste, and hear as well as feel textures, measure temperatures and respond to electric fields.' Surprisingly, in this regard, the author does not mention documented adverse effects of electromagnetic fields emanating from the masts and phones (see the work of Arthur Firstenberg reviewed in August 2021). However, in asking whether bees are conscious and might even know that they know, he brings out the implications for conservation given that 'they might be conscious of, and suffer from, the destruction of their habitat and the disruption of their families and societies.' Hence, 'we should treat bees with the same respect as other animals in which we accept

the possibility of subjective experience.' (p. 213) This is a remarkable testament, and the book deserves a wide readership.

■ The Science of Subtle Energy

Yury Kronn PhD (1935-2021) with Jurriaan Kamp – foreword by Bruce Lipton PhD

Park Street Press 2022, 210 pp., \$18.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-452-0

This is an extraordinary and ground-breaking work on the science of subtle energy backed with repeatable experiments fully explained in a series of technical appendices. The significance of the book is revealed in its subtitle – 'the healing power of dark matter', which Bruce Lipton refers to as 'immaterial, invisible forces influencing biology'. Lipton observes that the lack of interest in Kronn's new ideas is symptomatic of the reluctance within the scientific community to challenge conventional thinking – even though it is clear that the new physics 'has yet to be fully adopted by biomedical science.' It turns out that there is an intrinsic connection between consciousness and subtle energy, neither of which dissipate over time and distance. A further important implication is the entanglement of experimenters with experiments in ways that influence the outcome (the experimenter effect) that explains why replications of the Benveniste experiments failed, and why Marilyn Schlitz and Richard Wiseman obtained different results while using the same subjects and protocol. This participatory insight fundamentally undermines the prevalent notion of impersonal objectivity.

The book explains both theory and experimental evidence against the background of the author's own career outlined in the introduction. At one point he was slated to lead an Institute under the guidance of Rem Khokhlov, but the latter was assassinated by the KGB before he could take up his appointment as President of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The KGB was also researching psychic phenomena (as was the CIA), and Kronn himself was later arrested and dismissed from his post. However, his inner voice kept him on

track, and he was able to devote his life to the research of subtle energy and the development of Vital Force Technology where 'mind interacts with matter by means of subtle energy.' The overall argument is that consciousness/subtle energy/life force is fundamental and needs to be recognised as such, as was the case in many traditional cultures where this is called *chi* or *prana*. We all experience this personally. The visible universe accounts only for 5%, while the rest takes the form of 30% dark matter and 65% dark energy – dark matter does not interact with the electromagnetic field, while dark energy does not interact with electrically charged particles; this leads Kronn to the conclusion that 'dark energy belongs to and operates in the subatomic world.' (p. 35)

Qigong Masters like Yan Xin MD heal with this energy by mentally programming it (p. 40) – Xin was also able to alter experimentally the radioactive decay rate of Am-241 at 2,000 km. Kronn discusses the pioneering work of Besant and Leadbeater, followed up by Stephen Phillips who spoke recently at the Galileo Commission, as an intriguing prefiguration of string theory. The second part describes a variety of repeatable experiments and the discovery that all elements in the periodic table are characterised by a unique subtle energy pattern with five elemental properties (pp. 98-9). This energy can also be shown to affect living organisms such as plants and even the human autonomic nervous system. A pervasive danger is increased levels of electromagnetic pollution – officially unacknowledged due to industry capture – that diminish the healing effect of subtle energy (Chapter 7 and p. 141). The current state of play according to Kronn is that 'we may not yet know *how* subtle energy works, but we do know *that* it works' and that it influences life at systemic, cellular and genetic levels. It also interacts with consciousness and is fundamental to healing at a systemic level, where Western medicine just treats the symptoms biochemically. The development of this field of research is surely essential, but it awaits a sufficient paradigm shift in science to open it up to substantial streams of funding.

■ When Animals Dream: The Hidden World of Animal Consciousness

David M. Peña-Guzmán

Princeton 2022, 272 pp., £20, h/b – ISBN 978-0-691220093

Rupert Sheldrake writes: The author is an American philosopher who specialises in animal consciousness. His published works include an article entitled 'Can non-human animals commit suicide?' In this book he explores the subject of animal dreams.

For centuries most people have assumed that animals dream, as do most people today who have watched a sleeping dog moving as if chasing potential prey. Charles Darwin took animal dreaming for granted and reflected on its significance. But in the twentieth

century, which Peña-Guzmán calls the 'silent century' the subject was barely discussed. Animals were supposed to be non-conscious machines. Only in recent decades has a discussion of animal consciousness become respectable in academic circles and this book is a significant contribution to that debate.

Peña-Guzmán shows how physiological studies of sleeping animals, including those tracking rapid eye movements, show many similarities to humans when they are dreaming, and analogous processes occur even in zebra fish. Of course, we cannot know what animals are dreaming about in detail, but studies with rodents suggest that at least part of their dreamworld involves the re-enactment of processes of learning that have happened when they are awake. Indeed, their ability to remember what has been learned depends on being able to sleep and have dream-like brain activity.

But the author does not take a narrow functionalist view and argues that animal dreams suggest that many non-human animals have imaginations and phenomenal consciousness. This has moral implication for how we treat them; they are not simply unthinking machines as materialists suppose. He concludes, "Like us, animals are authors of their own experience and architects of their own realities... Like us, they are builders of worlds." Although this proposition may be shocking to behaviourists and hard-core materialist philosophers, probably most people who live with dogs and cats take their consciousness for granted.

■ Tao Science

Dr. & Master Zhi Gang Sha,
Dr. Rulin Xiu

Waterside Press & Heaven's Library
Publication Group 2017, 254 pp.,
\$24.95, h/b ISBN 978-1-947637-68-9

Subtitled 'the science, wisdom and practice of creation and grand unification', this book is a collaboration between a medically trained Taoist spiritual master and a quantum physicist who has been following his system. It seeks to bring science and spirituality together within the overarching Tao in a series of 11 chapters with many practical recommendations and techniques. Rulin was influenced by John Wheeler, and contextualises their approach within the history of physics. As many readers will know, Tao is regarded as the source of everyone and everything, and is expressed here in a unified equation $S + E + M = 1$ based on three laws of Shen Qi Jing, Karma and Tao Yin Yang Creation. Shen includes soul, heart and mind, and is characterised as information, while Qi is energy and Jing is matter. The scheme also teaches how to attain the highest spiritual state expressed in universal service.

The system is explained in detail, but soul is defined as the content of the information in everyone and everything (p. 31) in an attempt to express it in more mathematical terms, where Shen as information 'is the

possibilities and possible states of an entity.' There seems to me to be a tension here between soul as information and soul as entity, since surely only an entity can have power and capacities as explained on pp. 57-59. In other words, the entity is primary, and the book recognises that 'our souls have many miraculous abilities'. Similarly, what is called a 'mathematical' definition of life and anti-life is simply a definition – a good one, in fact. A series of chapters explains the respective powers of soul, heart in mind, energy and matter, leading to a discussion of the Grand Unification Formula and subsequently of the nature of karma and the law of Tao Yin Yang Creation where space and time are understood as the fundamental yin-yang pair. The emphasis throughout is on the refinement of consciousness, including active forgiveness and service. As a whole, the book provides a new lens through which to consider the relationship between physics and spirituality, but will be most accessible to those already following Zhi Gang Sha's teaching.

■ Digital Lethargy

Tung-Hui Hu

MIT Press 2022, 256 pp., \$24.95, h/b – ISBN 978-0-262-04711-1

Subtitled 'dispatches from an age of disconnection', this book defines the new term 'digital lethargy' as a state of exhaustion, disappointment and listlessness permeating modern life under a digital capitalism that relentlessly seeks to manipulate and monetise our attention. The condition itself is nothing new and has been discussed by many artists over the centuries, and reminded me of Baudelaire's term *spleen* as an extended state of boredom – yet, as the author argues, his thesis is illustrated by consideration of works by contemporary artists, writers and performers may throw light on what he calls the unresolved present. The term burnout dates back nearly 50 years, and has become increasingly familiar as life continues to speed up and we seek ways of navigating, even enduring, the pressure and keeping ourselves afloat in a world where we become the products 'and everyone is becoming a service.' A thoughtful discussion.

HEALTH AND HEALING

■ Spiritual Healing in Hospitals and Clinics

Sandy Edwards

Findhorn Press 2021, 252 pp., \$19.99,
p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-304-2

This impressive book fully lives up to its subtitle: 'scientific evidence that energy medicine promotes speedy recovery and positive outcomes'. It is widely endorsed by leading people in the field, with a foreword by Dr Michael Dixon, Chair of the College of Medicine. He writes that the conclusion of the work is clear: 'biomedicine must

widen its remit to understand, not reject, the mysteries of healing with the same open-mindedness shown by staff in the hospital where Sandy Edwards has done her work. This is a work that demonstrates the importance of relationships, empathy, commitment and courage.' It is quite a journey, beginning with the author's own story and training and how she got an opportunity to practise in a hospital, due to the support of gastroenterology consultant Sukhdev Singh FRCP. Throughout the book, there is remarkable individual feedback on these 20-minute sessions, including from health professionals. Many intractable conditions were treated, reinforcing the case for healing as an adjunct to conventional approaches.

Two audits totalling 267 patients led to a more formal research project whose quantitative and qualitative results are described in the book (p. 168) along with the research protocol. The study builds on previous research, including results from members David Hodges, Tony Scofield and Maxwell Cade. The benefits in terms of symptom reduction and quality of life improvement were significant even if the so-called mechanism is not currently understood in biological terms. The team had some trouble getting the paper published, including a reaction from a mainstream journal that the paper was not suitable as their readers 'do not subscribe to complementary medicine', while other channels demanded a placebo control group, which would in fact have been unethical in the circumstances (the placebo response is discussed). Both the Galileo Commission and Paradigm Explorer are mentioned. Under What Next the benefits of healing sessions are described, including those for medical establishments. It is clear that further research along these lines must be prioritised, and that healing should be widely promoted within the NHS, not least because of its modest cost.

■ How to Eat, Move and Be Healthy

Paul Chek (SMN) –
www.chekinstitute.com

Chek Institute 2018 (2nd edition), 255 pp., \$24.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-58387-012-9

It's not surprising to learn that over 200,000 copies of this book are in print, as every reader of this journal can potentially benefit from its insights and advice, all of which is beautifully set out and attractively illustrated. The book takes the reader on a personal journey and assessment, starting with a series of nutrition and lifestyle questionnaires, with corresponding roadmaps depending on your score. The '4-Doctor approach includes Dr Happiness as chief physician, assisted by Dr Quiet, Dr Diet and Dr Movement. Readers articulate their core values/goals in these areas. They learn about the pioneering work of Dr Weston Price and assess their own dietary type. The work is informed by a broadly

ketogenic perspective that also advises to eat organically, avoid processed foods and GMOs, irradiation, alcohol, sugar and pasteurised dairy products. Adequate hydration is key, but not from the tap. The section on workouts and exercise is comprehensive and can be adapted to the reader's level. There are good chapters on the effects of stress, the digestive system and the need for adequate sleep. In short, this is essential reading towards the enhancement of health. See also www.eatmoveandbehealthy.com

■ The Power of the Healing Field

Peter Mark Adams

Healing Arts Press 2022, 166 pp., \$16.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-358-5

Subtitled 'energy medicine, psi abilities and ancestral healing', this remarkable book stems from the shared therapeutic journey of Peter Adams and his wife Kenzie over 45 years of experience. It will be of interest to both scientists and those working in the healing field. The cumulative outcome requires a field model of consciousness and energy, and Peter's findings cannot be understood or explained within a conventional materialistic worldview. A series of chapters with detailed case histories cover the role of intuitive knowledge derived from a universal information field, healing issues both within and beyond our timeline, and those related to ancestral patterns as well as haunting and possession. The phenomena discussed are well attested by many practitioners, including patterns from past lives as well as inherited familial and ancestral trauma. Adams proposes a widening spectrum of ways of knowing in terms of a field-like structure of defocalised awareness (p. 26) and elaborates his view by drawing on Rupert Sheldrake's morphic fields – the key attitude being one of empathic engagement, and the starting point that we are all part of or within a greater whole. Christians might say that we live, move and have our being in God.

Adams suggests four distinctive but related fields – of perinatal memory, past life memory, family unconscious and ancestral unconscious, the last investigated in Bert Hellinger's extraordinary work on family constellations. 'Healing through Spirit' involves spontaneous experiences as well as meditative and energetic practices, all of which are examples of the evolutionary unfolding of consciousness. The concluding chapter argues that there is 'ample evidence that what we see is only a tiny fraction of what there is. Our day-to-day awareness is like a torch that illuminates only a small circle of light. The vaster reality remains invisible to us. It vibrates at frequencies beyond the range of normal perception...' (p. 130) We know that people are capable of shifting their awareness so as to take in more of the hidden reality, as documented in this book and widely acknowledged 'within the context of energy

healing, shamanism and mysticism.' The expansion of consciousness appears to be an evolutionary and ethical imperative, since values are inherent in the universal field. We can work to eliminate our own self-limiting patterns of behaviour, enhance our emotional self-management and adopt 'a state of present moment, nonjudgemental awareness' while contributing to societal flourishing in service to others. This book makes a key contribution in linking healing with the expansion of consciousness studies.

■ The Bodies of Others

Naomi Wolf and Lasten San

Self-published 2022, 289 pp., \$15, p/b – ISBN 979-8-840322-82-6

Naomi Wolf is a prominent writer and journalist on women's issues, democracy and civil liberties. This new book is subtitled 'the new authoritarians, Covid-19 and the war against the human' and the arguments advanced here resulted in her being deplatformed from Twitter, Facebook and YouTube for so-called medical misinformation 'violating community guidelines', i.e. questioning the dominant Covid-19 narrative spun out by the medical-industrial-technological complex when many caring doctors, some of whom she interviewed, were also advocating clinically effective early treatments that were systematically suppressed. She rightly argues that we are in danger of moving to a fear-driven techno-fascist culture dominated by machines and following the technocratic pattern of social control already established in China. She analyses the inadequacies of the 'dashboard system' of cases and deaths uncritically accepted by most mainstream journalists – perhaps understandably, as they might well have lost their jobs if they dissented.

The book alternates between a personal diary and analysis of the events since 2020, covering all the main issues and drivers in terms of power and influence. One issue that concerns her in particular are the many reports she received from women concerning menstrual dysregulation after vaccination and involving haemorrhaging of large clots of bloody tissue. A further progressively documented effect is a rise in miscarriages and foetal deaths (see the recent work of Dr James Thorp), which the authorities continue to explain away, even recommending vaccines for pregnant women, a group deliberately excluded from the original trials (!). For further detail on these trends, see the work of Dr Sucharit Bhakdi on vascular damage and blood clotting. I think Naomi is right that freedom itself is in the balance and that 'what matters most is that enough people stand up and resist all at once.' It is a pity that the book is poorly produced and does not even have text on the back cover, though this does not detract from the contents.

PHILOSOPHY- SPIRITUALITY

■ Between Two Enlightenments

Lance St John Butler (SMN)

Maclean Dubois 2022, 128 pp., £7.99,
p/b – ISBN 978-0-9565278-9-9

These stimulating and erudite essays are informed by the author's extensive literary culture and wide reading over his academic career. The two Enlightenments of the title are the European legacy from the 18th century, and the spiritual enlightenment of Buddhism. Lance suggests that the common element is clarity, and that we need to recognise both the upsides and downsides of our European inheritance. On the one hand, we have witnessed extraordinary scientific and technological developments, and enlightenment thinking based on evidence, reason and logic is pervasive; on the other, there is a corresponding loss of inner orientation and meaning whereby 'our Enlightenment minds [left hemisphere] destroy our connection to subjective reality.' (p. 71) Lance explains how science has hardened into the ideology of scientism with which readers will be familiar; also that there is now abundant evidence on which to base a wider integral science and deeper philosophy as in the renewed popularity of panpsychism and indeed non-duality – I myself would go further to embrace panentheism.

For Lance, we are primarily conscious, experiential beings as well as social interdependent beings. It was a treat to be plunged once again into the world of Marcel Proust where the moments in Marcel's life *are me* as we read these pages, and the characters are fully real in our awareness. From this, he draws two lessons: 'that the world of imagination is more real than the world around us, and that our experience of living in the world is intensely private, subjective and real when we are not distracted by the 'truths' of politics, economics, science and materialism.' (p. 72) Experience itself is a category we have forgotten, and happiness is an inside job. Another important historical and contemporary theme is the betrayal of liberal values into intolerant 'woke' thinking as the new group mentality with its religion of social justice leading to 'religiously-inclined ... silencing of other voices and to the intolerance of dissent or the discussion of 'wrong' ideas.' (p. 109) As former Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard has scathingly described in a recent podcast, this mentality has taken over the Democratic party, with extensive censorship resources via the tech companies to back it up. Such intolerance was precisely what Voltaire opposed, and it has also manifested through totalitarian regimes since the French Revolution. We need a wider sense of human solidarity while prioritising, as Lance suggests, the task of being in order to recover the centrality of our own experience.

■ The Cosmic View

Fr Andrew Glazewski with
Paul Kieniewicz (SMN)

White Crow 2022, 149 pp., £14.95, p/b
– ISBN 978-1-78677-196-4

Andrew Glazewski was a Polish priest and mystic who was also deeply versed in physics and the arts, and played a key role in bringing together George Blaker and Patrick Shackleton to found the Network. Sadly, I never met him (which Paul did), but he was a close friend of Sir George Trevelyan and lectured frequently at Attingham and the Wrekin Trust. These lectures follow on from Paul's earlier volume *Harmony with the Universe* and are full of deep spiritual insight and wise practical advice. One of his points of departure was the work of Harold Saxton Burr of Yale, whose book *Blueprint for Immortality* was hugely influential at the time on many early Network Members. Andrew explains in his own terms the way in which we can work with the Life (L) Field and Thought (T) as the Organising Field that influences the body and health. The body is within us as the true self is the Observer; and healing should focus on the restoration of the self rather than the illness.

Listening or empathic receptivity is the first stage of prayer, which we can also apply in our relationships with Nature in giving and receiving energy as we expand our inner awareness. Andrew recommends what he calls the LLT (love-light technique) rather than LSD while noting that both paths seek transcendence, and 'once you practice this light-love, your inner universe becomes lit up' (with bliss and peace) and we serve our true purpose as channels for the Divine. Andrew explains – in a similar way to Swedenborg – that transubstantiation represents feeding on love and understanding, the very essence of the spiritual life; knowledge comes to us but we give out love ('what we receive in contemplation we give out in 'love' – Meister Eckhart): 'knowledge is to me an immense opening, but love is the existence itself in this world of knowledge, by loving it, by giving, by expanding in and within it.' (p. 107)

The task of the human being – illustrated diagrammatically on pp. 34-35 and 122 – is to integrate the other triangle of divine 'overconscious' with the lower unconscious to create the Star of David (the Self), a process requiring persistence, perseverance and patience. In this respect, there is an interesting discussion of the reincarnation process when discussing Steiner which proposes that only a part of the personality – represented by musical themes – can be incorporated or woven into another artist's music. Andrew shares a cosmic understanding of the Logos and Christianity, with the Kingdom as the divine within that has to penetrate everything. He undoubtedly exhibited shamanic qualities in his interaction with plants and animals as well as in his healing capacities. This invaluable book brings his inspiring presence and profound teaching to life, as relevant today as 50 years ago as we seek individually to integrate intuition and rationality, inner and outer, feminine and masculine.

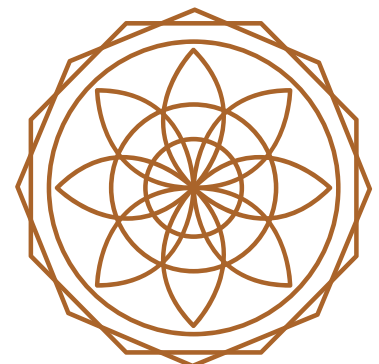
■ Spiritual Intelligence in Seven Steps

Mark Vernon (SMN) –
www.markvernon.com

Iff Books (John Hunt) 2022, 229 pp.,
£14.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-80341-032-6

This wise and perceptive book argues that spiritual intelligence is the foundation of who we are – awareness of awareness, being itself. The malaise of our times is due to a side-lining of this quality, leading to widespread loss of meaning and demoralisation. Mark quotes Karl Jaspers in this respect: "it is impossible for man to lose transcendence, without ceasing to be man" – a remark with which Jung would have agreed. Later, he observes that 'doing away with the inner life of the cosmos is a step towards doing away with the inner life of people', though I think there are signs of recovery, at least in some quarters. The book begins with a discussion of spiritual intelligence as a type of perception which is basic to being human that enables us to apprehend directly the underlying reality of which we are all an expression.

The book proposes seven steps, beginning with retelling our story leading to the emergence of a mental space of spiritual intelligence (*homo spiritualis*), discovering freedom, seeing reality as simple, settling the soul, learning to die, resonating with reality, and finally what he calls befriending irruptions. The engaging narrative draws on many sources of insight as well as Mark's own experience. The final steps are important in presenting a refined ethic and attitude based on virtue and our capacity to experience time as a more expansive *Kairos* rather than a stressful linear *Chronos*. The chapter on the meaning of death treats it as an opportunity to reflect on life, drawing on the death of Socrates and the work of Tolstoy. I agree with Mark that regaining serious contact with the spiritual dimensions of reality is essential, and that it gives us a different set of priorities, especially in relation to the advent of AI. He sums up his inspiring message at the end of the journey: 'we are *homo spiritualis*. Inner freedom is ours. Rich simplicity can be seen. The soul can settle. Death will prove a portal. The good remains committed. Kairos is waiting to break through in the slightest rustle and fall of leaves. This is our story, and it informs what to do and how to be.' (p. 213)



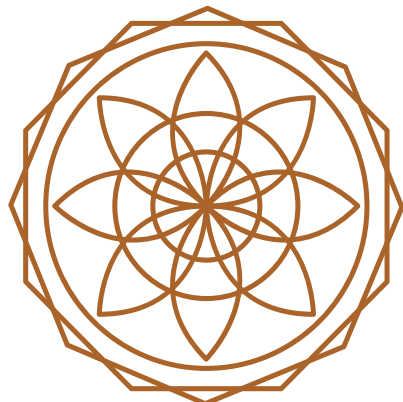
■ **Human Interaction with the Divine, the Sacred and the Deceased**

Edited by Thomas G. Plante and Gary E. Schwartz (SMN)

Routledge 2022, 282 pp., £36.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-367-61620-5

We held a launch for this interdisciplinary volume at the end of last year, and it is heartening to see such content put out by a mainstream publisher. The 17 chapters are divided into four parts: the personal and storied experience of the divine and departed communication, theological considerations, medical, technological and scientific considerations, and finally psychological considerations – so coverage of such perennial issues is comprehensive from a number of angles. The volume is an important statement in our predominantly secular scientific culture since its scholarly reflections are evidence-based and nuanced. Gary provides a number of strong evidential cases. One recounts a lawyer-turned-medium helping a sitter make contact with those of his comrades who died during a military incident that he survived.

Topics covered include afterlife journeys including those of Swedenborg, prayer, deliverance from demons, Islamic models, healing, ghosts, survival evidence, beliefs and ethical challenges. I enjoyed Larry Dossey on love and healing. He relates an incident when, sitting on the toilet as a young intern, he read the graffiti ‘the secret to patient care is caring for the patient’, and he gives a number of examples of insensitive behaviour on the part of medical staff; also a lesson from a fellow physician on how to love your patients. He proposes a universal spectrum of love and that, along with empathy, love is innate and ‘provides evidence of who we are’, unmasking the illusion of isolation. Eben Alexander writes about the implications of the emerging science of consciousness for prayer and divine experience as part of a major revolution in the scientific understanding of consciousness. This distils the argument of his most recent book for objective idealism and the centrality of oneness and connection. Gary proposes a spectrum of light, both physical and spiritual, as well as recounting the extraordinary work of Susy Smith and another medium capable



of drawing portraits of people she sees but has never met – including David Bohm. As a whole, the volume is a rich resource for consciousness researchers.

■ **Contemplative Leaders**

Edited by Laurence Freeman OSB (SMN)

Meditatio 2021, 293 pp., \$22, p/b – ISBN 978-981-18-1048-0

This is a highly accessible collection of personal reflections by members of the Bonnevaux business meditation group organised by the World Community for Christian Meditation working online during 2020. Laurence Freeman provides a helpful introduction, highlighting the benefits of meditation both in terms of cultivating solitude and community. He argues that being comes before doing, stillness before activity and that ‘meditation is a means to focus better, to be other-centred, to be authentic, to be conscious.’ It encourages stability with flexibility, enabling a clarity of mind that enhances relationships and decision-making. It is a discipline of pure attention. The varied contributions tell the stories and convey the valuable insights of distinguished international business leaders and make a strong case for the benefits of embedding daily meditation in professional life. Significantly, many themes recur: love, compassion, deepening, focus, nonattachment, acceptance, authenticity, commitment, clarity, service, self-knowledge and transformation – among others. The value of the book is enhanced by commentaries at the end of each contribution, mostly by the editor, and can be highly recommended as daily reading and reflection from many wells of wisdom and life experience.

■ **Sacred Geometry of the Starcut Diagram**

Malcolm Stewart

Inner Traditions 2022, 320 pp., \$40, h/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-430-8

Subtitled ‘the genesis of number, proportion and cosmology,’ this richly illustrated work is a revised edition of *Patterns of Eternity* from 2009. It starts from the simple square of the Starcut diagram, which the author argues was the key to early architecture and recurrent patterns in different cultures. He explains how to create the figure and illustrates how it is expressed in many artforms as well as in musical form, while containing sacred proportions and shapes as well as the Tree of Life from the Kabbalah. The author takes the reader on an extraordinary odyssey, explaining the figure’s role in the liberal arts and more specifically in geometrical forms and even the pyramids. He examines in detail the hidden geometry of Raphael in a number of paintings.

Throughout, there are many practical exercises that readers can try to enhance their living understanding and sense of harmony, in the course of which they

realise how much of this kind of knowledge has been lost – and fortunately revived at the Prince’s Foundation. There is an extraordinary drawing by Fazal Inayat Khan on page 253 with truth in the centre, the overself above, the self below, reality to the left and ideas to the right with subtle corresponding schematisation of relationships all within geometrical triangular shapes. It is a cultural reminder that numerology, symbology and astrology were the three basic researches of Sufism: ‘numerology is the science of vibrations, of patterns; symbology is the science of forms, and structures; astrology is the science of influences, psychology.’ This is a classic work to include in your library.

■ **The Fall of Spirituality**

Baron Julius Evola (1898-1974)

Inner Traditions 2021, 200 pp., \$35, h/b – ISBN 978-1-62055-977-2

Subtitled ‘the corruption of tradition in the modern world’, this volume is effectively an iconoclastic and bracing denunciation of what the author sees as the pseudo-spiritual and therefore inauthentic shortcomings of spiritualism, psychical research, psychoanalysis, theosophy, anthroposophy, Krishnamurti and even Satanism and Crowley’s magic. For him, spiritual paths must be transformative and lead to self-realisation rather than simply dabbling in the supernatural. Readers may find some of his criticisms over-harsh, and they do reflect a generalised perennial critique of modernism (there is a useful comparative chart on p. xxx). He rightly urges us to direct our efforts towards higher metaphysical development and transfiguration, observing that few people actually do so. In this respect, the essays are an invigorating spiritual reminder.

PSYCHOLOGY-CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

■ **Our African Unconscious**

Edward Bruce Bynum, Ph.D., ABPP

Inner Traditions 2021, 455 pp., \$22.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-396-7

This extraordinary book about the history of ideas in relation to the evolution of culture and consciousness is a game changer: no reader will come away without their understanding radically reframed by the author’s comprehensive argument and remarkable erudition across a range of disciplines. Subtitled ‘the black origins of mysticism and psychology’, Bynum’s study extends the well-known anthropological argument of human origins in Africa to the development and spread of ‘Western’ culture, showing in this respect the pivotal role of ancient Egypt. Chapter headings convey a good sense of the scope of the book, beginning with diaspora or the great dispersion, then origins of the African unconscious, the roots of modern science

and religion in ancient Egypt, kundalini and the spread of African mysticism, the myth of Osiris, West African religion and the slave trade, Freud, Judaism and the limits of psychodynamic insight, the milieu of race in the New World, and finally the rudiments of Kemetist Philosophy in African/Indian yoga science. In its scope, the book reminded me of the equally magisterial *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* by Radhakrishnan that also stressed the central role of Egyptian culture.

Kundalini and the life force more generally are a crucial component of the overall argument that also draws on quantum field theory and the work of David Bohm. Our mechanistic mindset based on classical physics and separation is turning out to be suboptimal, as many readers will no doubt agree. The paradigm of our common African rootedness and collective unconscious advanced here highlights our physical and spiritual interconnectedness, drawing on modern psychology and ancient mysticism as well as ecology to emphasise the primary role of consciousness and the primacy of spirit in human experience as a higher order of enfoldment arising from more subtle realms of order. Within the context of scientific materialism on the one hand and the Asian idea that matter and energy are manifestations of spirit on the other, Bynum proposes a philosophy of personalism whereby ‘the essence of reality is taken to be personhood of persons, objects, situations and forces’, implying a certain pantheism and a mode of apprehending the world as a living web of identity and causality that also entails the embodiment and transmission of spiritual values in a process of transformative evolution: ‘human consciousness is a living part of a vast, interconnected community of spirit, information, and energy.’ (p. 119)

The original Egyptian Caduceus of intertwined snakes is explained as a symbol of the ascending force of kundalini as ‘the evolutionary force becoming conscious in man.’ (p. 123) Bynum documents how this played a central role in the spread of African mysticism, also representing the use of rhythm, vibration and entrainment within a larger context of spiritual discipline elaborated in the final chapter. Such a hermetic view overcomes the European dissociation of rationality from intuition and fragmenting distinctions between ‘inner’ and ‘outer’, body and mind, self and society, humans and nature. Here, complementarity would be a more apposite metaphor. West African psychology of religion is based on the deepening and amplification of the sense of life force (*chi, prana*) where matter understood by modern physics is ‘the form of localised and gravitationally enfolded light, energy and information in its densest form, yet nonlocally connected with matter and energy everywhere.’ (p. 390) The author concludes with a summary of his enfolding Afrogenetic Paradigm where the nonmaterial is the ground of being and we transcend the idea of dead matter in a mechanical universe to experience ourselves

and evolve towards ‘a new kind of human, a race of luminous beings who adventure in the realm of light’ (p. 411) moving towards a wider solar consciousness and articulating a sophisticated science of the spirit. Bynum’s *tour de force* gives readers an essential new lens on consciousness and culture.

■ The Miracle Club

Mitch Horowitz

Inner Traditions 2018, 182 pp., \$16.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-62055-766-2

Some readers will have heard Mitch’s presentation at our recent Beyond the Brain conference and will already appreciate his original take on the field. Here he takes a fresh look at the New Thought movement, with which few people are familiar, even though it was at the cutting edge of psychology at the beginning of the 20th century with William James and others, before the whole discipline was taken over by behaviourism with its exclusively third-person view. As such, the book is both a theoretical and practical primer on how thoughts become reality. As it happens, I am sitting at a desk and on a chair both designed by my grandfather Sir Robert Lorimer – this furniture is the manifestation of his imagination, line drawing and the craftsmen he commissioned. The fundamental proposition is that thoughts are causative – so the universe works creatively from the inside out. Despite critiques of New Age thinking, this is undeniable: ‘your mind is a creative agency, and the thoughts with which you impress it contribute to the actualised events of your existence – including money.’ (p. 11) Life as such is generative, but the work has to be absolutely specific where you write down your clear and definite aim in life, including the amount of money you want to make in connection with it. This rule was strongly emphasised by Napoleon Hill, who himself learned a great deal from Andrew Carnegie when he was commissioned as a young man to conduct an interview. The process has to be accompanied by strong feeling commitment if it is to be effective.

Mitch draws on many classic texts and writers, including James Allen, Wallace Wattles, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thomas J Hudson, Emile Coue, Napoleon Hill and especially Neville Goddard, whose work I also regard as extraordinary and underrated. Missing from his coverage are Thomas Troward, Charles Haanel, Walter Russell and Earl Nightingale, although he does refer to classic works by Joseph Murphy and Maxwell Maltz, which I have also read. However, the underlying message is the same, and I think it especially important for young people setting out on their life paths as they seek to define the overall purpose and, equally importantly, the service they can render in the process – an ethical dimension is essential, as Mitch points out.

He explains a number of key methods, with illustrations from his own experience and a particularly striking affirmative statement from the novelist Octavia Butler (p. 37).

Her use of ‘so be it!’ and ‘see to it!’ highlight the single-minded clarity and passionate commitment required – most people never get round to defining their aims and goals in written form, while making sure that these correspond to their capacities. I agree with Mitch that Napoleon Hill’s *Law of Success* is his finest work and in it Hill stresses the importance of the mirroring effect of how we think about others as an adjunct to the Golden Rule. We also need to decide what we stand for. There is an excellent chapter on Neville Goddard, whose central proposition is that ‘the human imagination is God the Creator’, a view also articulated by Thomas Troward. The importance of this movement for our time is that ‘it rejects materialism as the foundation of life and sees reality based primarily in spiritual rather than physical laws’ (p. 139) whereby ‘you radiate and interact with the world around you by the intensity of your imagination and feelings’ (p. 149). All this implies ‘the permeability of time’ where we ‘select from infinite realities and outcomes’, imagining our world into being as an expression of self-agency. There is no doubt that this fine book has the capacity to change your life – so over to you. As Brian Tracy memorably put it, ‘if you want things in your life to change, you have to change things in your life’ – just think about it!

■ One Earth – Three Worlds

Julian Carlyon

Triarchy Press 2022, 137 pp., £15, p/b – ISBN 978-1-913743-65-9

This book is an important theoretical contribution to bringing together the three worlds of the title, namely the oneness world, the twoness world and the intermediary world. The first is the mystical realm, the second the empirical material realm addressed by science, while the third is crucial in relating to the two, but cannot be fully explained by either. The chapters range widely over such areas as physics, psychology, homoeopathy and their respective principles such as similarity and resonance, with a particular focus on the pattern that connects these fields. The author reminds readers that the element of passion and need has to be present for synchronicity to occur. If the oneness world is a totality beyond division and therefore description, the twoness world is one of objects and fields in spacetime, a world of cause and effect: oneness can also permeate/interpenetrate twoness, with seemingly anomalous effects; here lies the bridging intermediary world. As humans, we inhabit all three while the artist, healer and shaman are perhaps most at home in the intermediary realm which is also that of choice.

Interestingly, the author quotes Nick Herbert as saying that ‘a universe that displays local phenomena built upon a nonlocal reality is the only sort of world consistent with known facts and Bell’s proof’ – witness the 2022 Nobel Prize for physics. In this respect, Taoism is isomorphic, while also paralleling the unbroken wholeness in David Bohm’s

implicate order and the separation that occurs at the explicate level. The author postulates that a future science might be able to accommodate the intermediary realm characterised by 'the presence of oneness in twoness', with oneness as causeless, the twoness as causal, and the intermediary as acausal. He identifies this status precisely as the biggest problem for modern science indicating that the prevailing model is incomplete. Correspondingly, oneness is consciousness itself, 'or the space in which everything appears.' All this is usefully summarised in a series of helpful diagrams (pp. 114-117). Highly recommended as a fresh and fruitful theoretical approach.

■ Self-Improvement

Mark Coeckelbergh

Columbia University Press 2022,
144 pp., \$19.95, p/b – ISBN
978-0-231-20655-6

The theme of this thoughtful book takes up that of a study of the good enough life reviewed in the last issue, namely the imperative, even burden and tyranny, of self-improvement – the author is professor of philosophy of media and technology at the University of Vienna. He begins by describing the phenomenon in its current form, driven by American individualism and positive psychology, while fuelled by social media and by an \$11 billion self-improvement industry. The author explains the historical background going back to ancient Greek stoicism by way of Christian redemption, guilt and confession, 'humanism's culture of self-examination and learning, the relentless modern search for authenticity and perfection' – all this within the larger modern context of neoliberalism, obsession with self-esteem, and promptings of surveillance capitalism based on behavioural algorithms. The author traces modern self-assertion back to Rousseau, and describes its modern manifestation in 'hipster existentialism.'

'Wellness capitalism' exploits our foibles and vanities while distracting us from necessary social action in which all these collective patterns are embedded. A topical example is the 'AmaZen box' where staff can watch mindfulness and mental health videos when the underlying issues are substandard pay and working conditions. This is an example of what the author calls 'technosolutionism' where 'self-improvement technologies are the hyperlink for dealing with a sick and unjust society'. (p. 57) Moreover, this form of *Bildung* is a largely middle-class phenomenon. AI can now categorise, measure and quantify us, making suggestions according to our preferences. Based on the idea that we are simply biological machines, the next phase of self-improvement is digital enhancement or transhumanism. Yet, as the author points out, technology 'cannot be a substitute for the hard work of gaining self-knowledge and becoming wiser', even if aspects of ourselves are hidden in the unconscious. He rightly emphasises the importance of the relational self that

embraces more than the autonomous and manipulated/conditioned self. Technology can make a positive contribution but we need to articulate a new story of the good life in both social and technocultural terms. This is a stimulating read, and the only notable omission for me was the stream of thinking emanating from New Thought including Napoleon Hill, Charles Haanel and others, not to forget Dale Carnegie on winning friends and influencing people.

■ Woman Through the Ages

Ann Merivale (SMN)

O-Books 2022, 754 pp., £34.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78904-967-1

This fascinating book is a highly readable spiritual odyssey drawing on deep memory process over many lifetimes, and on this journey it sheds important light on the nature of human consciousness and identity. Ann herself trained with Roger Woolger as a deep-memory process therapist and she unfolds a mosaic of intertwined personality lifetimes in very varied social circumstances, with different lessons to learn. The 'cactus firmus' of the book is the evolution of the role and position of women, coming into the present lifetime with illustrations of prominent women from the 20th-century. The geographical scope is wide, and Ann describes related journeys to such places as Egypt, Japan, China, Italy, India, France, Switzerland and South America. The descriptions are vivid and realistic – each chapter is preceded by a contextualising prologue and followed by thoughtful reflections after the death in a particular incarnation, which is always experienced as leaving the body and meeting deceased loved ones.

Some lifetimes are closely mirrored, such as a martyr in fourth century and a prostitute in the fifth century, both in Ravenna. Sometimes, Ann experiences a familiarity with a specific location, as was the case in Geneva, especially when going round Voltaire's Castle at Ferney. Subsequently, she recalled a lifetime in his service, having already studied his work at University. Forced to seek work after her baker husband died, she relates her experiences in different residences in Voltaire's employ, before and after Ferney, which involved a great deal of entertaining – even though Voltaire spent a good part of every day in his study. He comes across as very caring for his staff and arranged for her to have her own house when she retired.

The life in Cathar France was equally fascinating if traumatic. The story tells how a small group of Cathars decided to imprint a Rose Quartz Crystal with their energy and take it to Ste Baume, Mary Magdalene's cave. On the way back, she finds her horse dead, and the party is all burned at the stake by the Inquisition. Another extraordinary lifetime was as Johanna Carolina Bach (1737-1781), a daughter of the great composer. Again, experiences in the Leipzig Thomaskirche are vividly pictured, and she explains to her father that she sees angels

listening to his music. She evokes Bach's death and a dream thereafter where he predicts that his music will be forgotten and then known universally – his intention was 'to help *everyone* come close to God and to praise him'. Bach describes a creative process whereby the sublime music that was already out there flowed through his pen – Bach aficionados will know what he means. All the lifetimes in this remarkable book weave a tapestry within the overall context of ultimately returning to the Source.

■ The Medium in Manolos

Lauren Robertson (SMN) –
www.laurenrobertson.co.uk

Hay House UK Ltd. 2017, 204 pp.,
£12.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78180-851-1

Lauren has a background in English and philosophy and now works full-time as a medium and transformational coach. This accessible and engaging book combines her own story with guidance about how one can develop one's own psychic sensitivity in a series of what she calls activations. Her underlying philosophy is that we are all connected and that relationships are central to our lives, including with the departed. Sometimes we don't spot the signs of communication from more subtle realms, and in this respect it's important to gauge our feelings and pay attention to our dreams in which the departed may appear. Mediums are a conduit to direct evidence for survival, and Lauren gives many evidential case histories, some of which only make sense in retrospect. We also need to manage our thoughts and emotions, especially in relation to self-image, as this will be reflected in the 'outer' world in negative or positive feedback loops (p. 152); seeking harmony is an important guideline in this life-affirming book.

■ William James – My Reading

Philip Davis

Oxford 2022, 188 pp., £18.99, h/b – ISBN 978-0-19-284372-4

My Reading is a new series from OUP with individual takes on famous authors and their work, articulating a personal relationship and their influence on the writer of the study. Some of William James' most interesting work is printed in his occasional essays and lectures, a number of which I have read on more than one occasion. The emphasis here is on how the highly literary William James' live, dynamic and subtle thought processes are translated into necessarily structured language and ideas, with many citations. He is par excellence the psychologist of mental life, including his own. Characteristically, the author writes that 'for James the self, and its consciousness, is not a separate, isolated substance but is a vibrating field opening out into the surrounding world.' The volume will be enjoyed by James scholars, but those new to him might do better to start with the volume of essays such as *Talks on Psychology and Life's Ideals*. And readers who have not yet read *Varieties of Religious Experience* should immediately put it on their reading list.

DEATH AND DYING

■ The Medium and The Minister

Roger Straughan (SMN)

Sixth Books 2022, 163 pp., \$10.95, p/b – ISBN 978-78904-880-3

Subtitled ‘who on earth knows about the afterlife?’, this book follows up on the author’s 2009 study in survival connected with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle reviewed in these pages. It is a timely publication which reminds me of a remark by the then Archbishop of York John Habgood at a Churches’ Fellowship for Psychological and Spiritual Studies (CFPSS) conference where we were both speaking. His opening remarks were that he was sceptical of psychical studies for two reasons: first as a scientist, and secondly as a theologian. Readers will already be familiar with mainstream scientific attitudes to survival, but here they will learn more about theologians in relation to mediumistic evidence posing a challenge to ecclesiastical authority. The author begins with eight possible attitudes to the afterlife and makes it very clear that readers must come to their own conclusions based on an assessment of the evidence on a matter that should concern us all but seldom does.

Christianity deals mainly in platitudinous generalities when it comes to the afterlife, and faced the dual but very different challenges of spiritualism and psychical research in the second half of the 19th century. The pivotal figures in the book are on the one hand Sir Oliver Lodge, who lost his son Raymond in the First World War, and Conan Doyle, and on the other senior Church of England bishops and archbishops insisting on faith rather than intellectual apprehension. The war made the issue all the more poignant, and put churches on the spot; Conan Doyle suggested that their common enemy was materialism. Roger gives a vivid account of the report on spiritualism commissioned by the Church of England that should have been published in 1939, but the full text edited by Michael Perry appeared only 40 years later for political reasons.

Following his own study and book, Lieutenant-Colonel Reginald Lester established the CFPSS in 1953. Even so, it has not proved easy to bridge the gap between the medium and the minister, as Roger explains. There is an interesting chapter on the heretical Bishop Jim Pike and descriptions of other work in the field of mediumship, including that of late SMN member Dr Robert Crookall. Roger wisely concludes that no ultimate proof is possible, but there is a great deal of evidence, argument and experience to consider, as I did myself in my own book *Survival?* There can be some convergence between psychical, religious and experiential sources, and we do have extensive descriptions of afterlife scenarios, all outlined in a balanced fashion, making the book a valuable resource.

■ Where Are the Dead?

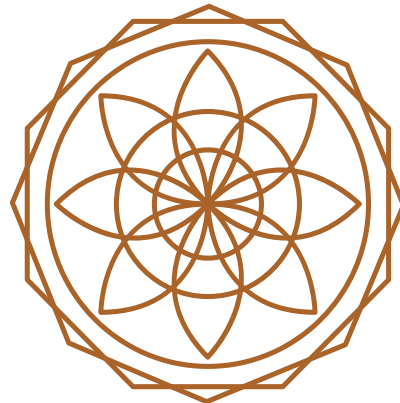
Peter Moore (SMN)

Routledge 2017, 243 pp., \$39.95, p/b – ISBN 978-0-367-88143-6

This book is a very important and well-informed addition to the literature on survival, drawing on a wide range of resources (though not my own studies on the question). The series of eight chapters begins with clarifying the question itself, moving on to what it might be like to die and be dead, locations of the afterlife, relationships between the living and the dead, then concludes with reflections on post-mortem identity and continuity and more general considerations about eschatology. Within the mainstream Western philosophical tradition, the standard view is to reject the idea of disembodied survival as incoherent (Peter explains the roots of this in Descartes’ dualism, with the loss of the idea of an inner body) without taking into account the postulation of other more subtle bodies recognised in western esotericism as well as eastern philosophies. Not since CD Broad and HH Price held the main chairs of philosophy at Cambridge and Oxford have leading philosophers shown much interest in survival evidence.

The value of this careful study to the researcher lies in its studious analysis of possibilities across the range of topics, also addressing well-known objections. Nor is this purely speculative as some very good literature, for example by Jane Sherwood and Geraldine Cummins, can shed light on the putative nature of an afterlife. For instance, Peter proposes five basic models for understanding or imagining the nature of post-mortem survival: discarnate survival, serial survival, transformative survival, transcendental survival and cosmic survival. Each of these is discussed in detail and later related to fundamental questions of identity and continuity. The book as a whole is an extended questioning of the orthodox view of death as extinction, and it makes a strong case for the alternatives postulated in terms of a rite of passage or transition. Peter’s view entails a relationship between our current and any future existence.

He distinguishes between a vital soul, a personal soul and a transcendental soul that we can potentially discover – here he revisits his initial analysis, observing that



‘if we are to survive death as ourselves, then we must survive as conscious beings, self-consciously aware of ourselves and also aware of others in relation to ourselves’ (p. 196). This continuity is also likely to involve growth and evolution rather than an unchanging essence, even moving on with reduced contact with the living as our focus changes: ‘we will be doing the becoming.’ Peter moves beyond an exclusively secular emphasis on the here and now to wider vistas that have been extensively investigated by many distinguished scientists, including Sir Oliver Lodge and other early pioneers. It always struck me when I was writing my own books in my 30s that so few people were concerned with post-mortem existence – such a perspective as embraced by Peter renders fully living our present life more, not less, important.

■ To Die is Gain

Johann Christoph Hampe

Afterworlds Press 2020, 145 pp., 18, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78677-190-2

I read this remarkable book in the 1980s, when I was researching my own. It came out first in 1975 – the same year as Raymond Moody’s - with an English translation in 1979, which makes it one of the earliest significant studies of the NDE. It is subtitled ‘near death experience and the art of dying before we die’, and it touches on many significant spiritual themes, reporting the process of dying from the inside through the various phases while drawing on many vivid case histories. Perhaps the most significant message, especially in the light of reactions to the latest AWARE study by Sam Parnia trying to establish/confirm the neurological basis of the experience, is the intensification of consciousness, which can be illustrated in the following extraordinary extract: ‘This new ‘I’ was not the I that I knew, but rather a distilled essence of it, yet something vaguely familiar, something I had always known buried under a superstructure of personal fears, hopes, wants and needs. This ‘I’ was final, unchangeable, indivisible, indestructible pure spirit. While unique and individual as a fingerprint, ‘I’ was, at the same time, part of some infinite, harmonious and ordered whole. I had been there before.’ (p. 75)

■ A Celtic Book of Dying

Phyllida Anam-Aire

Findhorn Press 2022, 205 pp., £14.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-298-4

Subtitled ‘the path of love in the time of transition’, this is a beautiful and authoritative exposition of the Celtic tradition of death and dying based on their understanding of the rhythm of life where Nature and the seasons are our teachers with respect to change, incarnation and ‘excarnation’. The book gives an overview of the tradition, moving on to dealing with the passage of your personal death and dying process, helping a dying person and their relatives, and being with the bereaved. The invaluable guidance in the

book is based on a distillation of decades of experience with rituals, prayers, songs, incantations and blessings – it asks how we can live and die consciously where our lives are embedded in the eight Celtic festivals of transformation – the kind of rhythm and engagement missing in modern life. It explains the real meaning of *Anam-Aire* as Soul Care and provides detailed guidelines for helping the dying. A very valuable cultural contribution to the literature of death and dying – soulful, contemplative and instructive in equal measure.

■ **WhatsApp from Heaven**

Louise Hamlin

O Books (John Hunt) 2022, 89 pp., £9.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78904-947-3

This engaging book by a former law fellow at Cambridge tells the intriguing story of the first two years of her bereavement and the journey from scepticism to acceptance of her husband’s survival. A variety of phenomena are described, including signs requested – intention seems to be a mechanism for these to manifest – evidential messages from mediums, white feathers in unexpected places, also sometimes on request, and most interestingly spontaneous initiation of WhatsApp groups and subsequent messages that despite the difficulty of using electronic devices for this purpose, they may be used to communicate coherently. Readers will find this a deeply humane and informative read that is a significant contribution to after death communication literature.

POLITICS-ECOLOGY

■ **Designing Regenerative Food Systems**

Marina O’Connell

Hawthorn Press 2022, 206 pp., £25, p/b – ISBN 978-1-912480-54-8

If you’re going to buy one book on regenerative food systems, this has to be it, especially at a time when the relationship between industrial agriculture practices and CO2 emissions is coming strongly onto the agenda. The argument is that food systems and farming require an integrated holistic systems approach, rather than a fragmented reductionist approach, especially with respect to global food security and protection of ecosystems on which agriculture depends. The first part discusses the history of agriculture over the last hundred years, which has also involved a great deal of large-scale chemical inputs and consolidation within the industry. This has depleted soil biodiversity and created toxic run-off into water systems as well as horrendous conditions for animals in computer-controlled feeding operations. The agricultural establishment proposes more of the same with more GMOs and fake meat, further removing us from Nature.

The second part is a detailed consideration of sustainable and regenerative food production methods, beginning with

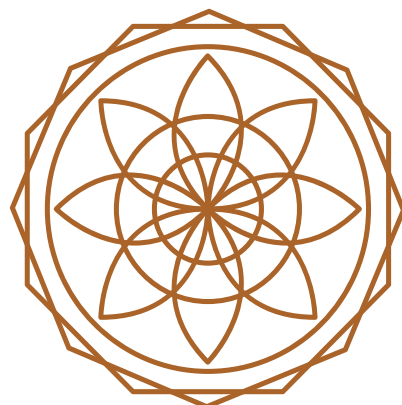
Steiner’s biodynamics as the historical origin (of course, all agriculture used to be sustainable) and moving on to organic, permaculture, agroforestry, agroecological and regenerative systems of agriculture. These all have many common features while bringing different emphases and attributes in terms of ‘sustainable intensification’. Each chapter explains principles and origins as well as practical applications with specific case studies, a summary of key features and further resources. This gives the reader an excellent overview and rationale, all based on working in harmony with Nature rather than exploitation and maximum extraction. The last part considers how we can design and bring about a sustainable agricultural revolution while meeting the challenges of an expanding population. This will require a fundamental worldview shift where, as Lady Eve Balfour put it, agriculture is regarded as a primary health service.

■ **Renewal**

Anne-Marie Slaughter

Princeton University Press 2021, 203 pp., £20, h/b – ISBN 978-0-691-21056-8

The author is CEO of New America, the think tank ‘dedicated to renewing the promise of America by continuing the quest to realize our nation’s highest ideals, honestly confronting the challenges caused by rapid technological and social change, and seizing the opportunities those changes create.’ Her book is subtitled ‘from crisis to transformation in our lives, work and politics’, reflecting on her own lessons and path within a wider social context of the need for renewal. She shares valuable insights on dealing with criticism, connecting with change, rethinking the nature of risk, sharing power, the need for rugged interdependence and mutuality rather than individualism and for flatter organisational systems. In the hierarchy, leaders are at the top, while in the web they are at the centre and perhaps on the edge. She notes that renewal ‘is a posture, practice, and philosophy. It requires us to confront, learn, grow and recommit to our principles with a better understanding of how to achieve them.’ (p. 141) The Declaration of Independence must apply to all, especially as it approaches 2026, its 250th anniversary.



The thesis is sound as far as it goes, but missing for me was any engagement with systemic and endemic political and economic corruption, revolving doors between industry and government, industry capture of environmental, medical and communications regulatory agencies, corporate funding of politics with corresponding effects on policies, connections of intelligence services with organised crime, and the long history of illicit political coups, often with disastrous long-term consequences (including Ukraine). Renewal requires confrontation with the shadow and a calling to account of existing entrenched systems of power. The immediate prospects for such a root and branch renewal are slim. As investigative journalist Whitney Webb points out in her recent eye-opening 800-page book, *One Nation Under Blackmail*, the government is incapable of investigating itself; besides, think tanks receive billions of dollars a year from the Department of Defence. So renewal needs to be more radically structural and thorough than proposed in this book.

■ **Overcoming the Robotic Mind – Why Humanity Must Come Through**

Julian Rose

Dixi Books 2019, 245 pp., £19.99, p/b – ISBN 978-619-7458-47-3

Writing in a popular and passionate style, this well-informed book of essays by Julian Rose foreshadows some of the developments and trends of the last few years. Julian’s background is highly diverse as an organic farming pioneer, political activist, social entrepreneur and holistic educator. He has a firm grasp of the ways in which the public are deceived and manipulated for ulterior corporate agendas, as these powerful financial, philanthropic and economic interests have captured Government and regulatory agencies for their own purposes. At a very basic level, the forces of humanity and (technologically driven) inhumanity are pulling in opposite directions, and we find ourselves at a tipping point where widespread informed resistance is necessary for a fundamental course correction – but the majority of people have not yet woken up to this situation nor to the necessity of co-creating a movement of sufficient scale and impact to say No.

Julian writes about agriculture, farming, food, genetics, the EU superstate, religion and spirituality, war, technocracy, globalisation and totalitarianism. The systems in which we are currently embedded are all interlinked in a network of power within an ideology of ‘progress and efficiency’ leading to larger scale operations and concentration, all based on an extractive model of profit maximisation. Instead, Julian proposes a Proximity Principle to uphold local communities in a process of Collectively Realised Creation rather than Mutually Assured Destruction. This represents a defence of life itself, of biodiversity, self-organisation, mutuality and reciprocity. Julian’s message is blunt, urgent and timely, challenging readers to act towards a genuinely life enhancing future.

■ Conversations with Nature

Peter Owen Jones

Clairview 2022, 82 pp., £10.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-912992-41-6

These 18 short and powerful meditations by a wild-spirited Anglican priest allow animals, birds, trees and plants to speak of universal themes – the mayfly on impermanence, the mouse on courage, the turtle on communion, the starling on dancing, the oak on sanctuary and the pond on peace. Peter has learned to listen deeply and speaks on the insights of his characters in the first person, giving the reader many memorable lines in the process:

- The wren is not singing, the wren is the song
- Everything exists between everything else
- Know that it is necessary to be fragile
- Life holds death, death holds life
- Sadness is the infection in the wound, it is the wounding of beauty
- To be fully receptive is to be completely open, as the flower is open to receive the starlight, the bee
- Silence gives sanctuary to sound. Sanctuary is within, find the room within
- The house of peace is built from the flints of suffering

Highly recommended for contemplative reading.

■ Creating Gaia Culture

Marko Pogacnik

Clairview Books 2021, 217 pp., £12.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-912992-32-4

Marko is a sculptor and landscape artist whose work I have seen at Hawkwood and Tamera – he is also a UNESCO Artist for Peace. The purpose of this book is to formulate a vision of a potential future human culture based upon co-creation with Gaia, providing readers with a new sensitivity and level of perception, drawing on the author's own visions and dreams coming from beyond habitual mental structures and enabling the power of imagination. This involves the inner development of the individual, and the re-creation of human society including its economic and educational systems. Most importantly and originally, Marko insists on the need for cooperation with parallel worlds, taking in those of stones and minerals, viruses, elemental beings, microorganisms, animals, dolphins and whales. Our amnesic rational consciousness has forgotten these subtle contexts of living interconnectedness and has therefore assumed an ultimately destructive attitude of control and manipulation. We have correspondingly forgotten that we are multi-dimensional beings, and we must transition from an extractive and exploitative mode into reciprocity within a cycle of exchange for our own long-term health and that of life on Earth.

■ Dark Ecology

Timothy Morton

Columbia University Press 2016, 191 pp., £25, p/b – ISBN 978-0-231-17753-5

This is a dense and erudite book based on some lectures in critical theory. The initial proposition is that 'if we want thought different from the present – If we want to change the present – then thought must be aware of this kind of future. It is not the future into which we can progress. This future is unthinkable. Yet here we are, thinking it. Coexisting, we are thinking a future coexistence' – a key theme in the book. Dark ecology is ecological awareness, 'dark-depressing' but also dark-uncanny and dark-sweet by way of 'ecognosis' as a path to coexistence. We find ourselves in a wicked loop with respect to our ecological crisis: we can't separate our attitudes and values from our predicament, which Morton traces back to the earliest development of agriculture, developing what he calls agrilogistics that has come to dominate the planet in a toxic fashion – for those invested in it, the answer is more of the same with fake meat and further genetic modification reflecting an identical mindset – but it is precisely this mindset that has to change with respect to Nature as a whole in the current Anthropocene era where domination must shift to partnership.

■ Storytelling for Nature Connection

Ed. Alida Gersie, Anthony Nanson & Edward Schieffelin with Charlene Collinson & Jon Cree

Hawthorn Press 2022, 367 pp., £20, p/b – ISBN 978-1-912480-59-3

This book is an extraordinary resource for telling stories and for story-based learning in relation to community and environment. It contains over 40 wonderful stories and shows how these can connect us to people and places as well as each other. The 21 chapters cover core ideas and techniques before exploring stories in a variety of contexts – and are written by the editors and other experienced contributors. Stories form the core of oral culture and tradition, and are passed down the generations; they also teach us to listen. A Troubadour quoted in a romance by Chretien de Troyes put it like this: 'give me your hearts and ears, for words are lost unless they are heard with the heart.' Among the stories I enjoyed were the Woodcutter and Three Eggs, Bird in the Hand, and The Passenger Pigeon – though this last one recounts the obliteration of the previously abundant passenger pigeon by hunters at the end of the 19th century. I liked the metaphor of stories as spectacles that can help us see things anew, and appreciated the quote from David Orr: 'the plain fact is that the planet does not need more successful people. But it does desperately need more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers and lovers of every kind.'

GENERAL

■ What the Thunder Said – How The Waste Land Made Modern Poetry Modern

Jed Rasula

Princeton University Press 2023, 334 pp., £30, h/b – ISBN 978-0-691-22577-7

Readers may already be aware that this year marks the centenary of TS Eliot's *The Waste Land* – the latest copy of *Prospect* contains reviews of three books on the topic, though not this one. My own copy of Eliot's *Selected Poems* is dated September 17, 1973, and I took the opportunity of rereading this and other contemporary poems when prompted by this encyclopaedic and hugely erudite work. One can read into the poem not only the culture and history of the time, but also Eliot's own fragile emotional state and turbulent marriage (hardly helped by Bertrand Russell's affair with his wife – although he did introduce Eliot to the Bloomsbury Group). The first chapter makes clear the enormous influence of Wagner, also on Baudelaire and Nietzsche, while the second dives into the world of French symbolist poetry before the advent of Apollinaire and surrealism in the 1920s. Ezra Pound was hugely influential and helpful, and there is an interesting encounter with Virginia Woolf. The book ranges widely over many literary characters and friendships, discussing in detail reviews and the more general influence of the poem in a narrative tour de force that paints many a vivid picture. Meanwhile, Eliot spent many years working at Lloyds Bank, and also with Faber. He tried to put a certain distance between his life and work with its expression of 'significant emotion' which is nevertheless revealed in certain confessional passages. The book is much more than its title suggests, sympathetically conveying a whole complex literary world marked by revolutionary intensity.

■ The Apology

Eve Ensler

Bloomsbury 2019, 115 pp., \$22, h/b – ISBN 978-1-63557-638-8

In his classic *Man's Search for Meaning* deriving from his experience of incarceration in Auschwitz, Viktor Frankl quotes Nietzsche: 'What does not kill us makes us stronger.' Eve (V) Ensler's extraordinary charisma and passion testifies to Nietzsche's truth, but it cost her almost everything. I met her on the Chartres pilgrimage, described in the previous issue (p. 29 if you have not read it) where she spoke about the theme of this book and emphasised that forgiveness requires a prior apology, a process of reckoning, responsibility, regret and remorse, empathy, humbling and complete loss of grandiosity and any sense of justification. The narcissistic and patriarchal strongman is incapable of apology since he would regard this as a betrayal of his masculinity. In her own case, she had to write her own apology as if from her father more than 30 years

after his death. The narrative is searing in the extreme, with explicit descriptions of the horrors visited on her by her father as Shadow Man from the tender age of five.

The process is gradual and inexorable, rooted in her father's own lack of nurturing and progressively corrupting absolute will to power, recalling Oscar Wilde's haunting line that 'each man kills the thing he loves' from the *Ballad of Reading Gaol*. The detail is graphic and harrowing, as her father relentlessly seeks to destroy her utterly at every level, resulting in extreme psychological distress and the unravelling of her life that she has so courageously stitched back together: 'I beat a child half my size. I used my hands, my fist, and belts as whips. I interrogated you mercilessly. I called you every terrible name. I insulted every fibre of your being and body. My intention was to humiliate and extinguish.' (p. 72) The importance of the book is not simply personal or even as a cry of anguish from women in general: we know that such horrors of abuse and trauma – and hence the need for healing – are much more widespread than we would like to admit (see Gabor Mate's book reviewed elsewhere in this issue). The grip of toxic masculinity, militarism, dominance, aggression and competition urgently needs to be transmuted into a new balance between masculine and feminine. I urge you to have the courage to read this cathartic narrative and reflect on its implications for our future.

■ Numbskull in the Theatre of Inquiry

William R. Torbert (SMN)

Waterside Productions 2021, 476 pp., \$19.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-951805-41-8

Ambitiously subtitled 'transforming self, organisations and social science', this engaging autobiography tells a pioneering personal and professional journey of being 'Upward Bound' with a focus on collaborative developmental action enquiry related to radical social action. It will be of most interest to fellow practitioners, though general readers can glean some valuable insights and from first-, second- and third-person perspectives in a general trend towards a culture of 'inter-interdependence'. Among these are the cybernetic theory of single-, double-, and triple-loop feedback and learning; the good life as good money, good work, good friends and good questions; analysis of seven social-scientific paradigms, and analogies between personal, organisational and scientific action-logics as well as the dangers of considering one's current views and orientations as adequate. Torbert recommends we should always be seeking to expand our capacity and horizons through transformative engagement.

BRIEF NOTICES, WITH OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED OR IN THE PIPELINE

SCIENCE- PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

■ The Sentient Robot

Rupert Robson

Imprint Academic 2022, 210 pp., £17.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-788360-79-1

There is certainly a race to develop Artificial Superintelligence (ASI), but views differ about whether a sentient robot is even possible in principle and the author himself defines consciousness as inner feel, which is not the same intelligence as information processing even though ASI may have 'agency'. The discussion is well-informed and original in proposing a naturalistic 'mirrored homunculus' theory of consciousness.

■ Modifying our Genes – Theology, Science and 'Playing God'

Alexander Massmann and Keith R. Fox

SCM Press 2021, 151 pp., £25, p/b – ISBN 978-0-334-05943-0

This book brings together a leading molecular biologist with a Christian ethicist to discuss the significance of genome editing (CRISPR-Cas9) and its implications, especially its use in human embryos. They give a clear explanation of the mechanisms involved and the potential of genetic enhancement to function implicitly as a form of eugenics. It is a nuanced and informed discussion that raises questions about human nature and identity – in Christian terms, the human as the image of God.

■ The New Science of the Enchanted Universe

Marshall Sahlins

Princeton 2022, 196 pp., £22, h/b – ISBN 978-0-691-21592-1

■ Balance

Paul Thagard

Columbia 2022, 335 pp., £25, h/b – ISBN 978-0-231-20588-0

■ Behind their Screens

Emily Weinstein and Carrie James

MIT Press 2022, 228 pp., \$27.95, p/b – ISBN 978-0-262-04735-7

HEALTH AND HEALING

■ Sane Asylums

Herry M. Kantor

Inner Traditions 2022, 288 pp., \$24.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-408-7

This is a fascinating historical treatment of the history of homoeopathy in the US, where, prior to the Flexner Report of 1910, there were more than 100 homoeopathic hospitals, 1,000 homoeopathic pharmacies and 22 homoeopathic medical schools. In addition, homoeopathic psychiatry flourished from the 1870s to the 1930s with many documented successful outcomes. The book provides a necessary historical corrective and a pointer towards a more humane psychiatry.

■ Bioethics for Nurses – A Christian Vision

Alisha N. Mack and Charles C. Camosy

Eerdmaans 2022, 242 pp., \$21.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-8028-7892-2

■ Healing Sounds

Jonathan Goldman

Healing Arts Press 2022, \$19.99, p/b – ISBN 977-1-64411-582-4

PHILOSOPHY- SPIRITUALITY

■ Engoldenment - A Year with Kabir

Translated by Andrew Harvey

KDP Publishing 2021, 399 pp., \$14.99, p/b – ISBN 979-8-764770-5-43

I learned about this book when I met Andrew in Chartres in August and immediately ordered it. Kabir is India's greatest mystic poet of similar stature to Rumi, and his words are perennially relevant to the spiritual seeker. Andrew's own passionate mystical nature finds its echo in Kabir – what he calls his radical blazing nakedness expressed in clear and forceful language. Here is part of the reading for November 14:

*The One has given
A root of wisdom
The Real One has given
A root of wisdom.
This root is precious to me
Filled with sweet honey.*

■ What Matters Most and Why

Jim Manney

New World Library 2022, 418 pp., \$22.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-60868-776-3

This insightful book gives practical and reflective daily readings based on the spirituality of Ignatius of Loyola who believed that God is found in all things. The title refers to the pursuit of the good, clear thinking, effective prayer, emotional management and good relationships,

all applied to our daily experience. It is structured into three broad areas of experience, reflection and action with various sub-themes such as awareness, freedom, desire, humility, compassion and trust. Each day features a quotation and reflection encouraging searching self-examination transformation. I shall be adding this to my daily reflective reading.

■ The Tango of Ethics

Jonathan Leighton

Imprint Academic 2023, 240 pp., £14.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-788360-88-3

Subtitled 'intuition, rationality and the prevention of suffering', this important and rigorous reassessment of ethics is written by the executive director of the Organisation for the Prevention of Intense Suffering that promotes compassionate ethics in governance. He places emphasis on phenomenological experience and the unique urgency of suffering, seeking to reconcile the two different ways of being we experience as intuitive search for meaning and detached rational agency. Highly informative and topical.

■ Letters of John

Roger Druitt

Floris Books 2022, 94 pp., £12.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78250-820-5

A new translation and reflective commentary on the Johannine Epistles and their significance. The author explains the context and orientation with a special focus on John's approach to knowing and key significant words such as abide, love, truth, righteousness, grace and peace. A valuable addition to the literature.

■ Dante's Divine Comedy

Mark Vernon (SMN)

Angelico Press 2022, 447 pp., \$22.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-62138-748-0

■ Processing Reality

John H. Buchanan (SMN)

Cascade Books 2022, 292 pp., \$28.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-6667-0928-5

■ Life is Short

Dean Rickles

Princeton 2022, £17.99, h/b – ISBN 978-0691-24059-6

■ Losing Ourselves

Jay L. Garfield

Princeton 2022, 203 pp., £20, h/b – ISBN 978-0-691-22028-4

■ Rules

Lorraine Daston

Princeton 2022, 359 pp., £13.75, h/b – ISBN 978-0-691-15698-9

■ Survive – Why We Do What We Do

Jerry Pannone

Psyche Books (John Hunt) 2022, 178 pp., £14.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-80341-090-6

PSYCHOLOGY-CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

■ The Dreamwork Handbook

Dr Nicholas Heyneman

Watkins 2022, 199 pp., £12.99, h/b – ISBN 978-1-84899-258-0

Written by a clinical psychologist and former university professor with over 50 scientific publications, this is an informative, practical and well-structured book on the topic corresponding to the author's app that analyses dreams – Dreamscape. He explains how to remember dreams and apply their insights, while also explaining their significance for relationships and in terms of symbols.

■ Parapsychology – a Century of Enquiry

D. Scott Rogo

White Crow Books 2022, 319 pp., £14.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78677-200-8

Originally published in 1975 when the author was only 25, this is one of the best introductions to the field, summarising its most significant findings and documenting the reasons for controversy as well as the foundations of psychical research. It is good to see this classic work back in print.

■ Call Me Lucifer

Eileen J. Garrett

White Crow Books 2022, 155 pp., £14.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78677-192-6

An intriguing dialogue written by a famous medium containing much practical advice about life and living, whatever the reader concludes about its status in terms of the author's own depth psychology and nature of identity.

■ Uncertain Places

Mitch Horowitz

Inner Traditions 2022, 304 pp., \$19.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-592-3

■ The Embodied Mind

Thomas R. Verny

Pegasus Books 2022, 258 pp., \$27.95, h/b – ISBN 978-1-643137-99-5

■ A New Story of Wholeness

Robert Atkinson

Light on Light Press 2022, 174 pp., \$15.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-958921-09-8

■ Sentience

Nicholas Humphrey

Oxford 2022, 243 pp., £16.99, h/b – ISBN 978-0-19-885883-9

■ The Nature of Astrology

Bruce Scofield

Inner Traditions 2022, 544 pp., \$39.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-6173

■ Cheerfulness

Timothy Hampton

Zone Books 2022, 267 pp., £22, h/b – ISBN 978-1-94213-060-4

■ Dreamtimes and Thoughtforms

Richard Grossinger

Park Street Press 2022, 179 pp., \$16.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-564-0

■ Connected Hearts

Peter Granger (SMN)

Self-published 2022, 296 pp., £8.99, p/b – ISBN 979-8-351657-91-2

■ Proof of Spiritual Phenomena

Mona Sobhani PhD

Park Street Press 2022, 242 pp., \$19.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-499-5

■ The Other Within

Daniel Deardorff

Inner Traditions 2022, 267 pp., \$19.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-568-8

■ Reality

Michael Featherstone

Amazon 2022, 218 pp., \$8.70, p/b – ISBN 979-8-590061-69-3

■ The Divine Language of Coincidence

Sophie Demas (SMN)

Mascot Books 2021, 292 pp., \$18.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64543-211-1

DEATH AND DYING

■ How to Grieve – the Lost Art of Consolation

Inspired by Marcus Tullius Cicero and edited by Michel Lafontaine

Princeton 2022, 264 pp., \$17.95, h/b – ISBN 978-0-691220-32-1

This book forms part of the series on ancient wisdom for modern readers, with the Latin on the left and English on the right. The reason that the author is not directly Cicero himself is that the original was lost, and the MS dating from 1583 is remarkable in containing extant known fragments while demonstrating intimate knowledge of Cicero's other writings. The editor explains Cicero's political and personal trials, culminating in the death of his daughter. His attitude is stoic, and he succeeds in consoling

himself through other classic writings and examples. The relevance of grief is perennial, and this text has certainly stood the test of time.

■ **Psychiatry and the Spirit World**

Alan Sanderson (SMN)

Park Street Press 2022, \$22.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-576-3

■ **Cette Vie...et Au-Dela**

Christophe Fauré

Albin Michel 2022, 357 pp., €21.90 p/b – ISBN 978-2-226-47545-9

■ **Viva – Life between Death and Rebirth**

Marilyn Barry

Inner Way 2021, 208 pp., \$15, p/b – ISBN 978-0-95308-11-3-4

ECOLOGY-POLITICS

■ **Protecting Human Rights in Occupied Palestine**

Richard Falk, John Dugard and Michael Lynk (UN Special Rapporteurs on Palestine)

Clarity 2022, 398 pp., \$32.95, p/b – ISBN: 978-1-949762-54-9

‘This book harnesses the remarkable collective experiences and wisdom of three authors, whose contributions served as the backbone of discussions on Palestine in leading international legal and political institutions.

The edifice of their collective work is proof that, despite the skewed power dynamics at the United Nations, a morally driven international law is still possible.’ Ramzy Baroud, Editor, *Palestine Chronicle*

■ **Global Discord – Values and Power in a Fractured World Order**

Paul Tucker

Princeton 2022, 552 pp., \$, h/b – ISBN 978-0-691229-03-7

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John Reed (SMN)

Umbria Press 2022, 116 pp., £9.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-910074-43-5

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Dougald Hine

Chelsea Green 2023, 224 pp., £22, h/b – ISBN 978-1-164502184-1

GENERAL

■ **Up from the Depths**

Aaron Sachs

Princeton 2022, 450 pp., £25, h/b – ISBN 978-0-691-21541-9

■ **The Flowering Mind – Rewilding the Sacred Masculine**

Sophie Strand

Inner Traditions 2022, 196 pp., \$18.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-596-1

■ **The Petroglyphs of Mu**

Carole Nervig

Bear & Co 2022, 334 pp., \$25, p/b – ISBN

■ **Putting the Heart Back into Business**

Andrew Thornton and Eudora Pascall

SRA Books 2022, 207 pp., £16.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-9512300-54-9



The High Pyrenees September 2022 - David Lorimer

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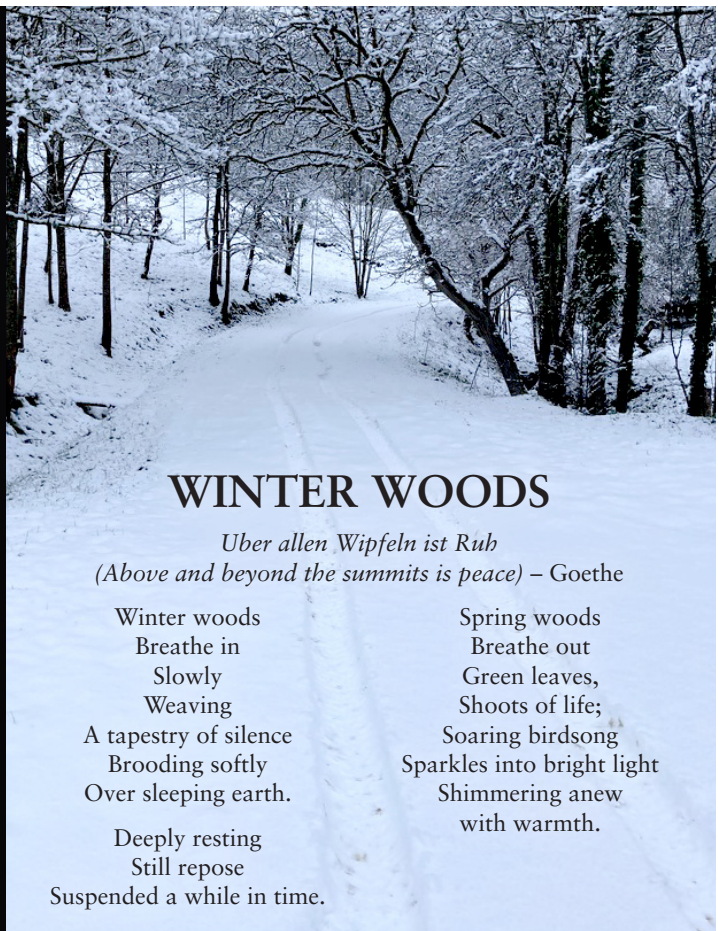
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WINTER WOODS

Über allen Wipfeln ist Ruh
 (Above and beyond the summits is peace) – Goethe

Winter woods	Spring woods
Breathe in	Breathe out
Slowly	Green leaves,
Weaving	Shoots of life;
A tapestry of silence	Soaring birdsong
Brooding softly	Sparkles into bright light
Over sleeping earth.	Shimmering anew
	with warmth.
Deeply resting	
Still repose	
Suspended a while in time.	

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

The Network aims to:

- *challenge the adequacy of scientific materialism as an exclusive basis for knowledge and values. See www.galileocommission.org*
- *provide a safe forum for the critical and open minded discussion of ideas that go beyond reductionist science.*
- *encourage a respect for Earth and Community which emphasises a spiritual and holistic approach.*

In asking searching questions about the nature of life and the role of the human being, the Network is:

- *Open to new observations and insights;*
- *Rigorous in evaluating evidence and ideas;*
- *Responsible in maintaining the highest scientific and ethical standards;*
- *Sensitive to a plurality of viewpoints*

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- *Regular Newsletter - Towards a New Renaissance*
- *A website with a special area for Members*
- *Extensive video and webinar library*
- *Links with MSc course in transpersonal psychology*

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The Network's annual programme of events includes:

- *Annual Beyond the Brain conference*
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