

ISSN 1362-1211 | No 89 | Winter 2005

network review

JOURNAL OF THE SCIENTIFIC
AND MEDICAL NETWORK

INSIDE

The Spirit of Mountains:
Jim Perrin's Climbing Essays

Evidence Based Spirituality

A Potential Future for a Global Family



Network Calendar

February 21st	Dr. Rupert Sheldrake - <i>How Far Does Your Mind Go?</i>
March 16th	Dr. Ervin Laszlo (Italy) - <i>Science and the Re-Enchantment of the Cosmos</i>
March 31st - April 2nd	Mystics and Scientists 29, Winchester - <i>The Spirit of Mountains: Inner and Outer Exploration</i>
May 9th	Dr. Elisabet Sahtouris (USA) - <i>Discovering Nature's Secrets of Success: a Potential Future for a Global Family</i>
June 3rd	Radical Futures 2 - <i>The Role of Renewable Energies in Preventing Climate Chaos</i>
July 5th	Dr. Richard Tarnas (USA) - <i>Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View</i>
July 13th - 16th	AGM - Plymouth - <i>Soil and Soul: Towards an Ecological Spirituality</i>
October 3rd	Prof. Paul Wilkinson - <i>Religion, Extremism and Political Violence</i>
October 11th -13th	Continental Meeting, Rotterdam - <i>Erasmus Revisited: The New Renaissance and the Future</i>
November 7th	Prof. David Tacey (Australia) - <i>The Spirituality Revolution</i>

NETWORK is a review published three times a year by the Scientific & Medical Network, generally in April, August and December.

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Printed by: Kingfisher Print & Design Ltd, Devon

The opinions expressed in Network are those of individual authors and not necessarily statements of general Network views. The Network is in no way liable for views published herein.

Notice to Contributors

All contributions should be sent to the Editor in one or more of the following formats, in order of preference:

1. **By E-mail to** dl@scimednet.org
2. By post on 3¹/₂ in. Floppy Disc, Apple Macintosh or IBM format, using your usual word processor file format plus 'RTF' or "TXT" or 'ASCII (no CR)' formats.

Disks should be labelled with the file name and author's name; all other files should be deleted. If you are sending a disk, please send hard copy as well.
3. By typewritten copy, which should be clean - no overtyping or hand correction, any last-minute alterations should be sent on a separate sheet. Text should be printed in black on one side of white paper. Laser, ink-jet or daisy-wheel out-put is preferred.

Attention Members!

Personal Numbers and Office Procedures

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

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

Office hours are 9am – 5pm Monday – Friday and there is normally someone to answer the telephone between those hours, with an ansaphone otherwise.

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Subscriptions

Because SMN's accounting year ends in December, it needs subscriptions to be paid in January, before it incurs the cost of providing members services for the year. Regardless when you paid your subscription in 2005, your 2006 subs are due in January, and from then until the subscription is paid it will show in the membership records as owing. This causes administrative confusion in the office as well as affecting the timely receipt of your copies of Network Review until your subscription is received. SO PLEASE HELP US TO HELP YOU BY PAYING YOUR SUBSCRIPTION AS CLOSE TO JANUARY AS POSSIBLE.

Cover picture:

Julie-Ann Clyma
www.skioff-piste.com
by Roger Payne



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network guidelines

Mission statement

To challenge the adequacy of scientific materialism as an explanation of reality.

Guidelines of Network Approach

Open-mindedness

- Bear in mind that good science is an open self-correcting system; no theory or set of insights is complete or perfect. There is no Network consensus view.
- Be ready to consider constructive criticism and to submit your work to rigorous examination
- Be prepared to revise beliefs in the light of evidence and experience.
- Question your own assumptions and presuppositions.
- Maintain a broad frame of reference.
- Cultivate humility, honesty, humour.

Rigour

- Recognise that our views of reality are models.
- Be prepared to test your ideas.
- Try to define your terms clearly.
- Make it clear when you are voicing opinions and beliefs.
- Be able to state opposing viewpoints in arguments.

Care of Others

- Have respect and empathy for others and be aware of their needs
- Balance kindness and understanding with clarity and discernment.
- Be willing to listen and learn from others in the interests of trust and openness.
- Disagree sympathetically, sensitively and constructively.

Meetings

Internal meetings provide a 'safe house' for explanation and debate in an interdisciplinary setting. This facilitates the development of trust and friendship. External meetings require a combination of rigorous professional standards with sympathy, understanding and support.

The above guidelines can be applied to writing and lecturing.

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Editorial

Bart van der Lugt

Pivot, Piety and Patience

*'He that will learn to pray,
let him go to sea'*

George Herbert



During the first week of November I was on board of my beloved three-mast-schooner 'Eendracht' (www.eendracht.nl) as watch leader, for a voyage around the Channel. During an afternoon we ran into a severe storm with wind speeds up to 60 knots an hour. We crossed the Channel, sailing half-wind with a speed of about 15 knots from Dartmouth to the Channel Island Alderney, where we would berth in the bay of St Anne. Suddenly I spotted a most unique natural phenomenon, high up in the sky: a 'circum zenithal arc'. For me it felt like a gift from heaven, a promise, offered to me in the oceans around Great Britain. There are no words to describe what came through me and as well as the physical experience, I felt a deep sense of gratitude, a gift on my path searching for the Divine. I was able to take a picture and felt the urge to share this with you.

Back to the daily SMN work. What has happened since the Annual Gathering held at Altenberg in Germany? Firstly, in my summer 2005 editorial I promised to come back to the domain



structure and holders for the coming year. During the board meeting, held in London in October, we reshuffled the domains and their holders.

Jacqui Nielsen, a barrister from Dublin, co-opted by the board as a director, is now the holder of the domain 'Local Groups'. Jacqui is introducing herself in this issue, setting out her intentions for the domain. **Claudia Nielsen**, deputy, moved from 'Local Groups' to the domain of 'Membership'. She will be supported in this pivotal domain by the newly co-opted director **Olly Robinson**, also introducing himself in this issue. Olly will be focusing specifically on enlisting younger members and will also be responsible for the Website domain. As you will see if you go to the website, it has been completely redesigned, a task Olly achieved in record time. You will find it more attractive and easier to handle.

Stephan Krall, our newly elected board member, joined **Bo Ahrenfelt** in the domain of Europe. It will provide Stephan with time and space to take over this domain next summer, as Bo intends to step down. **Martin Redfern** joined the Programme Committee, a committee which has responsibility for organising the programme. The other members in the committee are **John Clarke** (chairman), Claudia Nielsen, **David Lorimer** (programme director) and **Charla Devereux** (Network manager). During the board meeting in October the committee presented their plans for the 2006 programme.

For a considerable time the board has looked into the creation of a domain for research and education. I am happy to announce that Natalie Tobert took up the challenge, setting up and chairing a committee which includes **Mike King**. We have already received from the committee various proposals aiming at research and education for the younger among us. In this issue you will find Natalie's article requesting submissions for research proposals.

Finances will stay under **Chris Lyons**, our meticulous treasurer. Claudia will supervise the office and we asked our president, **Peter Fenwick**, to look for a fundraiser perhaps amongst the members of the recently set-up President's Circle. Last but not the least there is our secretary **Rupert Stewart Smith**, a great asset to the board, guarding the important legal procedures. I wholeheartedly entrust to my colleagues - the members of the board - the space and freedom within their domains for which they account four times per year at board meetings.

Secondly, I would like to update you on the 2005 appeal. I am so pleased to announce that some 140 members have until now (mid-November) donated around £8,500. I would like, on behalf of the board, to convey a big 'thank you'. We need your contributions, not only in terms of the money to

finance our plans and projects, but also to know and feel the energy of your hearts.

May I say that by now, autumn 2005, we have definitively left the trough behind and are quietly and steadily becoming ever stronger and as a renewed organisation are amid new projects and fresh plans. We owe this to the team involved for without the energy that the team provides and also the continuing support of our members we wouldn't be able to make it.

I started this editorial with the ocean, and so I shall end by announcing that I'll embark the square-rigged-three-mast clipper 'Stad Amsterdam' (www.stadamsterdam.nl) in La Palma, Gran Canaria, on the 20th of November. This beautiful sailing vessel, with the help of the trade winds, will bring me along the equator across the Atlantic to Antigua, Caribbean. The voyage will take three weeks. I have looked forward to this moment for a long time, having shifted my summer holidays to this period of the year. Besides my function as a ship's doctor, I will join one of the shifts in a four-hour-on and eight-hour-off scheme. You, the members of the Scientific & Medical Network will be in my rucksack and I'll report about my experiences in the next issue.

With my blessings to you.



Reflections on the Membership Questionnaire

John Clarke, Kingston, England

Earlier this year we distributed questionnaires to all our members as part of our attempt to assess the current health and future prospects of the SMN. The Board felt that, like many similar organisations, we had reached a stage where, after nearly thirty years of development, we needed to take time for reflection and renewal. We received 437 completed forms, which represents more than a quarter of our membership, and we are very grateful for the time that members have taken to fill out these forms. Both the statistical material and the individual comments have proved very useful. A full summary of the results can be found on our website.

The first thing we noted, much to our pleasure, was the high level of satisfaction expressed, though our joy was tempered by the fact that the survey did not reveal to us the attitude of a majority of our members. Nevertheless we take heart in the fact that we seem to be doing many things right in your judgement. There was strong support for our policy of maintaining openness to a variety of viewpoints, and of addressing a broad range of topics in our conferences, lectures and publications. Thus, the areas of science, spirituality, health, the paranormal, and philosophical interests all rated highly.

Inevitably we have not been able to please all of the people all of the time. Some members looked back to the earlier period in the Network's history and regretted that we had moved away from the founders' vision. For some people this meant a shift away from a scientific focus to something broader and less rigorous, for others a loss of earlier focus on spiritual matters. The pleas to "keep going as you always have done" were balanced by a hope that we would "grow and develop from the fundamental functions that served at its inception", and perhaps find our way towards a more sharply focused and distinctive mission. "I have always thought that the SMN needs a more focused mission than that of being rigorously open-minded".

On the whole there was support for our aim of maintaining scientific rigour, though this was balanced by requests for greater emphasis on esoteric and spiritual matters. "I would

like to see more of a fusion of the rational and the non-rational approaches. We need to find a better balance". Perhaps these two types of demand are not necessarily in conflict with each other. Some even felt that "The SMN has turned into an almost anti-scientific attitude", and that its potential value "is largely vitiated by its lack of critical rigour and its fey and crackpot element", which if true would certainly give us cause for self-criticism.

Questions on membership produced some interesting results. Stimulus for joining seems to have come predominantly from personal contact and referral rather than from advertising. And reasons for joining centred mainly on the desire to learn, to engage with new ideas, and to meet like-minded people. There seems to have been a strong reaction against the Full/Associate membership distinction – "Drop the Full/Associate membership split – very elitist to those of us without degrees" - but an ambiguity in the wording of the questionnaire makes it difficult to be certain about this result. At any rate the consequence of this part of the survey means that the Board is looking very closely at issues of membership.

Several aspects of our programme, especially where this involves participation of members, were covered by the questionnaire. Special Interest Groups and Local Groups received a luke-warm response on the whole, though judging from comments this may be largely due to problems of geography and mobility. We will of course give strong encouragement and support to Local Groups, though inevitably their viability depends on the enthusiasm of individual members. Special Interest Groups are more of a problem, especially in view of the fact that they are largely based in London, and we are giving urgent attention to ways in which commitment to this important aspect of our programme can be revived.

The Network Review was much appreciated – "The Review is one of the most valuable forums for a meaningful exchange of ideas and impressions" - and again the responses indicated a desire for a range of types of article from the academic to the personal. Nevertheless there were some indications of

disagreement about content – “most of the articles are too academically written” , “Do not go populist” – and that the format and content needed refreshing – “I would appreciate a more attractive design”. We are therefore looking at ways of widening the range of features to include regular interviews with distinguished thinkers and practitioners, at encouraging more correspondence from members, and of improving the format. Members need to be reminded, however, that the Review runs on a very tight budget and that hopes for a ‘glossier’ publication must remain on hold for the time being. But there was certainly no evidence for a desire that the Review should in any way go ‘down-market’. “Please remain rigorous and open-minded”.

Responses to questions about the Website were less positive, indicating that we were not yet exploiting the full potential of this new medium. As a consequence of this we have appointed a member of the Board to oversee improvements in format and layout, to ensure that the information on the Website is fully up-to-date, and to initiate an interactive facility in which members can participate in on-line discussions of relevant issues.

There were also some useful suggestions about new initiatives. In this context research and educational programmes were mentioned, and in both these areas we are working on plans for future activities. To this end we have appointed a new working group on research and education which is looking, amongst other things, at launching an educational initiative in the area of science and spirituality which will attract people from the younger age group, and at

developing a course in medical anthropology which will seek to develop links with university courses. There were also suggestions that we should pay more attention in our activities to art and literature.

Our programme of conferences was on the whole well received – “Great events!” - though there was some demand for more interactive elements, both on small groups and in question-and-answer sessions – “We would like a more interactive format” - and we are already taking steps to integrate this kind of suggestion into our programmes. We will also take on board the suggestion that conferences should involve more debate between opposing views rather than “cosy agreement”.

There were some calls for us to reconsider our title, which to some appeared too narrow to express the range and depth of the SMN’s interests. The Board fully appreciates the cogency of this point, but after lengthy discussion on the subject, in which the full financial and public-image implications of such a move have come to be appreciated, we feel that this is not a priority at the present time. No doubt, though, we will revisit this question before long.

Many thanks, then, to all who participated in this survey. As you can see, your responses have helped to stimulate new thinking and initiatives by the Board and we hope that this exercise will mark a new dynamism in the SMN’s career. “Long may the Network continue. Thanks to all”.

John Clarke is a Vice-Chair of the Network

network news

Co-options to Board

Jacqueline Nielsen and **Olly Robinson** have been co-opted to the Board, as described by Bart van der Lugt above. Jacqui writes:

“I am an enthusiastic member of SMN because I have found that its academic range and its ethos exactly correspond to my personal intellectual interests and approach.

I have found within it a milieu which combines intellectual rigour with openmindedness and good fellowship, almost a spiritual home.”

Jacqui was born in England and brought up in Ireland. Educated at Trinity College Dublin and the Kings Inns, she spent two decades working in business before realising an earlier ambition in being called to the Irish bar in 1987. She is currently a practising barrister based in the Law Library in Dublin. She runs the SMN Irish Group and since joining the Board has taken on the responsibility for co-ordinating the national and local groups in the British Isles and in the wider world –with the exception of the continent of Europe.

Olly writes:

‘I am currently doing a PhD in psychology at Birkbeck College in London and lecture there on various undergraduate courses. While psychology is my career path, my interests are diverse and span many of the areas that the SMN cover, including the metaphysics and methodology of science, theory and practice of meditation, mystical and esoteric spirituality, the philosophy of religion, holistic/naturopathic medicine and hypnosis. When I don’t have my head in books or in the clouds, I play the guitar and am in a folk band that plays regular gigs around London. I love to go climbing, cycling and walking. In both of these pastimes, music and the

outdoors, I find great spiritual sustenance and inspiration. I have been a member of the SMN for four years and as a director I am in charge of younger membership and the website. I am very much looking forward to the challenge.’

Network Programme

You will find enclosed details of the Network programme for the first half of 2006, with other dates noted inside the front cover. The dates and venue for the Mystics and Scientists had to be changed due to logistical reasons on the Bangor Campus. We are pleased to be returning to King Alfred’s College, (now University College), Winchester, where the John Stripe theatre has now been completely refurbished.

Network Web Site

The Network web site has been redesigned by Olly Robinson, and we encourage you to visit it and take part in the forums as well as updating your entry in the online Members’ Directory. See www.scimednet.org

Network Tapes and CDs

Tapes at £7.25 (or CDs at £8.50) from recent Network events are available from Philip Royall, who holds an extensive list of tapes from previous Network conferences. These include Mystics and Scientists conference – Healing the Split, the Climate Change conference, Beyond the Brain and the latest two evening lectures by Sir Jonathon Porritt and Dr. Leonard Shlain. Contact: email: confcass@lineone.net or phone 0845 456 9547. Details are also posted on the Network website.

Evidence Based Spirituality: an invitation to members

Natalie Tobert, London

Dr. Natalie Tobert, Board Member responsible for research and education introduces a new feature and invites members to submit articles describing their own innovative research projects.



Einstein and the Dalai Lama both considered that science and spirituality complemented each other (Sorkhabi 2005; 16). Surely we at the Scientific and Medical Network could provide good examples of practical research illustrating this? Attending certain meetings in the past, I occasionally wondered whether some of us had got a needle stuck in a groove of an old record, paying lip service to an isolated concept of 'science' that no longer existed in many disciplines, and especially not within medicine and health care. I used to feel as if the term 'scientific approach' had become shorthand for research that was: quantitative, reductionist, generalisable, deductive, and based on a materialist concept of reality. This 'shorthand' assumption seemed to deny research methods, which had developed during the last few decades within medicine and the social sciences including health care, psychology, and anthropology. Education in these disciplines offered training in updated scientific methods, which included reflective and participatory practices (Salmon 2000, Wellings & McCormick 2004), and explored person-centred narratives, experiences beyond the five senses, and explanations of reality 'beyond material physicality' (Reason 1994).

John Heron (1998) developed research methods for spiritual experience that required participation, collaboration, and community involvement. Participatory action research methods have been used within the social sciences to increase the evidence base and are useful both for obtaining data on subtle experiential phenomena or for community health evaluation programmes. There are of course, the old assumptions about qualitative research that have long been expressed (Greenhalgh 1998). Within the hierarchies of evidence set out by reductionist researchers, qualitative evidence has been traditionally placed at the bottom of the pyramid, but this merely serves as an indicator of the misunderstanding created by those coming from a deductive knowledge framework. Salmon, a clinical psychologist working mainly within hospital settings described the need for multiple sources of evidence (2000; 8). The modern methods engage in research with people rather than on people, and break down the barriers between lay members and experts.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods collect data for different purposes. One is essential to measure and analyse the material constituents, to determine what actually happens – the other is essential for finding out human meanings and feelings. Each serves a different function, and each is necessary. Both are needed to obtain a complete picture of human phenomena and society. While the positivist perspective of quantitative research is valid, topics like the study of health and illness, or consciousness and spiritual experience, demands a different type of data collection and analysis. The practice of medicine is multi-disciplinary, based on a fusion of qualitative and quantitative research data. And these days the experience of the user, or the participant, or the context of application, is of considerable importance, especially in evaluating health care practices.

Even those medical practitioners who select their treatments on evidence-based data also incorporate the narratives of their patients and other health care practitioners. The decision about the most appropriate treatment is usually based on the

interpretation of accumulated case studies, otherwise a personal dissonance may occur between the actual patients' symptoms and the research data from evidence based clinical trials (Greenhalgh 1999). In practice, within medicine, few patients actually have isolated, uncomplicated symptoms that can be managed according to the guidelines suggested by standardised application of data from randomised, controlled trials. Medical practice is an art, based on the interpretation of 'narrative knowledge', as well as a clinical science. [The University of Stafford has established a new Centre for Health and Spirituality, in response to their perception of the sea-change in attitudes.]

A person's experience is raw data. Their personal narrative is data. Their beliefs are data. How we (the observer / researcher) interpret that data often depends on our own framework of knowledge. In the past, it seems that as academics we have often interpreted data within the boundaries of our own understandings of reality, within our own ontological schema. Thus for example, the underlying assumption of early anthropologists, when conducting research with other cultures was occasionally "my understandings are based on knowledge, yours are based on belief". The term 'belief' was used implicitly for 'mistaken understandings', whereas 'knowledge' was assumed to mean 'correct explanations' (Good 1994; 17).

We at the SMN would like to explore scientific methodologies that are appropriate for more spiritual topics, with an explicit awareness of researcher ontological framework. What data collection tools should we be using, what methodologies should we be developing to explore validity, if we are to honour peoples' experiences, their narratives, and their interpretations? [There was an example at the Beyond the Brain conference in August this year. Gary Schwartz used triple blind experiments for his research into mediumship and survival of consciousness after death. He provided a clear example of how 'ordinary' research methods have been used to address a spiritual topic. The data from progressive science like this is there for those willing to see it. Schwartz used established scientific methods to explore an 'original' topic.

Rupert Sheldrake's own web site sets out accessible opportunities for rigorous research into subtle effects (<http://www.sheldrake.org/experiments>). Sheldrake suggests in a recent issue of 'Resurgence', that the kind of research Charles Darwin did was stunningly original. He wrote "research is determined by funding committees, not by human imagination" (2005; 32) and is constrained by anonymous peer reviewers. He proposed that just one per cent of the science budget should be spent on research, which is of interest to lay people, and this should be allocated to topics that are not already covered by the current budget. This would have an effect on innovation, would enable scientists to think more freely, and would be open to public scrutiny. Is there anything we can do to assist this?

Evidence Based Spirituality: an invitation to members

Perhaps we at the Network might extend our distinctive role,

and go further than our philosophical discussions, so that we initiate a greater focus on practical research. If we systematically presented examples of pragmatic research, this would not only provide a useful grounding of material, an evidence base, which could be used in the media to address the sceptics, but it would also support our younger members. It would hopefully give them more confidence to carry out research, with an appropriate research design, and adapt current scientific methods so that their research was rigorous, and also answered the kinds of questions we at the SMN are interested in. There is no reason why we could not present examples of actual research that illustrated our scientific and spiritual outlook on the nature of human existence. In the last issue of the Review, Lawton gave one-off examples of evidence for survival: past life recall, reincarnation, and the inter-life (2005; 17-19). Topics for a new section of the Network Review for example, might include these, or other aspects of memory beyond the brain, or complementary and alternative therapies, consciousness studies, spiritual or mystical experiences. We might explore whether the brain generates consciousness, or whether it is a receiver/ transmitter, or whether it is a protective organ, the purpose of which is to filter out the vast amount of information 'out there' (pers comm, van Mansvelt). This material we would present would go some way to adding to the scientific evidence base, so that in the long term, it would be untenable to deny the data.

With these thoughts in mind, The SMN Board would like to pilot a new section of the Network Review on evidence based spirituality, which would last throughout the issues for 2006, longer if interest and input from our members sustains it. We would like to consider your spiritual research themes, and emphasise your actual evidence-based research practices, incorporating the methods you use to acquire data. This section would demonstrate the practical scientific research methods used by you, our members in the study of your specialisms.

Our aim is to present examples of research, which illustrate scientific rigour, regarding both the internal validity of the research method, and the external validity and appropriateness to a spiritual research topic. That is, whatever paradigm the topic is situated with (whether materialist, psychosomatic, or consciousness and subtle energy) the research methods themselves can be developed so that they are appropriate to the topic. Critical inquiry and scientific rigour need not be compromised. Thus we would like to put forward the proposition, that research methods themselves are fairly neutral: it is the research question and the research design that tend to be value laden. [The 'experimenter-effect' seems to be generated by a 'value-laden' researcher.]

Scientific research methods have been adapted and used to explore subtle aspects of reality, consciousness, telepathy, medium-ship, non-local mind, health and religion, or health and prayer. The SMN's pragmatic focus on appropriate research methods would go some way to addressing the twin prejudices of for example, mainstream bio-medical and Complementary therapy practitioners, a few of whom might claim that there is no scientific evidence base for the work of the other, whilst a few of the others claim that science cannot be used provide an evidence base for its therapies. Each is basing their assumptions on their prejudices rather than on actual scientific research. Using our members' projects, we would like to illustrate that it is feasible to provide evidence for non-physical concepts beyond the materialist, by conducting research that uses appropriate indicators and appropriate methods. Above all we would like to continue to open up the debate and encourage discussion among members.

We are doing this to encourage member participation, and to

give examples of good practice with innovative projects. "Doing something different" can be a minefield for our younger members, and we could eventually offer a selection of specific examples of scientific research methods used for innovative topics, with clarity and critical awareness. We feel this initiative would support university students or those beginning their research careers, and offer future researchers confidence to adapt scientific research methods for their own cutting edge material.

Therefore we would like to open the discussion here, to invite our members to participate, to collaborate and to contribute to this section, with actual examples of their own practical research on a particular question, and the research methods, and the research design, they use to address the question. Let us take some breathing space from discussing the philosophy of existence or the nature of reality, and get practical, with real examples of real systematic research. Let us provide examples of research methods to increase the evidence base, which might include any of the following areas:

- Complementary and Alternative Therapies, Holistic Practices
- Consciousness studies. Subtle energies
- Survival studies, Reincarnation, NDE, OBE
- 'Paranormal' studies

Please submit your work to Natalie in the first instance at the email address below. It will be reviewed by the editorial board, and be incorporated in the review at the discretion of the editor. We intend to run this feature for a few issues throughout 2006, to test the strength of interest in it. Perhaps we might disseminate your input and present it on our web based site – if material offered was too great for the Network to publish quickly.

We start with an article opposite, an interview with Professor Peter Stewart, who is using scientific research methods to explore Remote Viewing.

We propose a structure for items submitted, along the lines of:

- Submission should be around 1000 words
- An outline of your Research question
- Research design and methods used to conduct research
- This might be in the form of experiments, or case studies, or trials, or whatever is appropriate to your question.
- Internal and external validity
- Your preliminary results in which to embed your points
- A critique and evaluation of your methods

If you work as a healer, a spirit release practitioner, or a past life regression therapist, do you systematically collect base-line clinical and follow-up data with each of your clients, as part of your ordinary case study notes? We would like to present your research design for empirical data collection and case studies.

Have you invented a new machine, or artefact, or a new substance that works at a subtle level? If you have, we would be interested in publishing examples of your research methods into its effectiveness.

References

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An Interview with Professor Peter Stewart on his research into Remote Viewing



As part of the SMN initiative into practical research methods and their use for spiritual and consciousness topics, I interviewed Peter Stewart in September this year, on his research into remote perception. During his working life, Peter was awarded the title of top British Engineer, winning the MacRobert Award for Rolls-Royce in 1984, which he received at Buckingham Palace. He was also a Fellow of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, the Institute of Mechanical Engineers and the Institute of Physics. He was elected into the Fellowship of the Royal Academy of Engineering and holds Master of Science and Doctor of Science Degrees. He is presently Chairman of the Dowsing Research Group. In the early 1990s he formed the first SMN Consciousness Research Group at Bristol.

He explained that he had chosen the research topic of 'remote viewing' as a result of his research work on intuition, consciousness and 'remote dowsing', and also after its publicity regarding CIA and US military use. In 1999 he set up his informal, non-profit, 'Centre for the Study of Extended Human Consciousness'. Today he runs a series of Level 1, Level 2 and Spirituality Seminars and Workshops and collects data from the experiences of his students. His system is simple and he says it requires only 10 minutes of training to use. I asked him to explain the importance of remote viewing. I wanted to know what the point was, in undertaking research into it.

I am interested in remote viewing for the purpose of serving humanity. I know some people use it for forensic purposes, for example to track terrorists, or to find murdered bodies. For example, I took a group of 8 people back in time to witness events leading to the murder of Jill Dando and obtained good descriptions of the assassin (who was not the man convicted). Emotionally the group found it hard and now we don't continue this work.

I want to be able to use it for scientific research. The current method of obtaining information is mostly by 'indirect cognition', that is by reading other people's material or attending lectures. Currently I feel we are using pedestrian methods to undertake research and learning. 'Direct cognition' is possible by extending consciousness, asking a precise question, and inviting an answer. I want to refine the techniques for doing this, and produce evidence: it will help the advancement of science, and we will be able to find out so much more, far more quickly."

While looking at ancient Egyptian paintings, Peter had noticed a 'kind of snake' curling up from the forehead of priests and pharaohs. It was known as the urkek. He thought

it was like the organ of perception described by the theosophists, and may have been used to extend consciousness in order to access information from the cosmic matrix. He became interested in conducting research into this some three years after retiring from his professional positions. He had studied the research methods of parapsychology and decided they were inappropriate.

"We know the negative and hostile attitude of other scientists monitoring the experiment is conducive to failure. An informal setting is more conducive to improved results, and is more appropriate to this topic. This is 'first person' research rather than 'third person' research: I can do the work myself. I believe information is 'objective' and may be accessed through an extension of consciousness. 'Direct cognition' or 'controlled intuition' is possible and can produce quantitative data from the information matrix, as long as questions are precisely framed. I teach this procedure in my Level One remote viewing courses."

After carrying out a literature search Peter developed protocols and procedures, and then used these standardised methods with his students. He refined the methods over a number of seminars and workshops with participants of remote viewing, and had around a 60% success rate. He also used the approach of experimental science known as 'proof and validation by independent replication'. This was used both to obtain patents, and in an attempt to replicate the cold fusion experiments. That meant a procedure was defined and given to another individual, who using the required equipment and the necessary tacit knowledge, tried to reproduce the original results. If successful, this was then proof of the validity of the technique.

"I wanted to develop a series of watertight protocols and procedures for the research methods. These would be given to someone else to test. If they were successful, and were able to do the same research, using the same protocols, with the same results, this meant the research was reproducible and replicable. My techniques have been tried out for example, by SMN Member Michael Brown in very successful transatlantic telepathy tests between Harrogate and New York, and later passed on to conference colleagues in New York who used them successfully. I believe anyone can be trained in this skill.

Peter's workshops are usually run with between 10 and 20 people. He asks them to work with someone who is a total stranger. He is aware this system can be open to fraud, so he takes steps to reduce errors: there is a block on all communication. He leads participants through a visualisation

procedure, and invites them to look at the accommodation of the other person. He asks them to look around and see what they can observe, to notice the colour of walls and flooring, location of doors, windows, and furniture. He asks them to call out for the occupant to come and show them around, and this often happens. He also asks them to interact with the reality, which they do.

When they have finished, he invites them to leave and close the door. Once the visualisation procedure ends, he asks them to return to the workshop room, and come fully into their bodies. He insists there must be no communication between either partner, so no information passes between them. Using a predetermined questionnaire they each write down details of what they have seen and experienced. When they have filled it in, still without speaking, they pass the questionnaire to the other person, who reviews it for accuracy and marks it on a scale of 1-100%. They still don't speak. They sign the questionnaire, date it, and make comments on accuracy.

I attempt to ensure scientific rigour is maintained by using procedures that preclude collusion, so that there is no way information can be corrupted. Once the information is written down, it cannot be amended or changed. During the exercise each participant simultaneously remote views the dwelling of the other. The exercise is completed in silence, and lasts about 20 minutes. Each viewer marks their partner's questionnaire. In this way there can be no possible collusion. Once this is completed they are free to speak and discuss details. When I am running a group I do not allow anybody to speak, until everything has been written down."

He has done this exercise around 50 times with different groups. He finds the results are predictable, but he wants to explore the extent of what it is possible to do. I wondered whether he had ever published his results. In fact one publisher has approached him, but he hasn't yet done a book. He feels it is important to publish, because the data is so solid, that open-minded sceptics and unbelievers should not be able to deny it.

"I am being very cautious about presenting the data. Recently I have done exercises where participants report on an incident in the historical past. I set time and space coordinates. For example 30 people at the BSD Congress in 2004 looked remotely at the surface of Mars to locate and find out the condition of Beagle 2, and its reason for failure. There was convergence in the results. So much new information has come in this last year, that I haven't managed to produce the book yet. For example, I have recently been successful on two occasions, in sending groups of viewers back in time: to the years 1640 and 1804. In each case participants experienced and interacted with the reality as if they were actually present, and not just viewing. They held meaningful conversations with people at the two locations, in those years, and clarified the research questions. This was useful to those conducting documentary research.

My future research programme is to continue and build on the use of the successful results in extending consciousness. I intend to extend to incorporate the work of Leadbeater, Hodson, Cowan, McClintock, and Giuliana Conforto (another SMN member). I would focus on the control of the sensing tip (the Egyptian urkek from the pituitary centre) and its ability to magnify microscopic and nuclear information and see electrons."

Leadbeater discovered that the urkek could be used to focus consciousness to nuclear levels. That meant he could use extended consciousness to look into the atomic structure of matter before physicists were able to do so. Philips, a theoretical physicist later confirmed his results. From around

1899 until they died in 1933 and 1934, Leadbeater and Besant spent a period, looking at the chemical structure of elements, the number of atoms, and how atoms were constructed. They discovered the existence of isotopes, before science discovered them, and there is evidence that the scientist Soddy in Cambridge, built on their knowledge (in fact Soddy was given a Nobel Prize for the discovery). Cowen has achieved even higher magnification down to string level. Hodson was able to do exactly the same: he sent his consciousness down to greater levels of magnification and was able to look at electrons.

I'll give you another example. Barbara McClintock was employed by Stanford University to look into the genetic structure of neurospora or maize. She found it difficult so left her work, and sat under a eucalyptus tree and re orientated. When she returned and looked down the microscope, with her extended consciousness she could see the structure of maize, and gained information from the archetypal information field. Within the next fortnight she wrote a scientific paper about this, which advanced the science of genetics more in that time than it had in the previous 25 years. She was made president of the Genetic Society of America and won the Nobel Prize for her work.

Remote viewing techniques can also be used to extend consciousness in order to access quantitative data for scientific purposes. Peter gave me an example of one student (PWH). The workshop had been his first experience of remote viewing. He was a glass craftsman, a specialist in stained glass, who had visited Chartres Cathedral, and was totally amazed at the hue of red glass in the windows. This man had used the techniques Peter had offered, in order to get quantitative answers to his questions. He received scientific and technical information from the exercises, which he would later test pragmatically.

PWH decided to extend his consciousness to the information matrix, to find out how the glass had been made. He had already carried out extensive practical research into how early mediaeval glass-makers had made blue glass in Europe. He wrote in a letter to me: 'I noticed there was a consistent brilliance to the red glass at Chartres, which I had not seen before. Intuitively I felt there was some resonance between the blue and the red, I felt that cobalt was also involved in making the red. I was not aware of any documentary evidence of the use of cobalt in this way. However, I knew that the use of cobalt would give glass a very even hue.'

'In later centuries scientific research indicated that red could be made from copper, gold, antimony as a sulphide, and a sulphide of cadmium. However, the last three were not available to mediaeval glass-makers. He knew that copper was the only material that could have been used for the Chartres red. Nineteenth century technical manuals and recipe books often refer to multiple melting and quenching techniques. Craftsmen had to bring the glass to exactly the right temperature of oxidisation, to precipitate the copper as a metallic colloid. Controlling the glass melt was not easy.'

With this in mind PWH used my techniques. He asked the question: 'is cobalt involved in the Chartres red'? He got the answer 'yes'. He then asked what the ratio was between copper and cobalt. The answer he got was that it was between 100 and 150 parts copper by weight to one part of cobalt. A third question asked about the concentration of copper in the glass. The answer was that it was about 0.1 per cent. The fourth question asked whether tin had been used as a reducing agent, and the answer received was 'yes'. Reflecting on this information, a plausible scenario occurred

to him. If cobalt was used in the crucible for melting the blue glass, which he was sure it was, then it may be the case that some very observant glass maker, noted that they got really good reds, if they melted red glass in a crucible that had just been used for melting blue. This would give a very low concentration of cobalt. This seems a more likely process than actually weighing out and testing cobalt. PWH intends to undertake practical tests to verify this information shortly. Peter is of the opinion that techniques of remote perception could answer questions, which have become impenetrable to

researchers in science and medicine. He has given examples of scientists who have already used them, and suggests that others like Newton, Einstein, Pauli and Dirac also used them, but didn't admit to it through fear of loss of reputation and career. However, they later proved any intuitive break-through by mundane means. Perhaps the intellectual climate has shifted today, and the body of evidenced based research is broader than ever? We look forward in anticipation to seeing Peter's fully published research data, to inform our understanding on the range of 'normal' human faculties.

Discovering Nature's Secrets of Success: A Potential Future for a Global Family

Elisabet Sahtouris, Ph.D., California

Elisabet Sahtouris gave an inspiring lecture at this year's Mystics and Scientists conference, one that gave the audience reasons to hope for a positive future. Here she describes her vision of a possible way forward for humanity based on her insights into evolution and her faith in the creative power of the human spirit.



The ancient Greek word for science was philosophy - *philos sophias, lover of wisdom*. This name was intended to set science on a course of searching for wisdom, for practical guidance in human affairs through understanding the natural order of the cosmos to which we belong. It was exactly this search that drew me to study science and continues to motivate me, though it was a long time before I found any other scientists who shared it, most of them having accepted the belief that science should be neutral - free of values and social intent - or that the ever new technologies spawned by science are all humanity needs to solve its problems and continue its "progress."

I became an evolution biologist, a student of life with a very long-term perspective. Evolution fascinates me because it gives meaning to humanity in an awesomely grand context and offers guidance for our future. But my even broader lifelong passion as a scientist is to make sense of everything in my entire experience of self, world and cosmos. I yearn for a new and inclusive scientific model of reality that does not separate my experience of this physical world from my spiritual experience of life, my heart's life story from that of my mind.

Ever working toward such a new worldview, I seek out other scientists, philosophers, clergy and generally broad-minded people as friends and colleagues, continually seeking new insights and angles for a model of reality that can serve *everyone*, that can be understood and loved by anyone in our whole global community - a truly meaningful and *appealing* story of reality that gives people some helpful guidance in living fulfilling lives both individually and together in the context of our beautiful and sacred Earth—the kind of story the ancient Greeks sought, but one that includes everything learned since their time.

Everything in our human experience takes place within our consciousness and is shared as social reality through stories. In our scientific story the Earth evolves as its creatures evolve, and we humans are among them. We ourselves evolve, and so do all our human endeavours from governance to the arts, from education to law, from science to religion. Most of my life has been lived in what has become the dominant human culture of Earth, at first a Christian European culture, then an American culture with Native American roots, bringing in Africans, then Asians, Latinos, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and so on to so many languages and spiritual traditions and concepts of reality that we can no longer sort them out. Perhaps in unwitting anticipation of all this wonderful spiritual diversity, my culture has stayed with its European forefathers' decision to give science the role and responsibility of a

supreme priesthood. Historically, every culture has had its religion, with a priesthood that explained reality in terms of their religious beliefs. In today's dominant world culture, science explains reality in terms of scientists' beliefs.

Contrasting Realities

The difference between religious and scientific "realities" lies in the difference between revelation and research. In any religion the story of reality - of "How and Why Things Are" - comes through revelation to certain people who write or inspire texts and develop a following, including priests who carry the story to succeeding generations of believers. In science the story of "How and Why Things Are" is arrived at by people trained to propose and test models of Nature that become scientific reality. The models (or theories) suggest questions to be answered by experimental tests to see whether the model is valid, and to gain clues for revising it if it proves not to be.

Science is thus expected to change, while in practice that is not so easy. Religion is expected not to change, and in practice, that is not so easy, either. It seems there is pressure on both to evolve as the Earth and its people evolve.

Resistance to change among scientists is deeply rooted in holding unquestioned but fundamental assumptions - in forgetting that these assumptions did not come by cosmic revelation, but that European men of science devised them. They were men enamoured of machinery, projecting their own engineering expertise onto God by calling Him the Grand Engineer, and thus seeing all of Nature as lifeless machinery. Later, when they decided they had no need of God and made science a completely secular venture, the concept of machinery without an inventor forced them to believe natural machinery could assemble itself by accident. Their fundamental assumptions, therefore, were belief in a mechanical universe, a great cosmic clockwork assembled from the bottom up by accidental collisions of particles into atoms, atoms into molecules, and so on all the way up to galaxies and galactic clusters, to the whole universe. Just like manmade machinery that rusts and disintegrates if left to its own devices, they "proved" by the Law of Entropy that this lifeless, non-intelligent, unconscious mechanical universe was running down to its ultimate cold death of nothingness.

In this scheme of things, this scientific model, life is a peculiar accident arising from non-life, as intelligence arises from non-intelligence and consciousness emerges from non-consciousness late in evolution. Despite the past century's

enormous changes in the physics describing our universe, this fundamental story is still assumed. Even quantum theory, which dissolved all the hard bits and pieces of the universe into energy waves, is discussed and seen as *quantum mechanics*.

In the life sciences, evolution theory placed man squarely into the natural world, where the notion of “survival of the fittest” had huge social implications. It justified taking everything we could from Nature - now seen as a collection of our “natural resources” - in an aggressive and competitive struggle among humans to get what we can while we can in this meaningless, entropic universe. Thus children were chained to machines for the sake of profits, wars were fought over resources, the holocaust was designed to weed out the “unfit” and the quarterly bottom line is our newest competitive tyranny, preventing corporate CEOs from being accountable to planet and people in their drive to maximise financial profit.

Now, at the dawn of a new century and a new millennium, we find ourselves stuck in a scientific worldview that leads us into ever more destructive modes of existence without any guidance toward wisdom. Our behaviour, guided by this worldview, actually threatens our own extinction as a species! Global warming and other disruptions of Earth’s weather systems and climate, mass starvation and disease epidemics, new threats of nuclear, religious, oil and water wars, environmental toxins and waste buildup, genetic engineering disasters, soil degradation and erosion, water pollution, increased discrepancies between extremes of poverty and wealth, etc. vie for status in our arsenal of species suicide weapons. Yet, we know in our hearts and minds and in our very bones that crisis looms so large now that we can no longer ignore it, that things *must* change quickly before it is too late.

As overwhelming as the crises appear to be, I believe their solutions are related and perhaps far simpler than it seems. While “waking up” is usually framed in a spiritual context, I would like to propose a scientific context for it. If the science in which I was trained, the science that gives all of us our basic understanding of the world we live in, has a great deal of responsibility for the trouble we are in, then it also has a huge and golden opportunity to unravel and help solve the problem. Therefore, I will envision a scenario in which science leads the way out of our global problems and helps unite us into the flourishing global community I believe is on Earth’s evolutionary agenda for humanity:

The Second Socratic Symposium

Imagine that a global retreat of leading and leading-edge scientists is held for one “sabbatical” year on a Greek Island and named The Second Socratic Symposium in the recognition that our present time is one of extraordinary ferment and change, just as was the time of the first such symposium. The outcome of this symposium is a manifesto that officially changes the fundamental assumptions of the scientific worldview and its entire model of reality. This manifesto is put into popular language and broadcast throughout the world’s media.

The world learns that scientists now recognise that all human experience occurs within consciousness and that we cannot therefore perceive any “objective” reality outside consciousness. Therefore, the model of a lifeless, mindless mechanical universe outside human experience had to be rejected as a false construct. The new model acknowledges that the only appropriate definition of reality is the sum total of direct human experience, perceived both as a world of “outer experience” including, but far from limited to, scientific experiment and as a world of “inner experience,” perceived as thoughts, feelings, dreams, revelation or intuition. Taking inner experience as seriously as outer, science seeks information to

inspire experiment from current religions and past cultures such as Vedic, Taoist, Kototama and indigenous traditions that have long experience in studying perceived inner worlds, thus building important bridges with spiritual traditions.

From this new perspective, science accepts consciousness as a fundamental assumption in its model of a reality in which everything perceivable self-organises and creates itself. Because self-creation (*autopoiesis*) is the definition of life, the new scientific model is of a living, intelligent universe from a human perspective.

Physicists develop models of a self-creating universe in terms of living geometry. In a leading model, every point singularity in our universe is conceived as a spinning black/white hole of infinitely outward radiation perfectly balanced by gravitational contraction rotating infinitely inward, thus balancing entropy with centropy (or syntropy) and solving the outstanding unification problem in physics. All singularities, whether at the heart of a particle, atom, cell, organism, planet, galaxy or the entire universe are essentially and fractally alike and their interacting wave fronts can be seen as creating each other as well as the field of zero-point energy from which they arise.

From a biological perspective, the new physics model shows a universal metabolism of anabolic buildup and catabolic breakdown from the fundamental vortex of a proto-galactic cloud in the macrocosm to the tiniest whirling particle in the microcosm, demonstrating that the entire universe at all its fractal levels is alive by the biological definition of life as autopoiesis, literally self-creation. Evolutionists recognise the Earth as a giant self-organising living cell that continually recycles itself through tectonic plate activity and weather patterns. Earth gains ever greater complexity by evolving tiny cells on its surface through the intelligent alliance of DNA and proteins. These cells evolve enormous variety and complexity by exchanging their genomes as DNA becomes the planetary language of life, permitting blueprints to be encoded and shared among all Earth’s creatures from the tiniest single-celled bacteria to the largest mammoths and redwoods.

With physics and biology reconciled in a common model, the other fields of science quickly integrate themselves, with alternative medicine becoming mainstreamed and psychology gaining a natural context of cosmic consciousness in which to see each individual consciousness as a unique perspective on knowing the whole through both inner and outer experience. Many conferences are organised to further integrate religious and scientific worldviews, while respecting their diversity and their individual evolution. A whole new branch of scientific investigation into the ongoing communion and conscious co-creation among all species and life forms develops, with special attention on indigenous knowledge in this field.

Perhaps most importantly, evolution biology goes beyond the Darwinian model of species evolution through competitive struggle in scarcity, recognising that this is merely an immature level of development in which species compete aggressively to establish themselves before they learn to form cooperative alliances in which they feed and nurture each other to build complex stable ecosystems such as rainforests and prairies. The new model shows that Earth’s greatest crises - simultaneous extinctions of many life forms - brought about her biggest waves of creativity, each extinction followed by a sudden explosion of new life forms. Not until things were thoroughly shaken up did these novel patterns arise, as the fossil record reveals.

All the symposium results leading to the new models had in fact already come out of research in physics, chemistry, biology, medicine and psychology over the past century, but the old model of a non-living universe had blinded most scientists to understanding their implications in a holistic context.

Individual scientists had predicted the new model well before the symposium and were able to come together and catalyse this sea change for the whole edifice of science.

A Transformative Wave

As soon as the new scientific model was publicised around the world, there was an enormous outburst of hope and joy. Humans had always known from experience that old rigidified structures do not change without shaking their very foundations. A butterfly cannot happen without the meltdown of a caterpillar and many cultural stories, such as the phoenix rising from the ashes, had recognised this fundamental pattern. Whole cultures had collapsed just before new ones arose; countries destroyed in wars emerged in shiny new forms; philosophies and beliefs had been challenged and dissolved throughout history so new ones could take their place.

The new scientific story showed people that the same evolutionary process that had made hostile, competitive ancient bacteria evolve peaceful collaboration to produce huge new cells - the kind all multi-celled creatures including humans are made of - was the same process that was driving us to shift from competitive nations to global family. History made more sense now, with many thousands of years of competitive empire-building - from kingdoms to nation states to multinational corporations - newly understood as the juvenile to adolescent phase of humanity's evolution.

The new story of species maturation into peaceful cooperation was a powerful catalyst for billions of people who longed for a peaceful world. New projects for building global family through cooperative enterprises cropped up and flourished everywhere around the globe as the Internet wove them together. With science promoting a model of living systems embedded within one another, operating by the same principles at all size levels, it became easy to relate healthy families and communities to a healthy global economy in which every individual was supported in meeting their needs. Diversity became recognised as essential to creativity and humanity began moving into mature cooperation and mutual sustainability as quickly as possible.

Every Christian had already been taught to value service to others over wealth and status and to turn the other cheek when attacked. Muslims had been taught to do good to others and refrain from wrongdoing in daily life. The ancient Golden Rule of virtually all ancient cultures - *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you* - could suddenly be seen as the normal way of being for a mature species. The Dalai Lama had been telling us from his Buddhist perspective that multiple religions are an excellent way to meet the needs of diverse humans and that kindness is the universal spiritual practice they can all embrace. He had also had many conversations with the best scientists he could find all over the world and thus was prepared for the new scientific worldview when it was announced. Now it was clear at last that science and spirituality had been separated only for temporary historical reasons and had been brought back together by science itself!

All humans want to be loved, cherished, understood and cared for, so we know how to treat each other well, but the old scientific model had taught us that life had no meaning and was an individual struggle to take what we can get before it ends in nothingness. The new scientific model, like a gust of fresh air, had an impact as sudden and positive as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the demise of Soviet communism and the release of Nelson Mandela from prison, only vastly greater than all of them put together.

Nowhere was the wake-up call so dramatic as in the United States' government, which reconsidered its own constitution in light of the new scientific worldview and soon announced to

the world that the serious flaws in its foreign policy had become apparent in the new framework and that it recognised now how unfortunately unresponsive it had been to ecological devastation and how insensitive to the real needs of the world's people it had been. The president made clear that from now on the US would do everything in its democratic power to be a role model global family member, beginning with unilateral disarmament and the prompt conversion of all military bases to educational, health and conflict resolution centres. Many more women were urged to run for political office in recognition of the importance of their perspective and of gender balance. At the forefront domestic and foreign policy would be the real elimination of poverty everywhere. There would be full cooperation with the UN while peace corps and protective forces would replace the armed forces. The Earth Charter would be ratified and all other international treaties would be honored, while full support would be given to the World Court in the Hague.

Jubilation was instantaneous around the world and terrorists found themselves without support. The US was embraced and forgiven as a friend and big corporations almost tripped over one another in their race to become more sustainable and more accountable to people and planet. Cooperative ventures among religions mushroomed as never before. It was as though a hurricane had swept away an old world in deep trouble and freed the hearts and minds of people who eagerly embraced the new cosmic vision.

Is it possible? My faith in the conscious cosmos of which I am but the tiniest aspect brings me a resounding and joyful "Yes!" I know we are all a continuum of conscious energy like a keyboard from the slow waves of the physical through the electromagnetic spectrum all the way into the highest frequency waves of spirit, so I shall continue to play my whole keyboard with every blessed cell in my body and with my whole heart and mind until it is so. So be it!

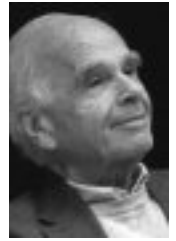
My gratitude goes out to many colleagues in science, spirituality, economics, government, the arts and all fields of human endeavor, with special thanks to those whose work I alluded to specifically in this piece. In order of "appearance" they are Nassim Haremein, Milo Wolff, James Lovelock, Lynn Margulis, HH the Dalai Lama, Dietrich Fischer and Johann Galtung.

*Dr. Elisabet Sahtouris is an internationally known evolution biologist, futurist, author, professor and business consultant. She teaches in the Bainbridge Graduate Institute's MBA program on sustainable business and is a fellow of the World Business Academy. Dr. Sahtouris has been a UN consultant on indigenous peoples, is a co-founder of the Worldwide Indigenous Science Network and has authored a scientific model of a living cosmos (see www.via-visioninaction.org under Articles). She lived extensively in Greece and the Peruvian Andes, discovering solutions to our big social and economic problems in Earth's ecosystems and indigenous sciences. Her venues have included The World Bank, EPA, Boeing, Siemens, Hewlett-Packard, Tokyo Dome Stadium, Australian National Govt, Sao Paulo's leading business schools, State of the World Forums (NY & San Francisco) and World Parliament of Religion, South Africa. Her books include *EarthDance: Living Systems in Evolution*, *A Walk Through Time: from Stardust to Us* and *Biology Revisioned* (with Willis Harman). Her websites are www.sahtouris.com (professional) and www.ratical.org/lifeweb (personal, with many writings). She will be giving a lecture for the Network in London on 9th May.*

The Rediscovery of the Akashic Field

Ervin Laszlo, Italy

For some years, systems theorist Ervin Laszlo has been working on a revisioning of science based on findings in physics, biology and consciousness research. This has led him to formulate a unifying field model in which mind and nature are closely intertwined and where ancient Indian wisdom meets modern science – we live in a highly connected and coherent universe.



Cutting-edge scientists are coming to a remarkable insight: the universe is not a world of separate things and events, of external spectators and an impersonal spectacle. Unlike the disenchanting world of classical physics, it is not even material. Matter - the kind of “stuff” that makes up particles joined in atoms joined in molecules joined in cells joined in organisms - is not a separate kind of thing, and it doesn't even have a reality of its own. In the last count matter is energy bound in quantised wave-packets and these packets can be further bound together in the vast and harmonious architecture that makes up the reality of the world we know.

The widespread idea, that all there is in the universe is matter, and that all matter was created in the Big Bang and will disappear either in black holes or in a Big Crunch, is a colossal mistake. And the belief that when we know how matter behaves we know everything - a belief shared by classical physics and Marxist ideology - is but sophistry. Such views have been definitively superseded. This universe is more amazing than classical scientists, engineers, and Marxists had held possible. And the connectedness and oneness of the universe is deeper and more thorough than even writers of science fiction had envisaged.

What explanation is there for the amazing coherence of the cosmos, our body and our mind, and the relation between our body-mind and the cosmos? If this is not an incomprehensible mystery, or the inscrutable will of a divine Mind, there must be something in the natural world that creates this coherence. Something that connects and correlates minds and bodies in the biosphere, and quanta and galaxies throughout the cosmos.

There could well be a something that connects things in the natural world even if it was not recognised until recently. The history of science shows that even fundamental aspects of nature are ignored until innovative scientists piece together the evidence for them. The greatest minds in 19th century physics failed to recognise the existence of the electromagnetic field until Michael Faraday discovered the relationship between electricity and magnetism and James Clerk Maxwell predicted the existence of electromagnetic waves. Today we know that the waves that make up the electromagnetic field exist - we live in a world saturated by them: they make it possible for us to listen to radio, watch television, navigate the internet, send electronic messages, and use cellular phones. But that there would also be something in nature that connects and creates coherence within and among human beings and between human beings and the cosmos is only now beginning to be recognised. This recognition will spread, for the evidence for connection and coherence speaks loud and clear.

- The universe as a whole is “nonlocal,” manifesting astonishingly fine-tuned correlations among all its basic laws and parameters.
- Close connections surface on the level of the quantum: every particle that has ever occupied the same quantum state as another particle remains subtly but effectively correlated with it.
- Biologists and biophysicists discover similarly puzzling correlations both within the organism, and between the

organism and its environment.

- The connections that come to light in the farther reaches of consciousness research are just as remarkable: they permit transpersonal forms of contact between our consciousness and the consciousness of others.

The current findings of connection and coherence ground an important insight. The networks of connection that make for a coherently evolving cosmos, for the entanglement of quanta, for the instant connection between organisms and environments, and between the consciousnesses of different and even far removed human beings, suggest that there is more to the universe than matter, energy, and space and time. There is also an element that connects and correlates. This element is as much a part of the universe as the electromagnetic, the gravitational, and the nuclear fields. It, too, is a field—a field that is as fundamental as electromagnetism and gravitation, and the attracting and repulsing fields of the atomic nucleus.

Akasha and the A-Field

The idea that there is something in the universe that connects and correlates is not a discovery but a re-discovery. As an intuitive insight it has been present in all the great cosmologies, most explicitly in Hindu cosmology. There it was known as *Akasha*, the most fundamental of the five elements of the cosmos—the others being *vata* (air), *agni* (fire), *ap* (water), and *prithivi* (earth). *Akasha* embraces the properties of all five elements; it is the womb from which everything has emerged and into which everything will ultimately re-descend.

The cosmic place and role of *Akasha* has been brilliantly described by the famous Yogi Swami Vivekananda.

“According to the philosophers of India, the whole universe is composed of two materials, one of which they call Akasha. It is the omnipresent, all-penetrating existence. Everything that has form, everything that is the result of combination, is evolved out of this Akasha. It is the Akasha that becomes the air, that becomes the solids; it is the Akasha that becomes the liquids, that becomes the sun, the earth, the moon, the stars, the comets; it is the Akasha that becomes the human body, the animal body, the plants, every form that we see, everything that can be sensed, everything that exists. It cannot be perceived; it is so subtle that it is beyond all ordinary perception; it can only be seen when it has become gross, has taken form. At the beginning of creation there is only this Akasha. At the end of the cycle the solid, the liquids, and the gases all melt into the Akasha again, and the next creation similarly proceeds out of this Akasha. (...)”

In the ancient vision *Akasha* is an all-encompassing medium that underlies all things; the medium that becomes all things. It is real, but so subtle that it cannot be perceived until it becomes the many things that populate the manifest world.

A hundred years ago Nikola Tesla, the maverick genius who was the father of modern communication technologies, revived this concept: he spoke of an “original medium” that fills space and compared it to *Akasha*, the light-carrying ether. In his unpublished 1907 paper “Man's greatest achievement” Tesla

wrote that this original medium, a kind of force field, becomes matter when Prana, cosmic energy, acts on it, and when the action ceases, matter vanishes and returns to Akasha. Since this medium fills all of space, everything that takes place in space can be referred to it. Four-dimensional curvature, said Tesla, put forward at the time by Einstein, is not the decisive feature of space.

However, by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century physicists adopted Einstein's mathematically elaborated four-dimensional curved space-time and, with the exception of a few maverick theoreticians, refused to consider any concept of a space-filling ether, medium, or force field. Tesla's insight fell into disrepute, and then into oblivion. Today it is reconsidered. David Bohm, Harold Puthoff, and a small but growing group of scientists are rediscovering the role of a field that would connect and create coherence, in the cosmos, in the living world, and even in the sphere of mind and consciousness.

This fundamental field is not a transcendental feature, added to or imposed on the natural universe, but part of the order of nature. It is currently located in—and sometimes identified with—the almost infinite virtual-energy field known as the quantum vacuum.

The Vacuum that Connects

The idea of a deeper layer of virtual energy that subtends the physical universe came up gradually in the course of the twentieth century. At the beginning of that century cosmic space was believed to be filled with an invisible energy field: the luminiferous ether. The ether was said to produce friction when bodies move through it, slowing their motion. But such friction failed to materialise. It was not detected in the beginning of the 20th century in the famous Michelson-Morley experiments, and as a result the ether was soon removed from the physicists' world picture. The absolute vacuum—space that is truly empty when not occupied by matter—took its place.

The vacuum, however, turned out to be far from empty space. In the "grand unified theories" (GUTs) developed in the second half of the twentieth century the concept of the vacuum transforms from empty space into the medium that carries the zero-point field, or ZPF. (The name derives from the fact that in this field energies prove to be present even when all classical forms of energy vanish: at the absolute zero of temperature.) In subsequent "super-GUTs" the roots of all of nature's fields and forces are ascribed to the complex and as yet mysterious energy sea known as the "unified vacuum."

The vacuum is both the originating ground and the ultimate destination of the particles that furnish the universe. The particles first arose from the vacuum in the Big Bang and they continue to spring forth in a process known as pair-creation. When energy beyond a very high threshold is injected into the vacuum (for example, in particle accelerators), a particle and an antiparticle spring forth. If they do not meet and annihilate each other, the positive particle establishes itself and the negative particle remains as a hole in the vacuum. Eons later, in the final collapse of black holes the degenerate remnants of matter die back into the vacuum, and the matter that had until then populated the universe becomes virtual again.

The vacuum is not only the womb and the grave of the particles that are the basic units of the observable universe, it is also a cosmic resonance board that continually interacts with it. During the 1990s, numerous vacuum-interactions have been discovered, beyond the already known Casimir force and Lamb shift.

Harold Puthoff, Bernhard Haisch, and collaborators produced a sophisticated theory according to which the inertial force, the gravitational force, and even mass are consequences of

the interaction of charged particles with the ZPF. In regard to gravitation this theory has found independent confirmation in the pathbreaking experiments of Hungarian scientists Dezső Sarkadi and László Bodonyi. They have replaced the usual Cavendish-type torsion balance for the measurement of the gravity-constant with a large and heavy physical pendulum of vertical bell shape and stiff frame. In numerous experiments the scientists showed that, while in the case of unequal masses the gravitational force satisfies the usual estimates, when the mass of the objects approaches the same value, gravitational attraction between them diminishes. The rate of reduction suggests that in the case of objects of precisely equivalent mass, gravity will no longer appear. If so, gravity is neither an intrinsic property of massive objects nor the result of space-time curvature. Rather, it is generated between unequal masses interacting with the vacuum. In the case of distinctly unequal masses the vacuum is deformed and creates attraction between the objects. When the masses are equal, the vacuum is not deformed and the gravitational force does not appear.

The very stability of neutral atoms is due to interaction with the vacuum. The electrons orbiting atomic nuclei constantly radiate energy, and they would move progressively closer to the nucleus were it not that the quantum of energy they absorb from the vacuum offsets the energy lost due to their orbital motion. Even the stability of the Earth's orbit around the Sun is due to interaction with the vacuum. As our planet pursues its orbital path it loses momentum, and given a constant loss of momentum, the gravitational field of the Sun would overcome the centrifugal force that pushes Earth around its orbit: the Earth would spiral into the Sun. This does not take place because the Earth constantly derives energy from the vacuum's zero-point field.

In the last count inertia, mass, gravity, and the very stability of atoms as well as solar systems are all due to the interaction of particles with the quantum vacuum.

In addition to the interactions that have been theoretically accounted for, the coherence of the universe's micro- and macro-structures suggests that the vacuum could also be the medium that connects and correlates all phenomena in the cosmos. This possibility has been raised by a number of investigators. For example, Harold Puthoff wrote, "... on the cosmological scale a grand hand-in-glove equilibrium exists between the ever-agitated motion of matter on the quantum level and the surrounding zero-point energy field. One consequence of this is that we are literally, physically, 'in touch' with the rest of the cosmos as we share with remote parts of the universe fluctuating zero-point fields of even cosmological dimensions." The experiences of the Apollo astronaut Edgar Mitchell while in space led him to a similar conclusion. According to Mitchell, the quantum vacuum is the holographic information field that records the historical experience of matter.

How does the vacuum connect and correlate particles, organisms, minds and galaxies—how does it record and convey "the historical experience of matter"? We can best grasp the nature of this cosmic information-processing by looking at the sea. Here, too, one thing connects with and affects all other things.

When a ship travels on the sea, waves spread in its wake. These waves affect the motion of other ships—something that has been dramatically brought home to anyone who has ever ventured to sail a small craft in the vicinity of an ocean liner. Vessels that are fully immersed in the sea affect things not only on the surface, but also above and below. A submarine, for example, creates subsurface waves that propagate in every direction. Another submarine—and every fish, whale, or object in the sea—is exposed to these waves and is affected by

them. A second submarine likewise “makes waves,” and this affects the first, as well as all other ships, fish, and objects in that part of the sea.

If many things move simultaneously in or on the sea, the surface becomes full of waves that intersect and interfere. When on a calm day we view the sea from a height—a coastal hill or an airplane—we can see the traces of ships that passed hours before on that stretch of water. We can also see how the traces intersect and create complex patterns. The modulation of the sea’s surface by the ships that pass over it carries information on the vessels that created the disturbance. This has practical applications: one can deduce the location, the speed, and even the tonnage by analysing the resulting wave-interference patterns.

As fresh waves superimpose on those already present, the sea becomes more and more modulated—it carries more and more information. On calm days it remains modulated for hours, and sometimes for days. The wave patterns that persist are the memory of the ships that plied these waters. If wind, gravity, and shorelines would not cancel the patterns, this memory would persist indefinitely. Of course, wind, gravity, and shorelines do come into play, and sooner or later the sea’s memory dissipates. (This, we should note, does not mean that the memory of the water disappears. Water has a remarkable capacity to register and conserve information, as indicated among other things by homeopathic remedies that remain effective even when not a single molecule of the original substance remains in a dilution.)

We now apply this example to the quantum vacuum. There are no forces in that cosmic medium that could cancel or even attenuate the waves that arise in it. In the theory put forward by Hungarian theoretician Laszlo Gazdag, the vacuum is both superdense and superfluid, like liquid helium cooled to 0.4 degrees on the Kelvin scale. It is then a frictionless medium, and in such a medium waves and objects move without resistance. In the absence of contrary forces, they would move forever.

In light of the latest theories, we can assume that all things that exist in space and time affect the cosmic vacuum—they “excite its ground state.” The torsion-wave theory of Russian physicists G. I. Shipov, A. E. Akimov and coworkers gives a mathematically elaborated account of how the excitation of the ground state of the vacuum by charged particles creates torsion-waves that propagate in the vacuum. The waves link matter in the universe at a group speed of the order of 10^9 c - one hundred and nine times the speed of light!

The present writer argued that vacuum wave-linking involves more than the known forms of energy: it also involves information. It is standard knowledge that particles that have a quantum property known as “spin” also have a magnetic effect: they possess a specific magnetic momentum. The magnetic impulse is registered in the vacuum in the form of minute vortices. Like vortices in water, vacuum-based vortices have a nucleus around which circle other elements - H₂O molecules in the case of water, virtual bosons (vacuum-based force particles) in the case of the vacuum. These tiny vortices carry information in the vacuum, much as magnetic impulses do on our computer disk.

The information carried by a given vortex corresponds to the magnetic momentum of the particle that created it: it is information on the state of that particle. These minute structures travel in the vacuum, and they interact with each other. When two or more of these torsion waves meet, they form an interference pattern that integrates the strands of information on the particles that created them. The interference pattern carries information on the entire ensemble of the particles.

In simple terms we can say that vortices in the vacuum

record information on the state of the particles that created them—and their interference pattern records information on the ensemble of the particles of which the vortices have interfered. In this way the vacuum records and carries information on atoms, molecules, macromolecules, cells, even on organisms and populations of organisms. There is no evident limit to the information that interfering vacuum-waves can record and conserve. In the final count, they can carry information on the state of the whole universe.

All elements of vacuum-conveyed information are present simultaneously wherever the waves penetrate: the information is in a distributed form. In this it is similar to the way information is present in a hologram, where the entire image of the recorded object is enfolded throughout the jumble of interference patterns on the film, and the entire image reappears whenever any small part of the film is illuminated. Interfering vacuum-waves are nature’s holograms. They carry information simultaneously on all the things that excited the vacuum in a given region of the universe.

The conclusion that emerges from these findings is strikingly similar to the ancient notion of Akasha. The Hindu seers were on the right tack. There is a deeper reality in the cosmos, a reality that is a field that carries information and thus connects and correlates. In recognition of this classical insight, this writer named the currently re-discovered vacuum-based holofield Akashic Field. The “A-field” deserves to be recognised as a universal field of nature, joining science’s G-field (the gravitational field), the EM-field (the electromagnetic field), and the nuclear and quantum fields.

A New View of the World

At the frontiers of the empirical sciences a new view of the world is emerging. It is the view of a reenchanting cosmos; a highly integrated and coherent system. Its crucial feature is space- and time-transcending correlation, system-wide “nonlocality.” Information is conserved and conveyed throughout the reaches of space and time. This transforms a universe that is blindly groping its way from one phase of its evolution to the next into a strongly interconnected system that builds on the information it has already generated. The cosmos proves to be more like an organism than a machine. All its parts instantly and enduringly connected by a field that connects and correlates, and creates instant and enduring coherence.

The current rediscovery of Akasha as the cosmic holofield reinforces qualitative human experience with quantitative data generated by science’s experimental method. The combination of unique personal insight and interpersonally observable and repeatable experience gives us the best assurance we can have that we are on the right tack: an Akashic field connects organisms and minds in the biosphere, and particles, stars, and galaxies throughout the universe.

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Ervin Laszlo Ph.D. is a former professor of philosophy, systems theory, and futures studies and founder and president of the international think-tank The Club of Budapest. He is the author of 74 books that have been translated into 20 languages. Ervin will be giving an evening lecture for the Network in London on 16th March about his new book ‘Science and the Re-enchantment of the World’.

G.P Associates – A Milestone in UK Integrated Healthcare

HRH The Prince of Wales

HRH The Prince of Wales has a long-standing commitment to the development of integrated healthcare and the delivery of complementary therapies within the framework of the National Health Service. As President of the Foundation for Integrated Health, he launched his new G.P Associates project in London in October and used the occasion to reflect on progress in the field.



I am delighted that so many of you are here to celebrate the inaugural event of my Foundation's G.P. Associates. So many, in fact, that I can see I shall now get the blame for taking you away from your patients and subjecting you to my sinister powers of indoctrination! But more of that later... I am told that there are, in fact, approximately one hundred and twenty General Practitioners here from across Britain... all of whom, I rather suspect (unless they're here out of curiosity to see whether I speak to G.Ps differently from plants!), share an interest in integrated medicine, and an enthusiasm for promoting its principles. Indeed, many of you have already established integrated services in your surgeries: from homeopathy in Dorset to acupuncture in Malvern, and spiritual healing in Inverness.

I very much hope therefore that today represents a milestone in the development of integrated healthcare in the U.K. and its relationship with General Practice.

On an historical note you may be interested, by the way, to learn of the medical history of St. James's Palace. It was built on the original site of a medieval hospital for women suffering from leprosy, and dedicated to St. James the Less, Bishop of Jerusalem and patron saint of lepers. And during the reigns of the Tudor and Stuart sovereigns the practice of touching for the disease "King's Evil" – now more commonly known as a form of TB – used to take place here and it was believed, and you know this just as well as I do I expect, that the touch of the King of England could cure it! And I suspect this early evidence of the "placebo effect" probably did work from time to time!

Changing Times

As I'm sure many of you are aware, for well over twenty years I have shared a passionate belief in integrated medicine with those who wanted to listen – as well as with those who didn't, which tended to be an awful lot of people! – and, fortunately, with medical experts who welcomed my views. In doing so, I seem to have attracted a remarkable degree of controversy for something as apparently harmless as advocating a whole-person, holistic approach to healthcare. Today these sentiments sound relatively tame, but over twenty years ago they were thought by some (although certainly not intended by me) to be an "attack on modern medicine" – and, by implication I was therefore "anti-science". But it was worth persevering: because I have always believed that an integrated approach to healthcare will lead to the betterment of the patient's welfare and the relief of unnecessary suffering – not because of some self-indulgent "pet project," or because of some half-baked obsession with unsubstantiated quackery.

In 1997 my Foundation for Integrated Health was established, and I believe that it has been instrumental in developing the concept of integrated healthcare. It speaks with an independent voice, free from political, professional and other vested interests. I am extremely proud of its successes, not least as, to my astonishment, it recently secured funding of £900,000 from the Department of Health to continue its work in supporting the regulation of complementary therapies. And I am enormously grateful to the Department for their help.

Times and attitudes change, thankfully, and today integrated health is moving steadily towards the centre stage. Indeed, I have just come from reopening the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital in Bloomsbury, which has gone through a £20 million refurbishment and has now become one of the first Foundation Trusts. Interestingly, the support they have had from the public has been overwhelmingly more than there has been for any other foundation trust and it really indicates the degree of public interest out there and the degree to which the public actually want this kind of choice.

As I said when rather bravely addressing the B.M.A.'s one hundred and fiftieth Anniversary Dinner in 1982 – "today's unorthodoxy has an uncomfortable habit of becoming tomorrow's orthodoxy." According to research, a phenomenal sixteen million people in the UK now use complementary treatments and over 50 per cent of G.Ps are making complementary healthcare available to patients in some form or other. Earlier this year, the Royal Society of Medicine held a conference to celebrate its bi-centenary, entitled "Integrated Health: Coming of Age". And, of course, rarely a day passes without a report in the media about complementary healthcare and its pros and cons. Usually, it would seem, I am portrayed as one of the "cons" – and if certain organs of journalistic rectitude are to be believed, you are all the subject of a highly sophisticated brainwashing operation!

Whole Person Healthcare

So it seemed to me, therefore, that it might be useful to commission a report looking at the main available evidence in order to encourage a better informed debate about the effectiveness of different therapies and treatments. Last week's report compiled by the economist, Christopher Smallwood, which I think you have all heard about already, was the result. The report found that there was good evidence to show that complementary treatments could help to fill "effectiveness gaps" in some of the orthodox treatments offered by the NHS – particularly in relation to many chronic conditions such as lower back pain, osteo-arthritis of the knee, stress, anxiety and depression, and post-operative nausea and pain. The report also suggested that many of these conditions are more prevalent in deprived areas. I was talking to patients earlier this afternoon at the homeopathic hospital, and one lady said homeopathy had totally transformed her irritable bowel syndrome in a matter of 12 hours. This evidence, which is so important in building confidence amongst patients and professionals, I think takes an important step towards developing a more effective degree of integration – that is, combining the best of complementary and conventional approaches to healthcare in the UK.

Obviously, the powers of orthodox medicine cannot be underestimated. In the eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson was incredibly prescient when he called it "the greatest benefit to mankind". That we have made extraordinary advances in medicine, science and technology is beyond doubt. That conventional medicine has saved the lives of countless thousands of people is also beyond question. In the case of many diseases, major accidents or serious infections,

conventional medicine is essential; and we are fortunate in our day and age to have the prospect of successfully treating conditions previously considered incurable, such as meningitis or pneumonia or many cancers, such as Hodgkin's lymphoma. But we are living in a highly technological, unprecedented scientific age: an age in which the agents of industrial efficiency, profit and speed can also be viewed as potential threats to our lives – from agriculture to architecture, and of course, our health. Too often, we have reduced the human body to its individual parts and treated it without reference to the whole person, with his or her unique qualities. Dr. George Engel, who recognised the singular importance of human relationships to the work of the physician, said, "By concentrating on smaller and smaller fragments of the body, modern medicine perhaps loses sight of the patient as a whole human being, and by reducing health to mechanical functioning it is no longer able to deal with the phenomenon of healing".

We might easily say the same about the way we have been treating our entire world – and now we are being made forcibly aware of the incredibly dangerous side-effects from such treatment. We are infinitely complex beings – mind, body and spirit – that cannot just be reduced to mechanical functioning, and healthcare should, and must attend appropriately to all three aspects. As Plato said, "The cure of the part should not be attempted without treatment of the whole". What, then, is a whole-person approach to healthcare? I believe it is a medical approach that makes both orthodox and complementary treatments available to the patient, not as competing or separate approaches, but in unison. It addresses not only the specific illness or ailment, but always considers it in the wider context of the patient's circumstances. And, crucially, integrated health stresses the importance of encouraging patients to help heal themselves, and to take individual responsibility for their health.

Taking account of the whole person necessitates a more personal, individual approach to healthcare consultations, and emphasises the more traditional and humane aspects of healing, such as listening, intuition and empathy. I think there is a worry that, all too often, patients feel rushed and confused by short – (I understand often under 10 minutes), - consultations, in which their role is too passive. Mind you, how you, as G.Ps, fit everything into a ten-minute consultation I really don't know! And I can well imagine the pressures created by both patient and Doctor needing more time.

Nevertheless, integrated healthcare would seem to be a "best of both worlds" approach, in which the patient is given a choice. The patient can decide (with the G.P obviously) which treatment – orthodox, complementary or a combination of the two – is the most appropriate. It is not, as some of the more outrageous media reports would have it, about quackery and witchery, hocus-pocus and snake oil. It is about giving patients accurate information, and then – and this cannot be stressed enough, as well you know! - allowing them to make informed choices.

The Central Role of the G.P.

To my mind, the group of people best placed to give patients accurate information, and to encourage them to take responsibility for their healthcare, is yourselves, the G.Ps. General Practice has been the cornerstone of the N.H.S. since its inception in 1948, (just think, I am as old as the NHS and look what's happened to me!) with General Practitioners known as its "Gatekeepers". In 1952, the Steering Committee of the newly formed Royal College of General Practitioners wrote, "General Practitioners are essential to the heart and soul of medicine". Much more recently, a B.M.A. report in June of this year stated, "General practice is the part of the N.H.S.

that patients know best and appreciate most. It is crucial in providing patients with a continuity of high quality, personalized healthcare, and in enabling appropriate patient access to wider N.H.S. care".

As General Practitioners Ladies and Gentlemen, you are therefore on the very frontline of healthcare, and without you the quality of many lives would be greatly reduced and believe you me I know that. Unfortunately, as you know so much better than I do, our collective health is, in some areas, being reduced by the insidious effects of today's lifestyles. Children are suffering from obesity and so-called attention deficit disorders, with expert opinion rooting these things in exposure to pollution and the years of polluting, processing and over-refining of our food. Many adults are still suffering from cardiovascular disease, adult on-set diabetes and various forms of cancer, some of which, we are told, can be rooted in controllable factors.

Crucially therefore, the connections have to be made; the links understood between lifestyle choices and health consequences. As such, I believe that you, as G.Ps, are in an unrivalled position to explain these fundamental connections to patients; to demonstrate to us that the state of our health is so often determined by our ways of life, our diet, our human relationships, and the way in which we form our built surroundings or treat the natural environment. The pervasive effects of uglification are all around us. And yet beauty can have a truly positive effect on our health. That's why, I established my Foundation for the Built Environment over fifteen years ago – but that's another story you'll be glad to hear! The next instalment of this exciting series . . .

General practitioners can therefore play an integral role, not just in tackling illness, but also in preventing it, and can contribute to improving patients' lifestyles by the promotion of healthy living. There are already many shining examples of integrated services in General Practice, but if I may, I'd just like to allude to the findings of one. The Glastonbury Healthcare Centre, of which I understand Roy Welford has already spoken, discovered in a recent survey that eighty five per cent of patients who were referred to its complementary therapists reported some, or much, improvement in their health. Its patients also appeared to reduce their usage of orthodox health services: such as G.P time, prescriptions, X-Rays and other tests.

So one crucial reason for the inclusion of integrated healthcare into General Practice is to tackle the rise in long-term and chronic conditions. I have been told that far greater demands are now being placed on G.Ps as a result of more patients presenting with chronic and multiple health problems. In fact, a staggering eighty per cent of all G.P consultations are being taken up with complex long-term conditions. Many of these - such as ME or Fibromyalgia - have no known treatments. Complementary medicine, therefore, offers a possible answer where otherwise there is little hope.

Managing a condition is thus increasingly becoming the challenge instead of curing it. Long-term conditions can bring acute frustration for the patient, and the resulting negative emotions can have a serious effect on the body's intrinsic healing ability. But this is exactly where complementary treatments can help enormously: giving patients treatment choice (that word seems to crop up fairly frequently!) helps to foster a renewed sense of control - and we know that if the patients make the choice, they are more likely to take the medicine and thus accelerate the healing process. According to a Doctor/Patient Partnership survey a few years ago, seventy one per cent of patients said they would like to be able to receive more information about complementary medicine from their G.Ps. If eighty per cent of patients want to make their treatment choices with their G.P, then I would have

thought the G.P. would be the best person to help them choose, and also provide evidence on safety and effectiveness. Furthermore, offering choice is bound to be safer for patients – only fifty per cent of patients currently tell their Doctor they are taking a complementary medicine or seeing a complementary practitioner.

(Mental Health problems are perhaps a good example of chronic condition. As you know better than I, one in four people has a mental health problem, and the total annual cost of mental health problems in England has been estimated at £32 billion. The prescribing rate for anti-depressants continues to rocket. While they are clearly life-savers for some, they are not without their risks. The BMJ recently reported that the herb, St. John's Wort, has now been shown to be at least as successful in treating moderate depression as anti-depressants).

G.P. Associates

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I think we ought to turn to the reason for today's gathering ... my Foundation's G.P. Associates. The aim of the G.P. Associates is, above all, to support and help those G.P.s in Britain who want to provide integrated medicine and, in turn, the patients who want to access it. I hope that through examples of best practice, networking and bringing together cumulative research, evidence, anecdotes and best practice, it will widen your knowledge and, in time, the choice you can offer your patients.

I would also very much like to see opportunities for educational and research visits abroad, to learn about different medical traditions in their cultural and geographical contexts. In February this year, a group of five British G.P.s visited Northern India to study Ayurvedic and local medicine in the foothills of the Himalayas. By the end of the week, patients from local villages were being diagnosed and treated using a combination of both Eastern and Western medicine. It was testament to the fact that no one medical tradition should have the monopoly. Every new movement needs courageous pioneers: every pioneer needs the spirit of profound belief to motivate them (and to soften the blows of the inevitable critics!). George Bernard Shaw wrote, "Some men see things the way they are and ask "Why?" I dream things that never

were, and ask "Why not?". Ladies and Gentlemen, I have been dreaming and asking "why not?" for a long-time (usually to a chorus of concentrated abuse!) Today, then, I couldn't be more thrilled that the Foundation has gathered together experts who can continue to pose such questions with one united medical voice.

As I said earlier, there is nobody to my mind in a better position than yourselves to express to patients that healthcare is a matter of understanding the extent to which all aspects of life - and our place within it - are interconnected. Just as we need to see that if we pollute and degrade our natural environment and its limited resources we will create irreparable damage to our planet; so we need to see that if we abuse our bodies, we may suffer the consequences. After all our bodies return to earth...

Today marks the launch of a network of like-minded and forward-thinking Doctors with an enthusiasm for integrating the traditional and well-tried medicines of all disciplines for the good of their patients. I can't tell you how pleased and proud I am that so many eminent and sensible quacks are joining with my Foundation and it is my fervent hope that as more and more G.P.s spread the word of integrated healthcare across the country, so an increasing number of people will understand and adopt its preventative and holistic principles. You will be very much the standard-bearers for integrated medicine within General Practice, and I hope that with the seeds we're sowing today we may, in time, witness the development of a more balanced and harmonious approach to healthcare.

A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales for The Inaugural Conference of The Prince of Wales's Foundation for Integrated Health G.P. Associates, St James's Palace, London, Wednesday 12th October 2005

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Network GPs are most welcome to contact the Prince's Foundation for Integrated Health for more details of the G.P. Associates. See www.fihealth.org.uk or phone

Stop Climate Chaos

Anne Miller, Cambridge

Following our June conference on Climate Change, reported in the Summer Issue, and David Wasdell's article 'Global Warning', Anne Miller describes a new climate change initiative in which you can take part.



Many members of the Scientific and Medical Network will already be concerned about the threat of climate change. It's a scientific, medical, moral and even a spiritual issue. It also raises fascinating questions about the way society resists new ideas, and what we, as concerned individuals can do about it.

On 1 September 2005, a major new coalition of environment and development groups, faith groups, humanitarian organisations, women's groups, trade unions and many others - was launched in the UK to STOP CLIMATE CHAOS www.stopclimatechaos.org. Our aim is to create an irresistible public mandate for political action on climate change. We have been growing rapidly, and by October had 25 members including Oxfam, RSPB, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Tearfund, WWF, Women's Institute, Sustrans, Christian Aid and CAFOD. The founder members have been extremely active, and

have their Chief Executives on the Board. Politicians are starting to take note and ask to speak to us.

I have been fortunate to be able to play a part in helping with the development of this coalition. This article discusses why I think climate chaos is such an important issue, and how members of The Scientific and Medical Network can help.

What's coming is climate chaos, not a gentle global warming. We are starting to see the consequences in increasingly frequent tragic events such as Hurricane Katrina which has killed over 1,200 people, the heat waves in France that caused the premature deaths of 28,000 elderly people in 2003, and the current droughts in Southern Africa and the Amazon. It's nearly always the poorest and most vulnerable that suffer most. Up to one third of land-based species could face extinction by the middle of the century.

This is primarily a consequence of us burning fossil fuels and hence increasing the levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The concentration of Carbon Dioxide is already 30% higher than at any time since the start of the industrial age, back through at least 4 ice ages. Levels are rising terrifyingly fast; nearly 1% pa, increasing global temperatures in their wake. The tipping point of runaway climate change is dangerously close. As Sir David King, UK Government's chief scientific adviser said "Climate change is a far greater threat to the world than international terrorism".

We've had scientific consensus that climate change is real and at least partially human induced since 1993. A paper published in Science (3 Dec 2004) showed that not one of the 928 papers on climate change in published in refereed scientific journals between 1993 and 2003 disagreed.

Nevertheless, it is noticeable that until recently professional sceptics, funded largely by corporations with interests in maintaining high fossil fuel consumption tried to deny the reality of climate change. They were irritatingly successful in delaying action, but are rapidly losing ground. For example, in 2003 The Global Climate Coalition, an organisation set up in 1989 representing US industries, was haemorrhaging members and quietly disbanded. By 2004 skeptics such as Lomborg were admitting that climate change was happening, but bizarrely started claimed that action was too expensive. They based this argument on economic models that carefully excluded the economic costs of damage more than 20 years in the future, or the boost to the economy from the investments and taxation changes. In 2005, they quietly changed tack again, so now you will hear them emphasising the need to invest in capital intensive technology, rather than reduce consumption. Even President Bush now admitted at the 2005 G8 meeting that "climate change is happening now, that human activity is contributing to it" Reality has got them on the run!

It's easy to feel confused or overwhelmed by the threat of climate chaos, but the reality is that we have a window of opportunity in the next decade. If we act decisively together now, we can keep the average global temperature increase under 2°C and save millions of lives and a multitude of species. We need to achieve a world in which all of humanity can prosper, and achieve it by means that promote global social, environmental and economic justice.

The good thing is that there are so many opportunities. We need to take personal action, whether its turning off our phone charger when not using it (every little helps), or (much more significantly) slashing the distance we fly. We need bold political action to support these personal actions, as demonstrated by the London Congestion charge which has now made cycling to work in central London feasible and even fun. We need to invest in simple old technology like loft insulation and proven new technology like wind turbines or biofuels. Sensible tax breaks will help these take off. Investing in research on experimental new technology like carbon sequestration (or even cold fusion) may pay off in 20-50 years, but we can't wait for it. We need local action, unilateral national action and international action, and we need it now. We have only a decade before emissions need to have peaked and be on their way down.

Achieving this requires our political leaders to make difficult decisions, some of which will initially be unpopular. Although in the UK our politicians have said some of the right things, and have set a useful initial target of reducing domestic

emissions by 20% by 2010, we're heading to miss it and they are backsliding fast.

That's where the Stop Climate Chaos campaign comes in. As the Drop the Debt and Make Poverty History campaigns have shown, focussed campaigns with a strong moral agenda can be a significant political force for good. The problem from is that, unlike Drop the Debt campaign, to Stop Climate Chaos we need to change our own behaviour as well as demand Government action.

Psychoanalysts tells us that when we hear someone saying "someone else needs to take action first" it's just the classic response to the "learning anxiety" we all experience when faced with the need to change the way we do things. We are therefore trying to design a campaign that will help us all deal with this "learning anxiety" at source, rather than let it be used as an excuse for inaction. This thinking has led to three principal elements of our campaign.

Take action together. We want to encourage people to come together to take action, because strong mutual support networks are really helpful in enabling change on the scale we need. Membership of Stop Climate Chaos is therefore only open to organisations that pledge to involve their members in action. If you would like to get involved, please do join in with one of our existing member organisations. If none appeal, persuade your favourite organisation to join. You can also set up your own organisation and join, even if its just a group of committed friends. Note that there's no minimum size to join, but there is a minimum membership fee (currently £200). Individuals are welcome to come along to our events, but you'll need to keep an eye on our website to keep yourself reliably informed. Managing large mailing lists of individuals is surprisingly expensive, so this also lets a very small office manage a large campaign.

Take the pledge. Petitions are useful way for voters to express demands, but experience shows that the more effort they involve, the more impact they have. We are therefore demanding government action, but linking it to personal pledges of action and personal statements of why you care. We will be delivering ever increasing batches of these in an entertaining way to local and national politicians during the year. Please do visit our website and sign up. If you need ideas for actions to pledge, see our member organisations' websites.

Tell your friends. Ideas spread when people "come out" with their friends and colleagues and talk from the heart about why they care, and what they are doing about it.

It seems so easy, but chatting round the coffee machine at work, persuading your friends to join you in taking action, really will help save the world.

For further information see www.stopclimatechaos.org , or contact Anne Miller anne.miller@tcp-uk.co.uk

Editor's note: If any members would be interested in setting up a "Stop Climate Chaos" Special interest group of the Scientific and Medical Network, please let me know.

Anne Miller is a Board Member of Stop Climate Chaos, Director of The Creativity Partnership www.tcp-uk.co.uk and former council member of The Scientific and Medical Network.

The Climbing Essays - Jim Perrin

Robert Macfarlane, Cambridge

Robert Macfarlane, himself a writer and climber, introduces Jim Perrin's 'Climbing Essays' and gives a vivid flavour of the man and the book. Jim is a keynote speaker at 'The Spirit of Mountains' conference in April. Two of his previous books have been awarded the Boardman Tasker Prize.



Put an ear to this book, and what will you hear? You will hear the soft rasp of a chalked hand on a gritstone hold. You will hear the cow-bell clink of hex on granite. You will hear the skirl of wind over drifted snow. You will hear the cry of a falling man, and the silence in the seconds after his death. You will hear the chatter in the Llanberis Heights on a Saturday night. You will hear the jubilant shout of a climber mantling over the top of a big route, and into rich quiet sunset light. You will hear a Himalayan ice-fall noisily rearranging itself. You will hear voices raised in funeral song.

You will hear, that is, all the mingled joy and tragedy and action and beauty of a climbing life lived to the uttermost: a life lived as fully on the lateral as on the vertical. "Contact! Contact!" wrote Henry David Thoreau after his climb of Mount Ktaadn in 1846, and Thoreau's imperative might stand as Jim's motto – if Jim could tolerate something so officious as a motto. For contact of every sort is everywhere in this extraordinary book. It is the memoir of a man in love with touch.

Nearly forty years' worth of Jim's essays are collected here. But do not mistake this for a ragbag or *omnium gatherum*. For these essays are bound together by many things: by their energy, by the images which recur in them, by their openness to beauty. They are all, too, about "weathering", in both senses of that word. "Weathering" in terms of how the forces to which we are exposed shape us. And "weathering" as endurance: as getting through the difficult times.

To read across all the essays here is to learn three stories. There is Jim's own story: his move from the slums of Manchester, out to the moors of the Pennines, and from there to the quarries, crags and peaks of Britain and the world. Certain scenes flash out. Jim sleeping in the sandy caves of Stanage Edge, so as to be on the rock as soon light strikes it the next morning. Jim, jittery, wired on cocaine, soloing *Coronation Street* in Cheddar Gorge. Jim whooping for joy in The Cauldron, with the green sea echoing beneath him.

There is the story, too, of Jim's writing. His prose style has changed with his climbing style: from what he calls – speaking of his rock-work – "a wild and prehensile freedom of attack", to a "coolness and control". The enormous tonal range of Jim is to be found here, a range gained in part from the writers he has studied and loved: Hazlitt, Johnson, and Menlove Edwards among them. Listen again now – listen to this:

And I, I wanted the heights and the naked edges and the steep plunge of rib and groove, the splintered rock, wind-whistled and myself upon it. So up I went on that shattered hillside in company with a certain fear. It was so beautiful, I was lost. There were pinnacles and great drops; there were moves to be made and lakes far below, mauve horizons and I was unutterably alone; and the mountain did not shake me off, for I am not hubristic.

How far we are here from the usual workaday prose of the outdoor journalist. How strongly the rhythms of the Old Testament beat through those lines – in those repetitions, those inversions – imparting a proper sense of ritual and ancientness to this act of ascent. How precisely placed, in the still centre of the paragraph, is that extraordinary sentence – "It was so beautiful, I was lost" – with its careful refusal to

ascribe cause: the beauty does not make the lostness, or vice-versa, but rather both states exist within and around one another. And how precisely arranged is the topography of that final sentence, with the "lakes far below", the "mauve horizons" stretching out, such that the figure of the climber seems to exist in another world altogether, an apart-world or beyond-world of wildness. To read such a paragraph is to find one proof among many of Jim's brilliance as a stylist, his awareness of how revelation can be as much a function of syntax as of event.

And finally, there is the story of British climbing over the past four decades, and more. For Jim has known them all: Longland and Murray, Tilman and Shipton, Whillans and Bonington, Dawes and Fawcett – all "the sport's great regulators and mediators". He has moved through this fractious, egotistical world of climbing, and what has distinguished him perhaps above all is his immense lack of ego. "I am not hubristic", Jim writes, and if anyone else wrote this we would not believe them, for to deny one's egotism is usually to demonstrate one's egotism. But with Jim it is true. To read the 'Climbers' section of this book is to know this, to witness his extraordinary generosity of spirit in action. Jim is ready always to dowse out the good in a person; to consider them from all angles, and so to see what is valuable in them, and to do this one must be willing to forget oneself.

Of the great climbing writers of the past, Jim is closest in temperament to W.H. Murray. Murray knew Jim, encouraged him, inspired him, and Murray, the old eagle, hovers over these pages. When Jim writes of Murray's "impassioned wisdom, detachment, humility, and scrupulous self-honesty", he might as well be describing his own writerly qualities.

What both Murray and Jim share is a belief in climbing as an almost mystical experience, one through which the outer landscape comes – in ways which are impossible to articulate, but unmistakable to experience – to shape the inner. What both view askance (though Murray saw less of it than Jim) is climbing as mere gymnastics; a purified exercise in dynamics and musculature, which might be expressed as an equation. For both men, the "star systems" that really matter are not those in the guidebook, but the constellations beneath which climbing takes place. Jim, like Murray, climbs for joy. "Good! Know that! Kiss the joy as it flies...", he writes – and that's Jim, there, in a phrase: transient, aerial, passionate. "Kiss the joy as it flies!"

Joy, above all, is Jim's lodestar. In 'The Vision of Glory', the great essay which ends the 'Climbs' section, Jim describes going alone up Beinn a' Chaoruinn, the Hill of the Rowan, which arches above Loch Moy, on a winter day. The morning begins dully, but near the summit, suddenly "the mist is scoured with speed from the face of the mountain", and he sees out over the surrounding peaks and corries, "all glitter and coruscation, shapes of the Mamores beyond a phantasmal ivory gleam." From this epiphany, the essay



develops by way of Wordsworth and Simone Weil, into a meditation on the power of such visionary moments – “the occasional goings-through into the white world, into the world of light” – to call out a goodness in us. “Our essential life, the joy-life, is a sequence of these moments: how many of us could count even sixty such?” The deepening and lengthening of the joy-life: this, in Jim’s secular theology, is the reward for those who climb.

The risk for those who climb, though, is death, and everywhere here there is “blood on the rocks”, as Jim puts it (Bobcat ever, grimly tipping his hat to Dylan). I have never read a book so full of life that is also so full of death. You will meet so many of them here, the dead. Killed by avalanche, by altitude sickness, by lightning strike, by broken holds, slipped belays. Primo Levi, the mountaineer who lived through the worst that the world has yet devised, only to leap, neck-breakingly, down a stair-well. Paul Williams dying at the foot of Brown’s Eliminate on Froggatt Edge. Al Harris, with whom Jim jostled JCBs, drank, and fought, and who eventually “crashed

himself dead”. And then, finally, recently, Jim’s own dear son Will, whose life and whose death is celebrated here. I say “celebrated”, and I mean it. For Jim does not regret things. It is, astonishingly, not in his nature. What occurs, occurs. “It merely was so,” he writes more than once. So it is that, in this exceptional book, the two extremes of the world of climbing – death and joy – bend round and fuse into one another, becoming of the same bright alloy.

“We must love one another or die”, wrote W.H. Auden. Jim has it differently: “We must love one another and die”. Both are imperatives. This is what Jim has learned, knows, tells us here: that we must love one another and die.

Robert Macfarlane teaches English at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and is the author of ‘Mountains of the Mind’.

This is the preface to Jim Perrin’s book, ‘The Climbing Essays’, which will be published by Neil Wilson Publishing in March. Jim is a speaker at the 2006 Mystics and Scientists conference on ‘The Spirit of Mountains’.

reports

Beyond the Brain VI Memory Beyond the Brain

Julian Candy



A phrase that seldom crops up in everyday conversation is ‘akashic record’. If, like me, you overhear those words while travelling on a mainline train out of London, you may well be, as I was, on your way to a Beyond the Brain conference in one of Britain’s finest cathedral cities.

This year the sixth conference in the series took place in Lincoln, and memory was its theme. With much to savour, perhaps the most memorable image of the conference was evoked by Professor Gary Schwartz of Tucson, Arizona. He described standing one evening at the window of his hotel room looking out over the lights of the city and bay of Vancouver towards the sky and the stars, and coming to a sudden appreciation, all the more vivid in that he was naked,

that what he could see was only a tiny fraction of the total spectrum of radiation, of the myriad vibrating and persisting energetic ‘feedback loops’, in which he was bathed and to which he was contributing; and reflecting moreover that since these vibrations do not interfere with each other (“it is not a blur, it is not a mush”), and exist largely in the vacuum of space, such feedback loops represented a vast storage system necessarily retaining a potentially retrievable trace of all previous events, let alone future ones. Here then was a scientist describing a basis for the ancient concept the woman on the train was alluding to: the akashic record, a cosmic memory where everything that has been, is now, and is to be is said to exist.

David Lorimer had opened the conference with a characteristically authoritative survey of the different interpretations, conceptions and attempted localisations of memory, along the way touching on most of the themes later speakers would develop. He noted the continuing inability of neuroscience to pin down explicitly where memory traces are to be found, giving continuing life to hypotheses that place them certainly beyond the brain, if not beyond the body. Many believe that it is memory that forms the sense of self; can it be that those memories continue after death as a soul?

Then followed the now traditional and helpful speakers’ introductions, from which we learnt to recognise who were to be our guides on our two day tour through some of the mysteries David had laid before us.

We began our journey appropriately enough within the brain or at least the body. **Professor John Gruzelier** of Imperial College shared with us the remarkable results of using biofeedback techniques to promote theta rhythms and thereby induce a hypnagogic state: that borderland between waking



and sleeping in which it emerges not just creativity but mood also is enhanced. If we add exercises to develop heart beat coherence then we have a potent recipe for success and wellbeing: student musicians improved their performance by as much as two honours grades; dance teams displayed greater technical virtuosity and joyfulness. All this in a setting not of stress and anxiety but of love, empathy and, in the case of meditators, bliss. John set out some of the meticulous research that has given biofeedback a new impetus, and linked these findings to our theme by emphasising how creativity involves reorganising and recombining memories in new, often symbolic, ways, noting a possible link with the greater distance travelled within the brain by slow theta waves than faster alpha.

Dr Iain McGilchrist's remarkable career as a Fellow of All Souls, who becoming disenchanted with literary criticism turned Consultant Psychiatrist and neuroscientist, qualified him admirably to guide us into the thickets of literature, memory and the brain. Memory he pointed out is not stored in discrete elements but rather is embodied, a point developed by other speakers. With barely a mention of Proust, he drew out the significance of 'context memory', mediated through the right cortex, and 'public memory', centred in the left. Quoting extensively, especially from Wordsworth and *The Prelude*, he stressed the 'betweenness' that characterises so much post-Renaissance romantic literature, shot through as it is with nostalgia, melancholy, and a bitter sweet sense of loss and possible renewal.

Roz Carroll, a body psychotherapist with a deep interest in neuroscience, was introduced by Andrew Powell, Founding Chair of the Royal College of Psychiatrists Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group, associated with the Network in setting up the Conference. Roz' journey took us right into the community that makes up the body: its skeleton, muscles, organs. From infancy on, all these build their own memory, from which indeed our awareness of self is constantly reconstructed. She drew attention to our senses, both the five outer and the still often neglected inner such as proprioception, interoception, balance, and what she called 'fluids' or 'wetbrain': water, blood, interstitial fluid, hormones, enzymes; and significantly including those colouring agents of emotion, the neuropeptides, so vividly described by Candace Pert in *Molecules of Emotion*. These inner senses are largely mediated by resonance and vibration. She involved the audience in an exploration of their own bodies, and highlighted the growing significance and sophistication of John Bowlby's attachment theory for understanding child and adult development. Particular interesting was the idea that the right brain, so crucial for healthy relationships in childhood and beyond, receives directly neuronal input from the inner bodily senses, while the left brain lacks such connection and acts rather "as interpreter and inhibitor in the best and the worse senses", as Roz put it.

Gary Schwartz's epiphany in the Vancouver hotel was not the culmination of his first presentation. He used that event as a stepping stone in his efforts to establish to his own and I fancy most of his audience's satisfaction that the presence in living organisms of persistent dynamic feedback loops implies that cells have memory. In turn, this leads to the prediction that transplanted tissue would bring donor memories with it to the recipient. And that is what is found: a woman transplanted with the heart of a motorcyclist develops a previously entirely uncharacteristic taste for beer and Chicken McNuggets; a man "falls in love with classical music" when he receives a transplant from a classical black violinist, contrasting with his prejudiced fear that he would find himself taken by an enthusiasm for rap. The many and continuing confirmed cases of this sort are soon forgotten, for they contain, as Gary

put it, "terrifying implications" for our culture's consensus view of the world. Gary stressed that feedback loops of the kind he described occur at all levels of complexity, between cells, between organs, between people, even between galaxies. This implies relationship, which in turn implies evolution and both are based in love.

That evening we enjoyed a video interview with **Rupert Sheldrake**, expertly conducted by **Peter Fenwick**. Rupert's morphogenetic fields appear to play a similar role to Gary's dynamic feedback loops, but on the face of it are not mutually compatible. A live debate between these two would be rewarding.

In his second presentation, Gary Schwartz described the Afterlife Experiments, in which the team he leads is investigating and generating mediumistic evidence for the survival of consciousness, using rigorous controls and the full panoply of scientific method. He noted, following William James, that the methods of neuroscience cannot distinguish between the hypotheses that the brain generates consciousness and that it transmits it. To use a contemporary analogy, correlations and the results of ablation and stimulation notwithstanding, we remain essentially outside the television set, unable to tell whether the programme content arises within or without it. He gave a number of intriguing examples of veridical communication by apparent afterlife consciousnesses, but it is the outcome of the meticulous research now underway that will have real impact. Like a number of presenters at the conference he did not shy away from speaking of love, used here as an acronym for listen, observe, value and empower.

In 2001 cardiac physician **Dr Pim van Lommel** published in *The Lancet* the results of a large scale long term well designed prospective study of near death experiences. The striking findings of his team underlined how common and consistent in content are NDEs. In his clear and thoughtful presentation he built on the extensive data now available to speculate, rather as Gary had done, that it may be that the brain in transmitting consciousness also filters it so that we are not overwhelmed. Not for the first time at the conference I was reminded of Ravi Ravindra's response to this puzzle. "Maybe it is not consciousness that is within the brain, it is the brain that is within consciousness." Pim went on to discuss possible physical interpretations of his findings, including



using the possibility that consciousness arises in one aspect of 'phase space'.

These conferences provide much more than seats in a lecture theatre. Lincoln cathedral was memorably large and beautiful, and atop a surprisingly steep hill. Worth the climb though, for Evensong and for an excellent organ recital given especially for us, now a Beyond the Brain tradition.

The food and accommodation recalled for many of us the relatively spartan conditions of our own university life, while the conference hall itself and the atrium where we took our meals were congenial and friendly places, in spite of their size, a feature which added significantly to the warm and friendly ambience that we enjoyed.

As always, some delegates found tension between their desire to sit so-to-say at the feet of distinguished and informed speakers and their impulse towards personal expression and participation. This time we had two sessions in groups of 10 to 12, where confidential discussion and sharing about the theme of the conference could take place. Further, on this occasion all the speakers kept more or less to the time allotted, thus allowing useful opportunity for questions and open discussion. Most of the people I spoke to seem satisfied with these arrangements, and my impression was that this

pattern achieved the most successful balance of those adopted to deal with this tension in the series of conferences. Overall the organisation of the conference ran remarkably smoothly, a tribute to the professionalism and hard physical work of the administrative team.

A final reflection. Based as it is on increasingly patchy memory, scribbled notes, audio recordings and half remembered conversations, this report necessarily is full of omissions, biased, and influenced by the unconscious including its dark side. Yet the akashic record, to which the woman on the train referred, is perfect and complete, like the life review in the NDE and Gary's cosmic field of reverberating feedback loops. Perhaps we should recall that the root Sanskrit word 'akasha' means space, sky, and that it was the sight of that sky and its stars that provoked the joyful yet terrifying growth in consciousness that Gary shared with us. It is growth rather than perfection that we should strive for, and this conference provided an opportunity for just that.

Dr. Julian Candy is a retired psychiatrist still involved in hospice work. He has written reports of all six Beyond the Brain conferences.

Ways of Knowing: Reuniting the Sacred with Science University of Winchester, UK 1-4 September, 2005 *Jennifer Elam, Ph.D., Pennsylvania, USA*



I recently had the opportunity to author a chapter in the book *Ways of Knowing: Science and Mysticism Today* linked to this conference and then to attend and make a presentation at the conference itself. It was inspired in part by the ideas of Isabel Clarke, mentioned below, which had been developed in two previous conferences on psychosis and spirituality. The theme this time was the broader idea of pluralism: the claim that there are many valid ways of knowing the universe, outside us and within us, and many valid paths on which to walk the way of truth. I feel enormously grateful for these opportunities to join people with the dream of advancing this position and the desire to speak for their own path.

The purposes of the gathering were:

- to share our truths and build community amongst the authors/presenters, and then to bring in the body of conference attendees;
- to hold and hold up our desire to promote pluralism and to balance the power structure presently in place in Western culture between the dominant and subjugated ways of knowing;
- to listen to one another's perspectives with respect;
- to begin to formulate a plan for how we can affect changes, both large and small, in the world around us (both immediate and far-reaching); and
- to support one another's efforts in spreading our messages as we promote the theme of our book.

The basic message of our work is: there are dominant and subjugated ways of knowing that are presently out-of-balance

and our world would benefit from hearing voices that are presently being subjugated and/or silenced. The lack of balance in our ways of knowing has resulted in escalating violence. The way forward seems to lie in righting the balance by giving power to the knowing of the feminine, the indigenous peoples, the downtrodden and the unforgiven.

The Conference began with the presenters (who included many of the authors of chapters in *Ways of Knowing*) engaging in five sessions designed to build community among their group. Following an introductory session where each person shared their own particular enthusiasms, we moved on to consider Ways of Knowing and Justice; Spirituality, Science and Reality; and The Spiritual Path. In a final session we explored the practical way ahead. Then the wider conference participated in presentations that both shared the path of the presenter and also showed how the many paths could flourish by learning from each other.

A key talk by **June Boyce-Tillman** (writer, musician, and Professor of Applied Music at the University of Winchester) expounded some of the dimensions of "Subjugated Ways of Knowing." Following this, several presenters explored visions of ways in which particular ways of knowing might in the future come together in fruitfulness. **Anne Baring**, writer and retired Jungian Analyst, on "Expanding the Conscious Mind", described the joining of Ways corresponding to the "Solar" and "Lunar" archetypes. **Les Lancaster**, Professor of Transpersonal Psychology at Liverpool John Moores University, gave a taste of the Kabbalistic path, in which the ascending and descending energies of the cosmos were mirrored by the emphasis in current neuroscience on the role of "reentrant

pathways” in the brain leading from the higher cognitive areas back to the lower sensory ones. Later **Mike King**, University Reader at London Metropolitan University, suggested that a post-secular society may be coming forth with the renewed interest in spirituality that is appearing at many levels in our Western culture, and used Stephen Jay Gould’s concept of “Non-overlapping Magisteria” (NOMA) to point the way ahead and to warn against a false synthesis of science and religion.

Several presenters incorporated experiential elements into their sessions. **Neil Douglas-Klotz**, co-chair of the Mysticism Group of the American Academy of Religion, and co-director of the Edinburgh Institute for Advanced Learning, in an introductory session on Friday evening, led us in a visualisation, with gentle movements to the breath, of the Semitic concept of time as the progression of a caravan in which we follow our ancestors and prepare for those who are to come within a fluidly changing landscape. This prepared for his later discussion on the nature and place of Sufism among religious paths. My presentation, as writer, artist, and school psychologist, built an exploration of “Art as Soul’s Sanctuary” around an experiential exercise. **Lyn Andrews**, writer, secondary school science and biology teacher, and founder of Eduspirit, based “The Quest for Integration.” on an informal view of her personal path.

Many others disciplines were represented. **Rodney Bomford**, ordained Anglican priest and founding member of the London Bi-logic group, who succinctly explained how the alternative logic of the psychoanalyst Ignacio Matte Blanco could reveal successively deeper layers of the psyche. Isabel Clarke, a clinical psychologist, presented a radical but experimentally-based model of the mind under the Leonard Cohen quotation “There is a Crack in Everything, that’s how the Light Gets in.” **Chris Clarke**, mathematician and physicist, presented the new vision of reality now emerging from contemporary physics.

Panel discussions with presenters offered an opportunity for discussion and questions. Home groups offered participants support through the week-end.

On Saturday night talents were displayed by many. Highlights included a modern ballet in two short acts by Lyn Andrews called “Seeing” and a one-woman play by June Boyce-Tillman called “Juggling – A Question of Identity.”

At the conference were people from several countries (including Australia, Greece, England, Scotland, and America), several religious traditions (including English Anglican, Catholic, Protestant, Quaker, Judaism, and Islam), many disciplines and age groups, and with a good balance of male and female. Our backgrounds, primary languages and ways of knowing were truly plural. And we communicated. And we had points of difference and points of agreement. And both were good.

The praise for the work of the conference was enormous. The critiques I heard were centered around the accessibility of the words. We propose giving power to the subjugated; that would include making our concepts more accessible to those less knowledgeable of our theories and big words. There were those holding and presenting the more dominant ways of knowing and those holding the more subjugated ways of knowing; all held both at one time or another. To walk what we talk we must be sure in our gatherings to provide sensitivity and balance for all ways. Were those holding the silence, the contemplative, the mystical, and the creative given the same power as those holding the intellectual, the theoretical, the academic, the knowledge, the talking, and the words? Was the competition for “air time” in right balance? Were we balanced in observer and participatory modes? Beneath knowing is being; let us move forward to right the balance not only for subjugated ways of knowing but also for pluralism in our ways of being in the world.

At the conference were many students doing research and degrees involving topics and methodologies that in the past would not have been acceptable for degree-level dissertations. I am grateful for the opening up of methodologies that would broaden our knowledge-base toward quality as well as quantity. May we go further in broadening our ways of gathering knowledge and in broadening our knowledge!!

Themes emerging from this conference included:

- The need for major paradigm shifts toward construction, to prevent the destruction of our world
- Both/and as a major tool for moving forward
- Allowing creative energies to move us toward finding the “third way” that brings us through the either/or and through the politicalization of both science and religion
- Pluralism in ways of thinking/knowing to right the balance between the propositional and relational as a way forward
- Recognizing the relationship between the dominant and subjugated ways of knowing and dominant and subjugated ways of being that lead to violence and serious justice issues
- A deep desire to not pathologize or subjugate people or ideas different from our own
- A deep desire to move forward toward sharing and resolving conflicts among the many traditions and ways of knowing
- A deep desire to move forward toward the post-secular; a relating of true science, religion, art and the mystical, acknowledging what Einstein called the “source” common to all of them.
- The need for Grounding in our senses, our bodies, and the earth to keep us in balance with the transcendent
- A deep desire for developing connections with the transcendent and imminent “something” that is larger than ourselves as well as amongst ourselves
- Transformation of our selves and our world at the cellular level, allowing the creative and mystical the power to bring the visionary to our world
- Accepting the grace to hold all of this lightly enough for us not to get caught in the traps of those institutions/practices we wish to change; and lightly enough not to create idolatries of our traditions, our words, our ways of knowing, and even our concept of balance.

I am very grateful to Chris and Isabel Clarke for their vision and their many hours of work to make this conference happen. I am grateful for the hope that was generated at this conference for providing possible ways for righting the imbalances between the dominant and subjugated ways of knowing in our world. I am grateful for the courage shown by the authors and presenters to speak of the subjugated ways that many would rather ignore and silence. We are embracing a paradigm shift that is basic to how knowledge will be gained and used; our planet will benefit from that shift.

Jennifer Elam is a licensed school psychologist who has worked with people from preschool through adulthood for the past twenty-five years. In an effort to better live her own out-of-the-ordinary experiences, she has spent the last decade listening to people’s subjugated stories of their mystical experiences and accompanying them through difficult places. She presently leads art retreats, facilitates creative sharing programs, works as a psychologist, and makes time to write and paint. She has written the book “Dancing with God through the Storm: Mysticism and Mental Illness” which is available by emailing her at jenelam@aol.com. The corresponding volume is reviewed in this issue.

correspondence

Concluding Unscientific Postscript

From: Nicholas Spicer, nichol@s-spicer.uklinux.net

'The 'information' in this article is based on the British press so may not be reliable and all the rest is my personal opinion.'

This is the postscript to scientist Diana Clift's article, 'Can we improve on God?' Alas, nowhere in her article does she tell us which is 'information' and which is opinion. So she herself regards part of her evidence as unreliable. But does not tell us which. This puts her readers at some disadvantage!

So she begins by saying that in the 1960s, 'We believed that Science would solve all human problems and that Religion would gradually die out...'

But I was growing up in the '60s and I didn't have these beliefs. Was I a 'we' or a 'they'? What is it that Diana Clift is excluding me from? I understand, (in the religious context to which she draws our attention), what I am being excluded from by not being a Muslim or Witch or Christian. I am an infidel, an unbeliever. But what infidelity was I expressing when I (and many others) thought that science was already causing more and more human problems and that religion ('All you need is love', the Beatles, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and hippy Diana Clift) - was about to undergo a change of life.

'We' (all) is just as dangerous for us as 'They' (all).

Generalisations: about religion.

For this very reason, generalisations must be challenged. Diana Clift has drawn our attention to some important generalisations. I think we should inspect some of them.

'Religion is - inevitably - a justification for war.'

But if I said, science is a justification for desecrating the moon, or vivisection, many would see that, though this is true, science is not made valueless for that reason. Science has much in common with religion - it might even be called the new religion. 'Can it be proved scientifically?' has the same tone nowadays as 'Is it found in Scripture?' had in the Middle Ages. We need to realise that there are things that religion cannot talk sense about and that there are things that science cannot talk sense about. (Gould's 'magisteria', fields proper to their expertise)

For example:

Believers' view of ultimate reality (which is essentially untestable).

On the contrary, believers' views are constantly tested in their individual experience. Oh! you mean scientifically testable! Well, I know that there have been scientific tests on people who meditate and resultant statistics. All fine and large, but the experience of the meditators is perfectly testable, just not by science. Science is out of its magisterium, its field of competence here. Just as Diana Clift wishes religion would not arrogate to itself competence, judgment or authority in many areas, so I wish that scientists (science, if you like - or even Science with a capital!) would restrict themselves likewise.

'Scriptures are 'written by men for men'

Their believers often say that they were presented by God (the Q'ran, the Commandments) or the Goddess.

'The arrogance of religion permits double standards in this world and the next.' (my emphasis)

It is true that George Bush's - and Osama Bin Laden's - statements about good and evil encourage the West - and East - to commit outrages. But a vast outcry against these outrages comes from religious believers.

[Incidentally: I would be really interested to know Diana Clift's conception of 'the next world'. A scientific 'next world' can hardly be testable. (as Diana Clift would test 'ultimate reality')]

'Nobody seemed to consider that every young man's ... death will leave an angry grieving family behind.'

But as the time, almost everybody I met was considering this; the papers (British press) had many articles considering it. 'Nobody' is a generalisation and this example shows how opinion can lead us into untruth and arrogance.

Generalisations: men and women and sex

'the central relationship of human beings - that between man and woman - equates to that between master and slave.'

As a keen observer of human beings - and having many relationships with women - I have to ask, 'Do you mean that women are the masters, or men?' I have much evidence of women dominating the men in their relationships. Though I would not go so far as to call the men slaves. I think it would be better to describe 'the central relationship of human beings' as that between one human being and another.

'the unequal treatment of women by all religions. The fact that we can talk about how a particular group 'treats their women' reveals that we don't think of women as members of that group.'

But that's what you just did when you talked about the unequal treatment of women!

[Understand, of course, that I don't know who 'you' is - whether a statement from the British press or from Diana Clift.]

'masculine values of conflict' 'Man is not only at war with everyone else, he is also at war with nature, with the world and with his own body.'

These generalisations belong with 'Women can't reason; men can't feel.' If someone were to say, 'Women can't think properly, their values are emotional and opinionated; they always generalise.' I would be outraged and I would expect you would be too. I imagine Diana Clift would be.

'what is absolutely sure is that human survival depends on women's ability to cope.'

Human survival depends on many things, no doubt; and men's, women's and children's ability to cope is surely one.

'Why is the prostitute despised and appallingly abused by those same men who need her?'

I wonder whether Diana Clift knows many men who visit prostitutes. I do and, far from despising and abusing them, they often build a relationship of respect. I will not generalise from this, but I know some prostitutes too, and they confirm that this happens. Not always, to be sure.

'The victim of rape is also treated as permanently tarnished and dirty.'

But men and women who have been raped are treated with kindness and understanding as well. We can hardly generalise from either case.

'some men get sexual pleasure out of inflicting pain'

Diana Clift's apposite reference to 'the example of Abu Ghraib' reminds us that women do this too.

'Only in Judaism do women have any right to sexual pleasure.'

Now, I understand that to make love on the Sabbath is accounted a mitzvah (a blessing), which seems delightful to me; but, brought up as a Christian, in a church school, I never heard that sexual pleasure was proscribed. Indeed, in my religious preparation for marriage, the priest prescribed sexual pleasure for us both.

How can Science Help?

I appreciate Diana Clift's hopes for science (Science, as she writes it) and a contribution it might make. However there are 'lords and priests' and 'underlings' in science as there are everywhere in establishments. Scientific books have been recommended - by scientists - to be burnt; and that in our recent past. I wish that 'the scientific world view' did appear to be more humble.

An opinion is not more valuable because it is held by a scientist.

'If scientists seem arrogant and convinced they know the whole story then they are bad scientists.'

And the same goes for religious people, of course. There are fundamentalists in science as in other human enterprises, sad to say.

If there are things religion must understand, and do, I believe that scientists, with so much of the moral power in our society that once was found in religion, must also acknowledge this at least.

First, that - as religion, and politics does - science may harbour fundamentalists. Second, that, not only they may be wrong, but that there are subjects, fields of study and experience, where the writ of science does not run; where scientific method cannot contribute anything useful.

Facts, Feelings and Opinions

Diana Clift's feelings are always clear and clearly expressed.

Though science - as she says - is humble and can never be proved right, we cannot say the same about our feelings and their close relations, opinions. I suspect that Diana Clift would not say that she might be wrong in her opinion that *'the universal' (sic) bottom line of morality must be to do no harm to other humans or other species.'*

'Logically one must arrive at the Directive to 'do no harm' where harm is suffering or damage inflicted on other people or species.'

I think that this logically and scientifically wrong. From the epiphyte to the carnivore, this is the way the world around us works. If anything could be classified as 'natural', surely 'damage to other species' is a fundamental principle. As humans, we do this to eat, to keep warm, to survive; it is our nature and it is Nature's nature.

As Diana Clift shows eloquently, scientists have feelings; they have strong feelings. These feelings can attach to ideas, to theories, including theories which are wrong. Scientists may also be bullied (by the modern equivalent of priests and lords) into promoting false theories (very recent examples are found in the practice of drug companies and the U.S. government's scientists' attitude to the science about global warming)

Theories grow from ideas. Experiments are devised to test (prove / disprove) the theory. Money must be found to fund the experiments. The theory may then become a horse preceded by its funding cart. Just as it may be preceded by an emotional cart. Like the rest of us, scientists have feelings about their theories and convictions. This passion is one of the delights of talks with and by scientists. And, as Diana Clift shows, the next step, from idea to theory, to tested (proved) theory, is fact. What follows then is so often generalisation. '9 out of 10 women prefer ...' All women? . No, out of a sample of 100. 'This or that food is bad for you'. 'This or that drug is good for you'.

So generalisations come to pose as facts.

'Religion is - inevitably - a justification for war.'

'It is of course, simplistic lazy thinking which people like.'

'the central relationship of human beings - that between man and woman - equates to that between master and slave.'

If such statements are indeed found in the press, or if they are expressed by individuals, we need to use all our wit and intelligence - yes, and emotions too - to appreciate them carefully, and differentiate facts, feelings and opinions.

I see that this piece has been presented at two conferences and again in this issue of the Network Review. Clearly it represents a valued point of view and I hope that these comments will contribute to the discussion on the 'Post-Secular' in this Society and in the greater society in which we live.

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A Response to Diana Clift

*From: Julian Candy,
juliancandy@btopenworld.com*

Although Di Clift's powerful piece (Review, Summer 2005) is, as she largely concedes, biased and partial, and unavoidably full of unsustainable generalisations, it expresses clearly an important and valid reaction to the predicament which faces our civilisation.

Among much else, it provokes us to seek for an underlying false turn which we have taken along the way. Recently, I asked a committed Christian to read an essay by an Orthodox priest in an excellent volume devoted to panentheism: the notion that God is not separate from His creation but rather both within and beyond, immanent and transcendent. Her reaction was to say that the piece was dry, and did not contain any reference to or reflection of a "personal God". For her it was axiomatic that we must be able to come into a personal relationship with God, and the Christian Scripture she believes sets out how we might attain this. God for her is essentially separate from His creation, though He may intervene from time to time.

Yet such a personal relationship implies that in one of His aspects at least God is a person, and in turn has a personality with a set of characteristics. This is just what some of us find difficult about this post-Reformation Christian God. If I say "God loves me", that implies the possibility that he might not love me, that he has preferences, likes, dislikes, intentions, hopes, problems, solutions, commandments, plans, even plans for me. And thus it opens the door to legitimise the view expressed recently on placards in America that "God hates gays".

So in this now traditional Christian conception of God, one which still permeates our civilisation and the Jewish, Muslim and Christian traditions within it – and moreover is the conception against which Di is railing – God is seen as separated from his creation and possessing a personality to which Scripture in particular bears witness. Rather than enhancing the glory of God this seems to many of us to diminish the Supreme Being, setting him up merely as a man / woman writ (very) large. It is also as we know only too well a view that can lead to dangerous destructive extremism.

What alternative might there be? If we loose ourselves from

the need to enjoy a personal relationship with the Almighty, we no longer need to claim "God loves me", but can say with real meaning and depth "God is love". This is no longer relationship, but identity.

Then we can escape from the false duality that separates God from His creation, and recognise that God in His immensity is His creation. "There is One God, the Eternal, the Only Being; none exists save He"; and as St Paul puts it in Acts 17:28, "in Whom we live and move and have our being." We are part of this creation, and thus however small, insignificant and powerless we are we share our identity with the divine.

Some will respond that this solves nothing. What about evil, imperfection, suffering? Can this all be part of God? Does God have a dark side? This is a large debate, but in simplicity we can answer 'yes' to those last two questions. The divine has manifested: something exists. Manifestation requires contrast, polarity, opposition. Neither good nor evil are absolutes, though that is not to diminish suffering or the need for each of us to make and stand by moral judgments.

The presence of what we as individuals or as societies see as evil does nothing to contradict the statement "God is love", however incompatible it may be with the claim "God loves me."

We in our littleness can never know the whole picture: we are like the drop of water that forms part of a wave which is part of the ocean, and, like the doctor who so often finds herself having to make the diagnosis on inadequate evidence, the judgment must be made nonetheless. This is part of the pain inseparable from the struggle of the manifested to return to its Source: that struggle inescapably soaked in magnificence and in horror.

The glory and the comfort of it is that however insignificant and ignorant we may be, as humans we are gifted to awaken to whom we really are: "the I that I am is a centre of eternal pure consciousness." Opening our third eye to that understanding puts us on a path that leads towards fully accomplished humanity, enlightenment and universal brother and sisterhood.

Can Religion also be Part of the Solution?

*From: Chris Clarke,
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On reading Diana Clift's article in the last issue of Network, I found myself sympathetic to her forceful critique of the Abrahamic religions, which she characterised as arrogant, oppressive, male-centred and obsessed with a concept of sin defined in relation to a moral code of laws. In my experience, however, this characterises only one aspect of these religions: the patriarchal aspect that has hijacked many of their canonical written documents, their organisation and much of their external presentation, for nearly three thousand years. Not

surprisingly, this aspect is all that most people in this country know of religion. What is worse, it is becoming the dominant reality in the majority of Christian churches (I have only limited knowledge of Islamic and Jewish congregations).

But this is only one part. There is also the mystical side, which has always existed in tension with, and often in downright oppression by, the formal organisation of religion. This mystical side, which is also the justice seeking side, is far less conspicuous, although it is (or perhaps was until recently) numerically very significant among religious

congregations. Within this part we can find a powerful, though "underground", counterweight to the bigotry of the external patriarchal forms.

To give just one example: two days ago I attended a presentation by Eliahu McLean (a Jewish rabbi) and Ghassan Manasra (a Moslem/Sufi sheik) about their joint work of peacemaking in Israel and Palestine. In covert meetings between influential religious leaders from both sides, and in large gatherings bringing whole communities together, they focussed on healing the basic divisions of fear

and alienation in the human spirit, holding that only when this is also addressed will political initiatives really work and stand firm. Each one worked within a deep commitment to his religion, and worked by unfolding the inner nature of that religion to his fellow Jews or Muslims. Their words, their actions and their achievements displayed that inner nature to be one of openness, recognition of all faiths, and recognition of the unity of all humanity in love. This side of religion can be a vital part of the solution to our problems, precisely because the patriarchal side is part of the problem.

The Totality – a hypothesis for assessment

*From: Philip Macken,
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I refer in this letter to Total Holism – a recent name for the ancient understanding that 'All is One'. It lies as the fundamental basis of most religions – Mahayana Buddhism – Advaita – Taoism – and a great many others at a less direct level; all centred around unity with the One as the ultimate realisation. However, if it is put forward today in normal life it is found not to be a communicable possibility, as it conflicts with the fundamental of our understanding, namely the separate identity of ourselves and each of the objects that surround us. We have come to accept this fragmentation as irrevocable – it is necessary for our patterns of thinking.

But many thinkers are beginning to question this total rejection of the possibility of unity - on the same lines as some are challenging other basics such as reductionism and materialism in our scientific and philosophical world today, realising the possibility of them all being the result of limitations in human comprehension rather than objective fact.

Evidence for Total Holism ('The 'Totality') is sometimes brought to our attention by those returning from near death experiences – we learn of their vision of this state of understanding in such circumstances. And there is much confirmation that can be developed from reason. It is seldom appreciated that our acceptance of the fundamental 'cause-and-effect' relationship that exists throughout all relationships in the cosmos (with the possible exception of quantum uncertainty) is a confirmation of this absolute unity. As everything has a cause, and each cause being a result of another cause, influencing one other progressively in a chain - all uniting into a totally inter-related integral single network of action and reaction that is the Whole. This is the Totality that we normally consider quite unacceptable.

From the ultimate hypothesis of Total Holism a set of conclusions can be drawn that are impressive in their clarity and significance. It provides a basis for assessment beyond conventional physical science and traditional scientific thinking into the indeterminate realm of 'non-physical science' - where causes, rather than material phenomena, are the predominant features requiring investigation. Acceptance of Total Holism forces us to face some remarkable conclusions – such as that nothing can exist in objective terms as a separate item as all are linked within the comprehensive 'whole'. This would imply that reductionism arises from our subjective viewpoint and that the reason we separate one item from another in our minds is to enable us to identify and comprehend them by relating them to others. Pursuing this, we are forced to conclude that 'chance' as an influence on events cannot be an objective fact of the cosmos, as it always relates

to the relationship between separate 'things' in the widest sense, and when all are known to be an interrelated whole, 'chance' can only be observed to apply to occurrences relating to separate, and therefore subjective, issues. Further, it tells us that mind and matter are not separate objective features within nature, as they are ultimately both integral aspects of the same phenomenon. It tells us there can be no separate God, that indeed any use of the term can only be valid as being applied to the sum of the whole of Nature throughout the cosmos. Only in that sense does 'He' exist as the overall powerful force within our lives.

Total Holism introduces a whole range of fundamental alternatives of this kind into current thinking and warrants a comprehensive assessment programme. It cannot be left to remain a vague 'possibility'. Maybe there is some error in the reasoning at some point or the conclusions that are being drawn may be incorrect, but it surely should not be ignored, as it has the potential to fundamentally alter scientific and philosophical thinking. If it were ever confirmed as fact it would enable a great many solutions to scientific 'mysteries' to be identified - even to steer us towards a basis for linking classical science with observations in the quantum field. It has an additional overall comprehensive potential as it can be shown to apply effectively not only in scientific issues, but for application in practical human living, assisting in human relations and ultimately leading to a form of Zen realisation in those able to pursue it in practical terms to the required extent.

Following presentation of a short paper on the subject at an SIG Meeting in December, which received a positive response, I was pleased to act upon a request from some SMN members to initiate a move towards pursuing this important possibility in depth. A substantial number of members are supporting this in principle - a surprising number of people confirm that they believe intuitively in total unity being the ultimate fundamental fact of existence, but do not pursue it to the ultimate level discussed in this letter, as it then appears unrealistic. However, it can be seen as more acceptable provided subjective and objective facts are distinguished and taken into account, and this I have found is the path to follow. It does not seem widely appreciated that there are two truths in most issues (subjective/objective), and how important it is to come to realise that they are frequently both equally valid, although often conflicting. An understanding of both allows comprehensive definitive conclusions to be drawn in the required direction.

Preliminary efforts are being made to form discussion groups

to analyse the feasibility of the hypothesis and the potential beneficial conclusions that may be found to evolve from it. The first meetings are being deferred for a short time until publication of a book later this year on the subject developing the reasoning and implications of the possibility, which should provide a basis from which discussions can progress.

It is expected that the project will be started early next year

and participation will be open to any interested members.

*Friends of Philip Macken will be very sad to know that he died on 24 November 2005, shortly before publication of his book *The Ultimate Hypothesis*. A full appreciation will appear in the next issue of Review.*

Inevitable Icons

*From: Stephen Fulder,
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This letter is written in part as a response to the review in *Network 88*, by Mike King, of Jonathan Sacks's book, 'The Dignity of Difference'. In the review, Mike King stated that he was rather disturbed by the tendency of Western faiths to claim the high ground as fighters against idolatry, and so denigrate Eastern faiths, of which the Jewish authorities sadly seemed to know very little. There is indeed a way to repair the East-West gap on this issue, simply because all faiths are inherently a mixture of both idolatry and iconoclasm. We need to focus more deeply on what idolatry is.

The worship of icons is not just a phenomenon for religious debate, but also affects everything we do and believe in. Judaism and Islam are very concerned about idolatry, and the first revelation that mythologically set these religions in motion is the Abrahamic revelation involving destruction of idols. However the concern about idolatry exists because it was a consistent part of Jewish life until today. It arises necessarily out of a dualistic relationship with the divine, in which the divine is reified as God. Jewish faith is deeply suspicious of pantheism on the one side and an idolatrous worship of God on the other, but this middle ground is hard to keep and often broken. For example, many thinking Jews of today are horrified by the idolatrous use of the Bible by Jewish settlers and fundamentalist Jews, to justify occupation, destruction and subjugation of their Palestinian neighbours. On the other side, Kabbalistic Judaism sees God as a product of the Source, not the other way round. According to Kabbalists, the first words of the Bible are not 'In the Beginning, God created....', but 'The Beginning created God.....'. Both readings are possible in the original Hebrew.

What this tells us is that we need to define what we are talking about, because of the intimate mixture of idolatry and iconoclasm which is in every spiritual and religious act and

faith. Normative religious doctrine is actually a very small part of the whole picture, and this should be stated. Buddhism is probably the world's most intensively iconoclastic spiritual practice, the Second Noble Truth stating clearly that the source of human ills, of evil and of the lack of awakening is attachment, and it goes so deep that in spiritual practice (dharma practice) even the creation of a single thought or concept is seen as a quasi idolatrous act of attachment to the self-process. Nevertheless, of course, there are thousands of Buddha statues all over the world, and many regard Buddhism as deeply idolatrous, if they never meet the spirituality and only come across the normative or folk religion. In relation to Hinduism, I never forget the discussion I had in India with a simple but devoted Hindu woman, about Shiva as an idol. Her response was 'Thank God that he gave us Shiva'! It is somewhat similar in science, science is a very strong icon, and scientism, the belief that reality can be completely explained by it, can be seen as idolatrous. Yet there are a great many forms of scientific inquiry, such as Goethean science, in which there is less belief and more observation, along with an iconoclastic view of the mystery of reality. Therefore, my plea – when talking about religious life, we should realize how wide it is and how deep and full of contradiction, and the same goes for science. Let us be more precise when we use such words as science, Judaism, Buddhism, and, of course, idolatry. More than that, let us include the subjective perspective, the insecurities which give rise to the need for icons, and so enrich the debate.

Dr. Stephen Fulder is Jewish, a scientist, author of a number of books on alternative medicine, as well as the senior teacher in Israel of Buddhist insight meditation.

How many members of the Bush Administration are needed to change a light bulb?

The Answer is:

TEN:

1. One to deny that a light bulb needs to be changed,
2. One to attack the patriotism of anyone who says the light bulb needs to be changed,
3. One to blame Clinton for burning out the light bulb,
4. One to tell the nations of the world that they are either for changing the light bulb or for darkness,
5. One to give a billion-dollar no-bid contract to Halliburton for the new light bulb,
6. One to arrange a photograph of Bush, dressed as a janitor, standing on a stepladder under the banner "Light Bulb Change Accomplished,"
7. One administration insider to resign and write a book documenting in detail how Bush was literally "in the dark,"
8. One to viciously smear No.7,
9. One surrogate to campaign on TV and at rallies on how George Bush has had a strong light-bulb-changing policy all along, and finally:
10. One to confuse Americans about the difference between screwing a light bulb and screwing the country.

Art and Science

*From: F. David Peat,
dpeat@fdavidpeat.com*

In his article "Art and Science – a Personal View" (Network Review no 97 pp29-30 2005) Philip Kilner addresses an issue that has always fascinated me, in view of my many interactions with artists. That is, while there are many examples of ways in which artists have been influenced by scientific insights or technologies are there examples of influences in the other direction? Clearly if we go back in history there is the example of Piero della Francesca's work in mathematics that allowed him to create, within a two dimensional plane, a "mental space" or "perspective of the intellect" which is internally consistent and visually satisfying, yet could not correspond to any physical space in our own three dimensional world (as for example in the Baptism of Christ (National Gallery, London) or Madonna del parto (Monterchi).

As to a twentieth century example, that of the interaction between the physicist, David Bohm, and the American artist Charles Biderman, is of particular interest. As with many other physicists, Bohm was concerned with the failure to reconcile quantum theory and general relativity. But while others were looking for "a new theory" or "new mathematics", Bohm argued that what was required was a radically "new order" in physics, one out of which a new theory would emerge. It was around this time, in 1960, that Bohm entered into a lengthy correspondence with the painter and art theorist Biderman. In his letters Biderman commented upon the work of the impressionists and, in particular, upon the approach of the post-impressionist, Paul Cezanne, whose goal was to preserve

the insights of impressionism but combined with the rigor of a painting by Poussin.

In one portrait, for example, that involved hundreds of sittings a tiny area of the hand had been left blank. Cezanne said that if he were to fill that in he would be forced to repaint the entire canvas. Bohm became fascinated by this notion of each part containing the whole and the whole being reflected in each part. He felt that if he could describe such a painting mathematically then this would be exactly the mathematics required for quantum theory.

It is not difficult to see that the seeds of Bohm's implicate order (along with the quantum potential and super quantum potential of his ontological interpretation of quantum theory) evolved out of this contact with Biderman, and through Biderman with Cezanne.

This story has an interesting corollary that brings influences full circle. Part of Bohm's work in unfolding these ideas, carried out with his colleague, Basil Hiley, involved what he termed "pre-space" and the non-commuting algebras of pre-space. A few years ago Basil Hiley and I engaged in a conversation with the sculptor, Antony Gormley, about the notion of space, pre-space and algebra – which we defined in David Hilbert's words as "the relationship of relationships". Out of that conversation was born a new piece by Gormley, "Quantum Cloud" which, in turn has led to other similar pieces in which a figure emerges out of the relationships between a series of straight metal rods. In this way art fertilised science and science fertilised art.

personal experience

*Listening to Water
Janine Edge, Aldeburgh, Suffolk*

While attending an SMN conference in Jamaica some five years ago, another SMN member and I were trapped all night in a remote bungalow by a man with a machete and had a pretty terrifying time of it. Some of you know about this, but what you may not be aware is where this led for me personally – to finding someone in New Zealand known as 'the Waterman' and making a film about him.

Some six months before the conference in Jamaica, a complete stranger had accosted me at an SMN AGM. His first words to me had been: "There is someone you should get to know – she is called Vicky Angell". I had not even heard of her name before and subsequently took no steps to contact her. So it is a curious fact that it was with Vicky that I found myself crouched in a bathroom with a machete stabbing through the slatted windows above our heads. It would have been impossible for us not to get to know each other.

It so happened that Vicky and the stranger who had first mentioned her name to me, John Ashworth, were part of a

group investigating Maori science and beliefs. Despite the fact I knew nothing about New Zealand, they insisted, following the machete incident, that I join their group. This, and other stranger events, resulted in my taking a trip on my own to New Zealand. After some months of wandering, I found the Waterman teaching school children how to 'listen to water'.

Mike O'Donnell acquired his name as 'the Waterman' from the role he played in court cases to prevent a mining company from excavating a mountain range on the Coromandel Peninsula and its source of fresh water, a river called Tara Riki. Mike describes how he took a bowl of water from Tara Riki into the courtroom saying to the judge "Can I have permission to bring the water from Tara Riki so it may speak to the court, my Lord?" The Judge replies "If you must, Mr O'Donnell". In New Zealand there is an unusual law which permits courts in environmental cases to take into account 'intrinsic value' arguments. These are factors which are not strictly ecological, but are nevertheless persuasive, such as Maori customs and beliefs. Mike's ancestors come from Ireland but he is

immersed in the Maori community. The confluence of both these sources has enabled him to communicate the essence of water, from the hard science to the ineffable, thus swinging the decision of tribunals.

So what is it he is doing, and can it be taught? Mike invited me to join him for a day when he was taking sixth-form students on what he calls a 'water journey'. At first this seemed a little like a field trip walking up the banks of Tara Riki, with Mike pouring forth knowledge and anecdotes about the life in and around the water. Then he started talking to the students about listening to the waters inside ourselves, our emotional waters. He told of his own grief when he thought the case against the mining company had been lost and how he 'turned this into something good' – making sculptures in clay of huge heads listening to land, water and the stars. Gently, Mike introduced the idea to the students that they themselves might listen to the waters of Tara Riki. At the end of the day the students, who had looked liked classic disaffected teenagers, silently sat down by the side of Tara Riki and, to the sound of Mike playing on his flute, each wrote down what they heard the water saying.

It is not easy to describe how Mike wrought the change.

Suffice to say that, through the qualities of empathy, passion and presence in Mike together with his numerous stories, the students were lead to what it might feel like to act authentically from their own waters. "Tara Riki has been my teacher" Mike tells them.

What did the students hear the waters of Tara Riki saying? Well, while on a ferry off North Island, I had bumped into a friend from England who is professional filmmaker. That is how there came to be a short film about the water journey, from which you will find the answer. There may also be an opportunity to ask Mike O' Donnell himself, as he is making a rare visit to England and Ireland this winter. I should say that he does not just communicate with water – I have seen him talk a kingfisher back to life.

Janine Edge is a visiting fellow at Nottingham Trent University in organisational psychology. If you want a DVD of 'The Waterman' (length 27 minutes) or to be put in contact with Mike O'Donnell, please email her on jedg@saqnet.co.uk or telephone 01728 451499.

news section

local group news

Friends of the SMN, Auckland
LEO HOBBS +64 9 478 7809

A Record of a Special Meeting in Auckland with Max Payne on Sunday 4 September 2005

FSMN members were delighted to have the opportunity to meet with Max Payne during a brief visit he made to Auckland recently. Although announced at very short notice the meeting was attended by some 20 participants. Max' subject was "The Nature of Consciousness" and, in particular, some objections to a materialist view of consciousness.

Leo Hobbs introduced Max, outlining his strong contribution in all the affairs of the UK Scientific and Medical Network over many years. Max said how pleasing it was for him to have this opportunity to meet FSMN members in Auckland. Having recently attended an SMN meeting in Germany he sensed there was a world-wide movement of like-minded people searching for wisdom and enlightenment in a humble way, not aiming for a dogmatic, destructive belief in a set of tenets having absolute truth, but seeking a deeper understanding of the human condition. Although such seekers are not in a majority they are the leaven of our civilisation. Max hoped that by joining together in conversation today each one of us might further his/her own journey.

Max began his presentation by summarising the origins of the Network in 1973 following the initiatives of George Blaker, Dr Patrick Shackleton, Sir Kelvin Spencer and Dr Peter Leggett. They felt strongly the need to question the assumptions of the predominant materialist approach in science and medicine which they felt was limiting human understanding. The Network nowadays includes members from a wide range of backgrounds but the openness to considering all areas of

human experience, including the spiritual, remains central. Max cited three important principles which the Network seeks to observe at all times: the openness to examination of any phenomenon reported; the application of rigour and a due humility in considering such phenomena; and maintaining an attitude of respect and love in relations between participants. The Network holds no dogmas but most members would support the anti-dogma of rejecting materialism as the sole conceivable basis for forming a world view.

The nature of consciousness is at the heart of all attempts to understand the cosmos for it is through our conscious experience that we have been able to develop tools such as language and the methodology of science which we use to interpret our experience. It is therefore vitally important that we try to understand what consciousness is and how we come to have it.

There are many theories of consciousness, some of which are materialistic while others have a component which acknowledges what many feel to be a non-material, sometimes spiritual, aspect of our experience. In this talk Max outlined some of the objections he sees to the materialistic/reductionist view in which the experiences of consciousness are determined entirely by brain states. He identified theoretical or philosophical objections, and objections arising from such experiences as telepathy and the Near Death Experience (NDE).

The materialist states that Matter + Brain produces Mind. The experiences of the conscious mind (sensibilities, memories, emotions, thought etc) are nothing but activities of neurones; the brain secretes consciousness as something excretable. However the statement is not a scientific one. It is not obvious and is in the nature of an axiom on which the materialist theory is based. We can see that many scientists hold it as a dogma to the exclusion of possible alternative axioms. But no brain scan will tell us anything detailed about our consciousness. Some say that in principle science will

eventually be able to do this. But we are nowhere near this. There is nothing here which corresponds to the evidence in support of Einstein's once revolutionary theory of the equivalence of energy and mass ($E=MC^2$). The problem of identifying brain states with conscious experience is altogether too complex. There are just too many components (more possible brain states than particles in the universe?). Furthermore, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle and quantum entanglement ensure that we can never predict brain states.

How can consciousness come out of sub-atomic particles? We don't even know what matter is and how the 'dark' matter in the universe might enter into the picture. The latest theories of the fundamental particles (string and brane theories) suggest that ultimately "matter" is nothing like the matter of everyday life.

There are other theories. In Dualism both matter and mind are separate but interacting features of the cosmos (different sides of the same coin?). Property Dualists and Process Philosophers suggest that fundamental particles have an attribute of basic consciousness, perhaps like the quantum features (strangeness, colour, charm) which theorists have added to the simpler concepts of mass and electrical charge in order to explain the experimental evidence. In this way consciousness might then arise as an emergent property of highly organised particles. Then there is the idea that everything is part of an ultimate unity, The One, in which matter and spirit are present at all levels of existence in varying proportions ranging from pure matter at the bottom of a hierarchy of levels to pure spirit at the top. Many claim that their mystical experience points toward this matter/spirit model.

Materialism means inevitably that mind must be confined to the cranium. But there is much evidence to the contrary although dogmatic materialists (espousing scientism) simply dismiss the evidence as illusory nonsense. Max expanded on the experiences of telepathy and NDEs.

In a group of 20-25 people about 5 would claim to have experienced telepathy, an apparent connection between minds, unlimited by their physical separation. This can range from transfer of information, as in remote viewing where the receiver seeks to identify a picture or video clip being viewed by the sender, through simultaneous dreaming, to an awareness of someone else's emotional state. Rupert Sheldrake has described a simple experiment which can be done by just a few people. A group of 5 people who should know each other well are arranged 4 in one room, the other one in a separate room. Both are observed separately as the 4 throw dice in turn, the outcome of which is "guessed" by the fifth person. If the result were simply due to chance the result of many trials would centre on a 25% success rate, but in practice higher success rates are observed, typically exceeding 30% and sometimes realising as much as 40%. There have been many experiments in telepathy taking various forms which show results significantly different from chance expectation. Sceptics repeatedly postulate sources of bias, for example in methodology, and even outright fraud. However parapsychologists have gone to great pains to design their experiments to conform to protocols agreed with interested sceptics and the positive results are usually confirmed. It has been noted that the thoroughness of parapsychologists in experimentation frequently exceeds that considered acceptable in mainstream science. However some attempts at replication yield a null result. Rather than take this to invalidate the idea of telepathy it may be simply an indication of the complexity of the human mind, perhaps a reflection of individual differences in qualities such as temperament or predispositions. (Results in many parapsychological experiments correlate with the degree of empathy between

participants.) Anomalies should always be taken seriously for the light they may throw on our understanding of a problem. Science now readily accepts that many observations in particle physics are replicable only when viewed statistically.

Care must be taken in the use of telepathy. Thus it would be unwise to base vital decisions on telepathic messages alone rather than directly available information. However in some critical situations telepathy seems to have been the only available source of awareness of distressed loved ones and has triggered life-saving action.

NDEs have been experienced by a high proportion of people; surveys in various places suggest some 10-20%. There are many reports of unconscious subjects finding themselves hovering over the scene of their accident, or during surgery. They have been able to accurately describe details of events such as acts of resuscitation or surgical procedures and conversations between the participating medical staff. One subject did this after undergoing brain surgery which required that her heart and brain activity be stopped. Sometimes subjects experience a life review where all their actions unfold before them. Frequently they have the experience of going through a tunnel "into the light" where they may meet dead relatives or a figure of light who instructs them to return to their body as it is not yet time for them to die. This figure usually takes the form of a person sacred to the religious faith of the subject's culture. For Europeans this might be Jesus or the Virgin Mary; for Indians Rama, the God of Death.

There are many books about NDEs, such as those written by neuroscientist, Peter Fenwick (SMN), and by Evelyn Varlarino (Pays d'Ange (Angel Country), translated into English by Max's wife). Although it is sometimes suggested the experience is due to oxygen starvation of the brain, medical tests have proved that this is not the case. Several attempts to prove the floating sensation is "real", such as inviting the subject to report what is written on a card placed on top of a cupboard, have so far failed to provide confirmation. It may be that such experiments are simply too unimaginative an approach to investigating what may be a phenomenon in an entirely different plane of being. After all, today's theoreticians are striving to express ultimate reality in terms of a multidimensional space which looks very different from the 4 dimensional one of our normal experience.

Telepathy and the NDE are but 2 classes of experience which suggest that the mind ranges far wider than the human body. David Fontana, a transpersonal psychologist and SMN member, has written a new book about the afterlife where he suggests that consciousness may survive for quite a time after physical death.

During discussion it was remarked that at least one NDE subject reported being able to read certain theatre instruments. Also, the usual monitoring of brain activity by observing the low frequency brain waves may be far too crude to detect everything going on during an NDE. In principle there must be many higher frequencies, albeit of very low amplitude.

Asked to comment on the Stephen Experience, the subject of our seminar last year, Max said he had no doubt about the authenticity of the events Michael Cocks had described. But he felt that in attempting to interpret that particular experience it had to be considered alongside other intense "spiritual" experiences which have been reported over many years. He cited for example Mohammed, the Old Testament prophets, Madame Blavatsky, Alice Bailey, Joseph Smith, who all claimed to have had revelations of deep spiritual truths. The widely ranging "truths" revealed are not always consistent. Then there is the inspiration of geniuses in music, mathematics and science, as well as the many transcendent experiences of more ordinary people. It seems that the particular human experience may be a condensation, perhaps deriving from a

cosmic information store, which has filtered down through several levels until it is presented to the individual mind in a form which is consistent with that person's life experience, beliefs, and cultural heritage. The various experiences may contradict when viewed horizontally, but vertically they point to something of spiritual value. Anyone who has had an intense spiritual experience needs to recognise that, although it may be of enormous value to them personally, it is but a first step along the way. We know that people can become spiritually ennobled, rising above the ordinary mortal, although they may engage in somewhat differing spiritual practices.

The world's religions have some great insights but they are unwilling to test these using the scientific method. Max reported an occasion on which several representatives of various faiths stated that their religion was not in conflict with science. But they would not address the question as to why their faiths could not agree on key issues. One said his religion was too deep and too important to put up to hazard. He would have hazarded his science but not his religion.

Finally, one participant, referring to past life memories, mentioned that her son, now 11 years old, had on several occasions reported having pre-natal memories.

Stuart Manins thanked Max for his stimulating presentation of what continues to be a challenging topic.

Sydney (Australia) Group

LLOYD FELL

Our group has shrunk during the latter half of 2005, but it has also consolidated, in that we now have a clearer sense of what we want to do in the year ahead. This vision and plan is too recent to capture here and will be included in our next report.

Our July meeting, led by **Ruth-Helen Camden**, was entitled: *The Fall: Myth or Everyday Reality?* She summarised it as follows: it's all about God and sex. Starting with the Bible, we took a tour of esoteric texts from the western spiritual tradition: from Gnostic texts, Jewish pseudigraphy and images of alchemy to Plato's Symposium, Jacob Boehme's Forty Questions and Rudolf Steiner's Cosmic Memory. Then to Samuel Sagan's Subtle Bodies, the Fourfold Model, Jean Houston's Search for the Beloved and an excerpt from Samuel Sagan's Atlantean Secrets tetralogy, summarising the myth of the hermaphrodite in story-form.

The story goes that Adam was in fact Adam-Eve, a hermaphrodite, and that the Fall in the Garden of Eden was both a fall into physical matter and a separation of the sexes into male and female. With Eve came sex, sleep and death. And the beginning of a deep and long-since-forgotten wound that every human being carries inside. We are all looking for our lost half. In Steiner's vision this is not to be found, as Plato suggested, in another human being, but within ourselves. Before the Fall human beings lived in a blissful state of merging with the Divine. We knew no distinction between inside and outside. Steiner described how at the Fall a part of our life force became turned inwards. It was no longer used for reproduction but became available for intelligence. We gained a brain at the expense of our life force.

From here we turned to everyday experience to reflect on the themes of the Fall in life - firstly the longing to merge into bliss. So many people's idea of the ideal holiday is to sleep in, lie on the beach, do absolutely nothing. And then there is the quest for the lost half. In every sexual or romantic relationship something deep within is eternally hoping to find fulfilment. The ensuing discussion revolved around the experience of the baby in the womb and its fall from bliss, the repeat of the primordial wound in every broken heart, possibly in every hurt. We related experiences of merging and letting go of effort in which something precious is felt, perhaps even something that can know divinity.

Our August meeting, led by **Rosey Faire** and **Alex Nicolson**, was entitled: *Drawing upon the Ineffable Well-spring*. Using a hybrid model from Deep Ecology and Expressive Arts Therapy, we were engaged in harvesting the song lyrics and poetry that resonated deeply and have stayed with us over the years. As Rosey explained (referring to her recent presentation for a World Music Therapy Conference): 'Among the lyrics of favourite songs from various times in our lives are embedded particular lines that stay with us even when we have forgotten the rest of the song. Due to a particular personal resonance, they move us, even give us "goose bumps" years later, and by studying them we may discover some recurring life themes.' We drew a timeline of our lives and put in lyric fragments that came to mind. It turned out to be much easier than you think it's going to be. We were encouraged to group them into lullabies, laments and others and then identify themes in our "songlines."

The experience prompted us to continue, at our next two meetings in October and November, to explore the contribution that the expressive arts (music, poetry, art etc) make to our human connectedness and the spiritual condition of mankind. This has awakened further creativity amongst us and the vision that we are co-researchers in this field and are developing a mission to further the work of SMN by using its guidelines in a peculiarly Australian way in 2006, hopefully with the help of some notable local authors.

Swedish Group

BO AHRENFELT, +46 470 12600

Bo Ahrenfelt writes: The Swedish national group had the Autumn meeting September 23-24. Our Springtime meeting will be held in Kosta, 12-13 May 2006.

Sofia Kjellström reports:

The meeting was held at Marston Hill, Mullsjö, in the middle of Southern Sweden. **Jens Allwood** and **Elisabeth Ahlsén** were the hosts. Friday evening we had a three course dinner with a lot of delicious food, wine and discussions. Saturday morning started by a presentation of **Leif Eriksson** with the title "Sonic Theology - experiencing the divine through inner sound". Inner sounds refers to sounds that are non-produced in an ordinary sense. In other words they appear spontaneously from within. Inner sounds have been described in scriptures from almost all religions and appears in several indigenous cultures. Leif made a broad overview of excerpts from these writings and the examples were chosen from two perspectives. The first category has to do with different expressions of the idea that inner sound is a fundamental creative and ordering principle that brings forth all forms and beings. The second category has to do with the profound effect of the hearing of inner sound and inner music, which has been reported to increase the quality of the life of the listener. This part concluded with a meditation designed to make inner sounds appear.

We also had a kind of "brain storm" in order to reach consensus on the mission of SMN. This exercise was led by **Lars André**. He is currently working with this method as a Avatar Master in self-development programs.

Cambridge Group

HAZEL GUEST - 01223 369148

The Cambridge Group has been revived after a lapse of something like two years. The new organiser is **Prashant Kakoday** with a team of volunteer helpers. We are continuing to meet in Hazel Guest's flat in central Cambridge. On Thursday evening 20th October **Dr Roger Taylor** of the Guildford Group led the discussion with a talk on 'Ormus: a new state of matter with promise for use in medicine'. Ormus,

sometimes called 'white gold', was discovered in the 70s as a residue in volcanic soil. It consists of certain heavy metals having unusual properties, including being chemically nonreactive and superconductive at normal temperatures. These elements have now been found in soils and water from many sources, and have proved beneficial for a number of conditions including AIDS, cancer and MS. In the ensuing discussion there was general agreement that these claims, if true, should be capable of validation by formal research.

Sussex Group

JOHN KAPP - 01273 417997

We have held eight monthly meetings since April, attended by an average of eleven people. The venue is Planet Janet cafe opposite Hove town hall. Subjects have included the evidence base for complementary medicine, SMN conference reports, dowsing, how astrology works, spirituality in mental health, talking circle, Pythagorean math. We are continuing to hold meetings throughout next year at the same venue on the third Friday of each month at 6 for 7pm.

Guildford Group

DIANA CLIFT 01483 417922

Our theme for 2005 has been 'the extended mind' which was the title of Rupert Sheldrake's presentation. The Autumn meetings continued the topic. **Roger Taylor** spoke on *Entering the Global Mind*. His talk was full of fascinating experimental data suggesting that human consciousness – and especially the focussed attention of many people together – seems to be able to affect the physical world. He showed the fluctuations of 'Random Event Generators' and how they have been shown to deviate from random at times of major world events, most notably on September 11th 2001. He also produced controversial evidence from an experiment in Washington when focussed meditation by large numbers of people apparently reduced crime levels. The talk raised many interesting questions about animal consciousness, cultural effects and the nature of time.

We were delighted to welcome back **Professor Chris Clarke** to speak at our November meeting on *Participation in Kosmos* where he defines Kosmos in its original Greek sense of Order. He started from a historical perspective and gave us a fascinating insight into Descartes' view of the human person and how misrepresented that has become. He discussed the impact of Quantum Theory on our views of consciousness and how this too has been widely misunderstood. However, it seems that at a fundamental level we all share and interact in the creation of what we see as reality.

We shall continue this theme in January when **Graham Martin** comes to provide a critique of the materialist world view.

London Group

CLAUDIA NIELSEN 0207 431 1177

In September we had the pleasure of welcoming **Dr. Soumitra Basu**, a psychiatrist from India who works in Calcutta and Pondicherry. Dr. Basu gave a presentation entitled *Occultism and Psychiatry: implications in clinical practice* about his work developing paradigms on psychology, psychotherapy and health based on the consciousness perspective that originates from Sri Aurobindo's mystical insights. This states that in evolution supreme Consciousness 'came down' through a process of involution into unconsciousness moving then up into manifestation. The forces on this upwards movement manifest from the lowest to the highest powers.

Whereas the higher powers are those of gods and goddesses, the lower ones are dark and destructive.

Unlike mysticism, which involves an emotional relationship with the divine, occultism is a technical manipulation of these dark forces and the corresponding dark sides of individuals. Psychiatric patients in India often seek the help of occultists to resolve problems and frequently find themselves depressed, having psychotic breakdowns which sometimes lead to suicide. We heard some interesting case histories to illustrate his point and when confronted with such patients, Dr. Basu will work within a framework which does not dismantle the patient's belief structure.

As well as pharmacotherapy, Dr. Basu seeks to counterbalance the occult influence by directing the patient to work with the forces of higher spiritual powers, using culturally accepted adjuncts to psychiatry, including positive worship and what he called 'white magic'. With the interest of his patients in mind, Dr. Basu is at present involved in a project to build a hospital which in its architecture, shape, light and surroundings will replicate the healing spaces of ancient temples. This most unusual design from our Western perspective is drawn following a model of the development of consciousness itself and will serve as framework for amongst others, a program of personality development. An international team is involved in this experimental project which at the moment is still on the drawing board but when fully operational will herald a completely new paradigm in the treatment of psychiatric disorders.

The October presentation was entitled *The Social Motivation of C.G. Jung's Critique of Scientific Rationalism* given by **Roderick Main PhD**. Roderick is Lecturer in Psychoanalytic Studies at the University of Essex where he is a Scheme Director of the MA in Jungian and Post-Jungian Studies. Within Jungian studies, Roderick's main area of interest is the theory of synchronicity and in this talk he expanded on the reasons why Jung was so critical of Western scientific rationalism, and why he saw in his theory of synchronicity a bridge towards what was for him, a more complete science. It warmed our hearts (mine anyway!) to know that Jung in fact would have been a committed member of the Network were he alive today, as our mission statement stands perfectly for what Jung himself was driven to explore – a worldview beyond materialism. He was critical of contemporary science for its rationalistic one-sidedness as materialist, outward, radically intellectual, and generalist, leaving out the exceptional, inner experiences and wider aspects of thinking, including imagination.

For Jung true science in a wider sense should include all these. The social consequences of such one sided scientific rationalism is seen in modernity in which mass mindedness results in current disorder of society, break with tradition, social sickness, meaninglessness etc. Large sections of the population are currently affected by a kind of psychosis which in itself can be 'infectious'. Jung hoped to shift the nature of scientific thinking to encompass subjective experience and he found in synchronicity the element which would achieve such a shift. Synchronicity is the acausal connection through *meaning* between two events. Based on his observations of Chinese spirituality, specifically the I Ching, coupled with his discussions with Wolfgang Pauli, Jung saw in synchronicity the means to bring within the scientific framework, something which is part of human experience, and is individual, subjective, unique and unrepeatable, thus making science more holistic and complete. It was a fascinating presentation of thoughts developed in Roderick's book *The Rupture of Time: Synchronicity and Jung's Critique of Modern Western Culture* (Brunner-Routledge 2004). His new book *Revelations of Chance: Synchronicity as Spiritual Experience* (SUNY Press) will

be forthcoming in 2006 in November, we heard from **Hardin Tibbs**, a management consultant who specialises in long term thinking, strategy development and scenario planning. Hardin helps corporations think, prepare and plan for the future considering technological trends and innovations in the context of the bigger picture, which necessarily includes the environment, as well as political and social development and trends. His writings on technology and the future have been influential in various political and academic forums. In his talk entitled *From Global Crisis to a New Civilisation* and he focused on a framework of 50 years back and 50 years forward.

We were presented a series of graphs and statistics showing the current dangerous situation we face on our beloved planet. The most impressive and worrying came right at the beginning, in a picture which shows the effect of exponential growth of an imaginary element, say water lilies in a pond which double in number every day. At the beginning the effect is so minimal as not to be felt or noticed. On the day before last however, the pond is half full.... This model shows the danger of the effects of pumping toxic and destructive elements into the air, soil and water resources which have only a limited capacity to absorb and deal positively with them.

However, the same creative thinking from which the technology originated which created such devastating effect, can also bring forth the necessary technology to reverse this devastation. We were invited to consider the role of consciousness and perception in the way we frame reality and the effect a reframing would have. A shift in the current concept of reality which considers the material world as the guiding principle for our decision making will enable us to change our values. If our values change, then the technology we demand will change as a result. Perhaps the current turbulence worldwide might be a sign of this happening. Inshallah ...

Scottish Group

DAVID LORIMER 01333-340490

Graham Martin acted as both host and presenter in presenting the argument of his new book *Does It Matter? The Unsustainable World of the Materialists*. He maintained that subjective experience is the great mystery and that it has not been explained by materialist theories. He reflected on Bishop Berkeley's distinction between *percipere* – to perceive – and *percipi* – to be perceived, commenting that the passive notion is unintelligible without the active being primary; and yet this is exactly the materialist position, that experience is in some sense deterministically passive rather than intentionally active. Another conundrum is the location of consciousness. Here Graham draws on some unusual sources like Jean Charon and John Smythies. Smythies points out that the visual field does in fact have a geometrical form, with a centre, periphery and boundary. He argues that we cannot imagine a non-spatial entity because mental images are themselves spatial entities. This challenges the Cartesian idea that the mind is outside space. Smythies proposes that the mind is located in a three or four-dimensional space that interlocks with the familiar material space and that this opens up an inner multidimensionality. Graham argues, along with Bernard Carr, that we need multidimensionality in mind as well as in physics. The next issue will contain both an article by Graham and a review of his book.

Dr. Michael Northwood spoke about *Apocalyptic Religion and American Empire*, based on his book *An Angel Directs the Storm*. He reminded us of the American idea of Manifest Destiny, that the United States is destined to inaugurate a new world order, an idea that goes back to the Pilgrim Fathers and their colonisation of the New World. Woodrow Wilson was

already speaking about making the world safe for democracy in the early 1920s, where the guiding idea is to redeem history and rid the world of evil. Reagan used this rhetoric (the evil empire) in the 1980s and George W. Bush has continued in this vein with his 'axis of evil'. In practice, though, American foreign policy has been about 'when and where to intervene' and some interventions have resulted in what the CIA calls 'blowback' or 'backwash' – for instance the strategy in Afghanistan in the late 1980s and the more recent invasion of Iraq.

If the idea of a new world order reflects post-millennial thinking, then the idea that we are in the so-called 'end-times' is distinctly pre-millennial. It has the interesting corollary that Government cannot do good and should therefore not intervene with the process leading to impending doom. It can only constrain evil. This applies both politically and ecologically in relation on the one hand to the role of Israel and on the other to the refusal to sign up to the Kyoto protocol. Economically, Michael stressed the dangers of what he called anarcho-capitalism, citing the situation in Russia at the beginning of the 90s. The current situation in Iraq is no better, with Halliburton netting \$8bn worth of contracts and subcontracting these to Iraqi companies without giving them the corresponding means to carry out a proper job. Interested readers should consult Michael's book, which is published by I.B. Tauris and was reviewed on p.70 of the December 2004 Network Review.

Yorkshire Group

MAX PAYNE 01142 304194, MIKE BROWN 01423 879038

Account of Yorkshire SMN meeting Saturday 8th October 2005

Carol Brierly was the hostess for this meeting at 18 Dam Hill, Shelley.

Jennifer Altman gave a talk on "*Models of Disease*". Conventional medicine regards disease as an imbalance in the body's working caused by injury or infection, and treatment is normally concerned just to remove physical symptoms. Much 'alternative' medicine comes under this heading as well. Holistic medicine may take in the whole person, mind, body and immediate environment, but still fails to deal with the total context.

This wider dimension can be addressed in various ways. Thus in some examples of 'energy medicine' there is a general 'field theory' in which matter is seen as an energy along with other energies - as in quantum physics. Yet this still ignores the total context of family history, and culture. Bringing the individual into a sense of connection with the larger whole can give a new approach to the understanding of disease.

She then outlined the Hollinger method of doing this through 'family sculpting'. The family of the diseased person is brought into a circle, and dead or absent members have their places taken by "representatives" who often find themselves taken over intuitively by their role without any previous knowledge of the family history. The result can be an awareness that present disease is a result of previous tensions, illness or karma over several generations. A sense of connection and love is created which replaces isolation and fear. The process works, and can achieve a liberation from a diseased condition. It had not yet been tested in terms of a prediction of a diseased condition which had not yet been diagnosed.

Olive Dewhirst talked on "*A Study of Interfaith Ministry*". From her earliest years she had been drawn to the church, but found no traditional dogma satisfied her. She had found her answer in 'Interfaith Ministry' and had found ordination in it a peak experience. The ministry was founded 13 years ago in New

York by an Episcopalian priest and a Jewish Rabbi to minister to mixed marriages, divided families and seekers of no faith. There a number of important things it is **not**. It is not a new religion, it does not intend to replace any existing faith, it does not have any pretensions to universality, it does not aspire to deep learning. It is simply an exercise in service. No one gives up their own position, but they attempt to enter the spiritual preciousness of the position of the other person. This provides the deepest inspiration of what to do, and the server finds that their own position is reflected back in the deepest and most luminous way.

Preparation for ordination consists in studying the deepest thoughts of different religious traditions and carrying out some of their simpler spiritual exercises. Faiths from shamanism to Bahai were examined with the three Western monotheistic religions and three main Eastern traditions in between. Questioning by the students was always polite but often searching. The spirit of the exercise is conveyed by the fact that when one of the Christian teachers was confronted with the manifest historical failings of organised Christianity, he simply went on his knees and said "Forgive!". The interfaith ministry finds the unity of religious experience in the love of the heart, not the intellectual synthesis of the head.

The next Yorkshire meetings will be held on Saturday March 25th, Saturday May 20th, and Saturday October 7th, 2006.

members' articles

The **unstarred** articles below are available from the office at 15p per sheet plus 30p postage per five sheets. Starred articles are on the web. Small UK orders are best paid in stamps. Overseas Members can add the appropriate amount to subscriptions or pay by credit card. The **starred** ones are only available electronically either via the listed web site, directly from the author, or from the editor. PLEASE CONTINUE TO SEND ARTICLES FOR THIS NETWORKING SCHEME. I have also included articles of general interest that are not by Members (e.g. Abrupt Climate Change).

SCIENCE/PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

* **The Feedback Crisis in Climate Change - A Topological Exploration of Equilibrium** - David Wasdell (35 pp.)

A very important paper: "*The Feedback Crisis in Climate Change*" highlights the all-too-real possibility of runaway climate change, driven by the naturally occurring positive feedback loops of the biosphere. It raises issues of the most fundamental and urgent nature for the world community and calls in question the effectiveness of current strategic responses to global warming.'

***The Maudsley Debate (Afterlife) - Opposing with John Polkinghorne; against Lewis Wolpert and Peter Atkins [proposing]** - Sean Spence (10 pp.)

Presents Sean's case in a debate at the Institute of Psychiatry on *Born-again brain? Neuroscience has demonstrated the implausibility of an afterlife*. The fact that such a debate could take place in the citadel of orthodox psychiatry is remarkable, and even more so when one learns that Sean and John prevailed. Sean questions the finding among a group of a hundred psychiatry students that not one believed in an afterlife. What, he asks, is the scope and competence of science in general and psychiatry in particular? The danger is that scientists 'say more than they know'.

* **Most Offspring Died When Mother Rats Ate GM Soy** - Jeffrey Smith (8 pp.)

Reports an experiment by Irena Ermakova of the Russian Academy of Sciences with rats fed Roundup Ready Soya. 'Ermakova's first surprise came when her pregnant rats started giving birth. Some pups from GM-fed mothers were quite a bit smaller. After 2 weeks, 36% of them weighed less than 20 grams compared to about 6% from the other groups (see photo below). But the real shock came when the rats started dying. Within three weeks, 25 of the 45 (55.6%) rats from the GM soy group died compared to only 3 of 33 (9%) from the non-GM soy group and 3 of 44 (6.8%) from the non-soy controls.' The article comes from *Spilling the Beans*, which is a monthly column available at www.responsibletechnology.org.

* **The Gaia Idea and the Education of our Children** - Joan Solomon - (10pp.)

A very thorough consideration of how the idea of Gaia might be taught to children within the context of science and the spirituality of wonder.

* **About the Continuity of our Consciousness** - Pim van Lommel in *Brain Death and Disorders of Consciousness* - Machado, C. and Shewmon, D.A., Eds - (12 pp.)

Presents the substance of Pim's lecture at this year's Beyond the Brain conference. Since the publication four years ago of his landmark article on NDEs in *The Lancet*, Pim has been considering the implications of continuity of consciousness during the experience. He concludes that 'such understanding fundamentally changes one's opinion about death, because of the almost unavoidable conclusion that at the time of physical death consciousness will continue to be experienced in another dimension, in an invisible and immaterial world, the phase-space, in which all past, present and future is enclosed.'

* **Abrupt Climate Change** - Robert B. Gagorian - (6 pp.)

A very lucid account of the probabilities of abrupt climate change, with special reference to the role of the oceans and in particular of the Global Ocean Conveyor. Gagorian argues that abrupt climate change has occurred in previous eras, where the climate shifts within a decade to a state that may then last several hundred years. He details the effects of a slackening of the Gulf Stream, which would result in a cooling of 3-5 degrees Celsius and bring Arctic conditions to the Eastern seaboard and Northern Europe.

* **New Problems with Cellphones** - Andrew Michrowski (6 pp.)

Abstract: 'The level of typical exposure to cellphone-related emissions has more than doubled for most Canadians in the last 5 years. This exposure has interacted with vaccines, common drugs and may be responsible for the genetic variations of Asian flu and *E Coli* distribution. Although sensitivity and absorption of these emissions is not the same for all, children are more vulnerable than adults. What can soon happen on a large scale in Canada has already occurred in Japan where MDs specialise in pathologies related from cellphone emission exposure, with limited success.'

* **The Fatal Trap** - Geoffrey Read (9 pp.)

Points out the devastating effect of an error syndrome built into the foundations of the scientific world-view: the belief that intrinsic change derives from spatial change.

* **A New Ontology** - Geoffrey Read (24 pp.)

A new theory of matter, time, space, and their inter-relationship is proposed. It is then shown how, from a physical

world thus conceived, life inevitable emerges and evolves, in dew course giving rise to mind. From this evolutionary process, survival of death and reincarnation are seen to follow as natural consequences.

***Speculations on Quantum Dynamics** – Amrit Sorli (6 pp.)

A semi-technical paper discussing cosmic space and consciousness, reminding the reader that 'consciousness acts in a scientist as his/her capacity to watch and to become aware the way mind functions. By watching the mind a scientist will become aware of the consciousness itself. He will become self-conscious, he will experience directly the a-temporal cosmic space.'

***Is the Evolutionary Ladder a Stairway to Heaven?** - Casey Luskin – (4 pp.) from ISCID Archives)

A review of Jos Verhulst's book *Developmental Dynamics in Humans and Other Primates: Discovering Evolutionary Principles through Comparative Morphology*.

*** Order, Structure, Physical Organisation and Biological Organisation** - Attila Grandpierre (8 pp.)

Argues that entropy is intimately connected with a reality much more comprehensive than the realm of material processes, distinguishes between the physical ordering of structures and the deeper realm of biological organisation from which collective possibilities emerge. Experimental results show that entropy increase is favourable to such biological organisation.

*** Skeptical of the Skeptics** - Ted Dance (5 pp.)

The article describing a conference sponsored by the James Randi Educational Foundation, which takes the lid off the skeptics' deliberations and tactics. Includes Richard Dawkins defining the "perinormal" as a new concept. See www.skepticalinvestigations.org

PHILOSOPHY-RELIGION

Response to George Johnson's Review of *The Universe in a Single Atom - B. Alan Wallace – (2 pp. plus original review 4 pp. and an extended reflection on other themes, 12 pp.)

Alan is responding to a review of the Dalai Lama's book in which Johnson complains that the Dalai Lama opposes "physical explanations for consciousness, invoking instead the existence of some kind of irreducible mind stuff, an idea rejected long ago by mainstream science." Concludes that 'while materialists and Buddhists, will continue to disagree about the nature of consciousness, the beauty of their differences in perspective is that they don't have to remain matters for philosophical debate, which are rarely resolved by philosophers. Many Buddhists, unlike scientific materialists, don't have faith that further study of the brain and behavior alone will shed light on the nature and origins of consciousness. But if refined first-person methods are used in conjunction with the third-person methodologies of the cognitive sciences, unprecedented clarity may be shed on these age-old questions.'

*** A Case of Two Universes** - George E Moss – (11 pp.)

Argues the case for two coincident universes; the one comprised of *physical* energies, and the other of non-physical *spiritual* energies. They each within themselves clearly have very different properties, but they interact in a variety of ways. The interactions have in the past been cloaked in mystery and sometimes ridicule. But acceptance that both universes exist could lead to our much better understanding of those

elements that continue to be viewed by many as unbelievable or mysterious.

*** The Demise of the World Soul and its Return** - Anne Baring – (9 pp. from Elixir Magazine)

Traces the history of the dominance of a male-dominated solar mythology over the last four millennia with its technological triumphs as well as its loss of instinctive awareness and connection with both visible and invisible realms. Then suggests that the present era is one where this imaginative and instinctive awareness is returning to compensate for the perceived shortcomings of our world-view. A brilliant synthesis of this aspect of Anne's work.

*** From Death to Life - A Dark Passage** - Ulrich Kramer – (4 pp.)

A paper presented at the British Psychological Society conference in September. It looks at a case history of a woman who has a cosmic perspective on her life during a therapy session. This is framed within an understanding that 'past lives and deaths' may affect the person's current state. A mind-expanding paper reminiscent of insights from Robert Monroe.

*** Literature, Memory and the Brain** – Iain McGilchrist - (26 pp.)

The brilliant paper given by Iain McGilchrist at the Lincoln Beyond the Brain conference (see Julian Candy's report). Iain draws on his knowledge of both English literature (e.g. Wordsworth) and neuroscience to put forward some fascinating insights on the nature of memory.

*** Philosophy of Redemption** - Henryk Skolimowski - (1 pp.)

In this short statement Henryk writes that 'the present world is slowly dying, strangled by the assumptions of a wrong philosophy. When the foundations of a society are crumbling, as the result of misconceived ideas of life and of the world, our lives are also crumbling. Philosophy is ultimately the masonry on which to build life and society.'

*** Label Land - Our Artificial World of Words** - Ted Falconar (2 pp.)

A short presentation of Korzybskian thinking that is visually rather than verbally based and which reflects a similar difference of approach between Goethean and orthodox science.

*** Derivation of the Bone & Classical Acupoint Compositions of the Human Body and Their Relationship to the Seven Musical Scales** - Stephen M. Phillips (34 pp.)

Articles 32 and 33 in Stephen's series, many of which can be found on the website. Shows how the Tree of Life mapping of the adult human body predicts the correct number of bones in its axial and appendicular skeletons.

*** The Human Axial Skeleton is the Trunk of the Tree of Life** - Stephen M. Phillips (16 pp.)

Follows up on the previous article. Both are technical and demanding, requiring an appreciation of symbolism and mathematics, but the detail is very impressive. See also www.smphillips.8m.com

*** Conception and Working Principles of the Virtual Oracle** - Evgueny Faydysh & Alexey Ivanov - (16 pp.)

'A new non-local information fields objectivisation technology is introduced. A unique type of human-machine registering systems - computer virtual scanners, or oracles - is developed. Their action is based on the same synchronicity principle as in traditional foretelling systems, but realised by means of

modern technologies for computer stimulation and virtual reality using the latest ideas of quantum mechanics, dynamic chaos theory and fractal sets.'

* **Awareness of the Transpersonal** - Ulrich Kramer (4 pp.)

Reports a method called MindWalking, which enables a standard set of transpersonal phenomena to emerge these include past life recall, present telepathy and recall of OBEs and NDEs. Illustrated with an extensive case history.

MEDICINE-HEALTH

* **Surgery at Trafalgar** - Sir James Watt KBE (17 pp.)

Drawing on his medical research and naval experience Sir James gives a fascinating account of surgery at Trafalgar, concluding that "British surgery at Trafalgar was not only superior to that of the French, but that it achieved significantly better results than those of civilian surgeons".

* **Prebirth Dynamics in the Formatting of Relationships & Reactive Attachment Disorders (RAD)** - Jon RG & Troya GN Turner - (30 pp.)

A major paper summarising 30 years of work in the perinatal field with case histories and pertinent reflections. The main point is that the formatting of our relationship patterns begins pre-birth and that lack of awareness of this fact is hugely detrimental so that 'increasing numbers of infants & children are floundering in a sea of neurological underdevelopment, dysfunctional & uncontrollable emotions which can generate various degrees of inappropriate, unsocial even anti-social behaviours.' Their solution is what they call Reactive Attachment Order (RAO)

* **Unhooked Thinking (A Philosophical Approach to Addiction?)** - William Pryor & Alan Rayner - (8 pp.)

The authors write that 'we are brought together by the observation that addiction is, beneath its drama, more a philosophical and metaphysical problem than anything else. Its medical, psychological, neurochemical, sociological and criminal manifestations are waves on the surface of a much deeper and darker ocean. Our disreputable outsider status enables us to say such outrageous things and brings an interesting resonance to the development of a philosophical understanding of why people adopt the extreme outsider position of addict, or of why it adopts them.'

* **The Gravitational Force and the Nervous System** - Mats Niklasson - (20 pp.)

Poster presentation that looks at the vestibular system as the commonest connection between gravitational force and the nervous system. Contains theoretical approaches, case histories and a subsequent discussion of the issues raised.

GENERAL

* **Why we Think we're always Right** - Paul von Ward (3 pp.)

A version of Paul's editorial for an issue of AHP Perspective discussing world-views and ideologies. He begins: 'On Veterans' Day, as a Vietnam-era vet, I always ponder why Johnson and Nixon believed they were right to issue orders that killed and maimed so many of my brothers and sisters, and the sons and daughters of other nations. Today, why does George Bush think he's right, while most everyone thinks he's wrong? Why do Benedict, Sistani, and Robertson believe they speak for the same God?'

* **The Nuclear Threat is as Real as Ever** - Professor Sir Joseph Rotblat - (4 pp.)

One of the last pieces by Sir Joseph Rotblat, who begins 'In choosing for this article the title 'The Nuclear Threat Is As Real As Ever', I did not have in mind a threat from Eastern countries. What I did have in mind was the threat from the US. I am deeply worried about the aggressive policy pursued by a team of hardliners, who have gained power in the Bush administration and are determined to ensure US supremacy in every field, including the nuclear one. By focussing attention on Iraq and now Iran, they diverted our attention from several measures, hardly reported in the media, which have radically changed the role of nuclear weapons and have greatly increased the danger of a nuclear war.'

* **The Shakespeare Authorship Controversy** - Peter Dawkins - (14 pp.)

Peter is the author of a recent book called *The Shakespeare Enigma* in which he makes the case that Francis Bacon was the principal author of the Shakespeare plays. Here he summarises the issues in the context of the recent publicity for *The Truth Will Out: Unmasking the Real Shakespeare* by Brenda James and William Rubinstein in which they argue that Sir Henry Nevill was the author, using some of the same arguments as Peter himself but applying them to another possible author. This essay gives the general reader a flavour of this fascinating controversy.

* **Eureka Experiences** - Tony Penny - (5 pp.)

Discusses the eureka experience within the context of ideas not emerging from the blue but rather from a mature and skilled mental framework, starting, of course, with Archimedes himself. Suggests that there are distinctions to be drawn between artistic, scientific and engineering creativities.

* **Architecture and Morality** - Henryk Skolimowski (4 pp.)

An article discussing the nature of architecture within the larger context of ethics and the environment and which also reflects the basis of the Prince of Wales's views.

* **What Rights are Eclipsed when Risk is Defined by Corporatism? (Governance and GM Food)** - Paul Nicholas Anderson (15 pp. from *Theory, Culture and Society* vol. 21, no. 6 December 2004)

The central contention of this paper is that 'where public debate on the introduction or extension of new technologies is prescribed to the limits of the expert, such dialogue can be confined to areas which in no way question the role of these technologies in the de facto selection of an exclusive kind of society whose development they serve.' This is then illustrated with reference to the debates on GM foods and nuclear power.

* **The Story of our Consciousness Evolution** - Pat Ryan (4 pp.)

An article responding to Lionel Milgrom's piece in the April Review within the framework of the author's own book on the evolution of consciousness.

* **Online papers by Anthony Judge - see www.laetusinpraesens.org**

Global Struggle against Extremism: from "rooting for" extremism to "rooting out" extremism

<http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/musings/extreme.php>

* *Ensuring Strategic Resilience through Haiku Patterns reframing the scope of the "martial arts" in response to strategic threats*

<http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/musings/haiku.php>

* *Union of Intelligent Associations: remembering dynamic identity through a dodecameral mind*
<http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/musings/untelos.php>

* *Acts of God vs Acts of al-Qaida: Hurricane Katrina as a message to Bible Belt America?*
<http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/musings/hurrican.php>

* *Resolving the Challenge of Faith-based Terrorism: Eliciting the dynamic of two-body, three-body and n-body variants*
<http://laetusinpraesens.org/musings/threebod.php>

MEMBERS' NEWS AND NOTICES

Victor Oubridge 1913 - 2005

Julian Candy writes: Victor Oubridge (always known as 'Vic'), died earlier this year, aged 92. A Network member of long standing, he was a regular attendee at meetings, in particular of the Consciousness and Spirituality in Science Groups. After his move five or so years ago for health and family reasons from Leamington Spa to Winchester, he came regularly to local group meetings, where his clear and thoughtful contributions were always appreciated.

Vic embodied a powerful amalgam of old fashioned virtues. He inherited the family business manufacturing piston rings, and clearly put much hard work in maintaining and extending its success, especially during the war. He was a devoted husband and paterfamilias, as tributes at his funeral bore witness. After retirement, he remained active for many years in teaching and monitoring business methods.

Beyond all that, he was intensely curious about the nature of the world in which he found himself, in particular about the role of consciousness. He amassed an extensive library focused on these topics. For his last few years he was engaged in writing an extended essay entitled: *Jacob's Ladder: the Hierarchy of Consciousness*. We had many discussions about this and I have what I believe is the last revision (though to his pleasure one of his grandchildren was also following with interest its progress). It is not complete, but is an attempt, drawing on many sources, including modern string theory as expounded by Brian Greene and the work of Douglas Fawcett concerning 'imaginism', to set consciousness in a dimensional and holarchical context.

Everyone who met Vic would soon recognise him to be a gentleman in the best and complete sense: his manner, his speech, his dress; more importantly, his consideration for others, his kindness, his self-effacement (especially in distressing circumstances). Beyond that, his curiosity, boldness and intellectual energy all flowed from a personality characterised by harmony and easy friendship. Network colleagues will join me I know in gratitude for his gifts and sadness at his passing.

Professor Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke – Chair of Western Esotericism and MA

Nick was appointed Professor of Western Esotericism and Director of the Centre for the Study of Esotericism in the University of Exeter in August this year. This is the first chair of its kind in the UK, and takes its place along with similar chairs in Amsterdam and Paris at the Sorbonne. It has been endowed largely from the estate of the late Geoffrey Farthing, a long-standing Network Member and Theosophical author. The MA in Western Esotericism is already under way, and the Centre has a number of PhD students registered as well. The purpose of the Master's programme is to introduce students

to this new and expanding field of academic study, providing an adequate grounding in its historical, theological and philosophical aspects. Students begin with a historical survey course entitled *The Western Esoteric Traditions* and can then follow up with more specialised study of such areas as Neo-Platonism, Hermeticism and Romantic Natural Science. Details: Tel: 01626 779941, email: N.Goodrick-Clarke@exeter.ac.uk and web www.huss.ex.ac.uk/research/exeseso/index.htm

Larry Dossey – Explore

Explore – The Journal of Science and Healing is now reaching the end of its first year of publication. It is an interdisciplinary journal that addresses the scientific principles behind, and applications of, evidence-based healing practices from a wide variety of sources, including conventional, alternative and cross-cultural medicine. It explores the healing arts, consciousness, spirituality, eco-environmental issues, and basic science as all these fields relate to health. There are clinical articles, case reports and a wide variety of themed column pieces as well as research abstracts and book reviews. See www.elsevier.com/locate/explore

Ian Lawton – Rational Spirituality

Following on from his article in the last issue, Ian has posted some new articles on his site www.ianlawton.com and there is a new site for the Rational Spirituality Movement at www.rsmovement.org - "*An Introduction to the Rational Spirituality Movement*": this sets out what rational spirituality is, what the movement is (and isn't), what it hopes to achieve, and the details of its ten precepts.

"*Bridging the Great Divide - A Rational Spiritualist View of Transcendence by Experience Rather Than Gnosis*": this contrasts the rational spiritual view of transcendence with that of many of the more esoteric spiritual approaches.

"*Reality and Time - A Rational Spiritualist View of Creating our own Reality, Multiple Realities and the Nature of Time*": this examines several popular esoteric concepts, and assesses whether they need to be qualified by rational spiritual evidence.

Claude Curling Fund

Claude was a longstanding and early Network Member who taught physics for many years at King's College, London. A Memorial Fund has been set up by Mrs Vera Curling in memory of her husband. She has initially donated £1,000 to the Department of Physics with £500 annually for undergraduate and postgraduate students that are experiencing financial difficulty. See www.kcl.ac.uk/physics

John Kapp - New Website Created 'Science Versus Materialism'

From Xmas 2005 log on to 'www.reginaldkapp.org' which republishes the philosophical work of Prof. Reginald Kapp (1885-1966) which comprise books 'Science versus Materialism' 1940, 'Mind Life and Body' 1951, 'Facts and Faith' 1955, 'Towards a Unified Cosmology' 1960, abstracts, and various papers. In 1,000 pages of rigorous logic, he demolishes materialism (also called monism) as bad science, and establishes dualism/vitalism (now called holism) as a better paradigm which can explain the inexplicable, and open up new fruitful fields of study.

He was fortunately free of any need to be politically correct, never having had to apply for grants. Others tried to unravel the Gordian knot of the materialist's core beliefs about matter, namely that it is the *only* reality, and that it is *permanent*. He cut the knot with Occam's razor, and showed scientifically that

both beliefs should be abandoned, and that much progress awaits if they are.

The **minimum** assumptions are that *non-material* influences (which he called 'diathetes' to avoid the emotive connotations of other words) also exist, and that matter has a *half-life* which he estimated to be between 350 and 400 million years. Assuming these new paradigms, he develops logical explanations for life and mind in the microcosm, and the origin of matter, gravity, formation and rotation of nebulae, galaxies, stars, the solar system, continental drift and evolution, including man, in the macrocosm.

His son and daughter (John and Elinor Kapp) have created this website in the hope that scientists world-wide (such as biologists, philosophers, consciousness students, physicists, astronomers, cosmologists,) will critically review his ideas, and launch research projects to test them. As the publication of Galileo's 'Dialogue' in 1632 promoted a paradigm shift to the solar system, we hope that this website will help promote a shift to holism,

For further information contact John Kapp at johnkapp@btinternet.com or 22, Saxon Rd Hove Sussex BN3 4LE England. tel 0044 (0)1273 417997

David Peat - The Pari Network: Ethics and Economics

As a result of our conferences and programs of visitors we have built up a network of business people, bankers and economists with a serious interest in the ethical dimensions of economics and business, at all levels from the local to the global. Through a series of informal meetings here in Pari as well as, thanks to the hospitality of Lord Stone of Blackheath, at the House of Lords in London, we have discussed issues of trust and loyalty in business and the spiritual dimension to these issues. See www.paricenter.com

NEWS AND NOTICES

Medicine-Health

Global Health Action 2005-2006

Global Health Action is a new campaign tool based on the first Global Health Watch published in July 2005 and supported by Global Equity Gauge Alliance, the People's Health Movement and MEDACT. The 22-page booklet documents a number of areas such as health inequalities, the role of the public health sector, globalisation and big business, climate change, war and conflict, and a new blueprint for the WHO. It makes both disturbing and stimulating reading, citing many illustrative case histories and setting out an advocacy agenda for health workers. See www.medact.org

Philosophy-Religion

Gifford Lectures Online

The John Templeton Foundation has funded a major project to put the Gifford Lectures online. This famous series of lectures on natural theology were endowed by Adam, Lord Gifford, in the four ancient universities of Scotland – Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St. Andrews. Gifford lecturers include some of the most famous names in philosophy and religion like William James, Albert Schweitzer, Alfred North Whitehead, Iris Murdoch and Werner Heisenberg; also scientists like Sir Arthur Eddington and Sir Charles Sherrington. In addition to the lectures themselves, the site contains summaries of the books and biographies of the lecturers. Word searches can be conducted, allowing researchers to identify key themes across different lectures. See www.giffordlectures.org.uk

Kosmos – An Integral Approach to Global Awakening

Kosmos is a new bi-ennial journal designed to inform, inspire and engage individual and collective participation in shaping our global future. It aims to connect the objective world of global realities with the inner world of spiritual values. Noting that we are the first generation called upon to build a sustainable and compassionate global civilisation, the journal contributes articles, book reviews and some stunning photos towards this end. See www.kosmosjournal.org

Peter Kingsley – new website www.peterkingsley.org

Readers of Peter's *In the Dark Places of Wisdom and Reality*, reviewed in this issue, may wish to know of his updated website which contains a number of new lectures on CD including *The Golden Chain*, *The Language of the Birds and the Secrets of Depression* and *An Ancient Dream: Origins of the Western World*. He will also be doing courses on the West Coast at Stanford University and in New York.

ESSSAT News

The European Society for the Study of Science and Theology issues an informative periodical electronic publication as well as organising a conference every other year. Next year's, in April, will be held in Romania on *Sustaining Diversity. Science, Theology and the Futures of Creation*. There are lengthy book reviews in the newsletter. See ESSSAT website: www.ESSSAT.org

Ecology-Environment

Robert Kennedy Jr wins William O. Douglas Award

Robert Kennedy Junior, in his capacity as a leading environmental lawyer, has won the 2005 William O. Douglas Award from the Sierra Club. In a barnstorming acceptance speech he excoriated the Bush Administration for its plundering policies, which he describes as a 'stealth attack': 'when they want to destroy the forests, they call it the Healthy Forest Act. When they wanted to destroy the air, they called it the Clear Skies Bill. But most insidiously, they have put polluters in charge of virtually all the agencies that are supposed to protect Americans from pollution.'

See www.sierraclub.org

Gaia Charity

Gaia charity, founded by the renowned scientist James Lovelock, has helped fund research into the earth and life sciences, notably research connected with the Gaia theory, which nobody else was prepared to fund. Over the past 11 years it has also organised and held four interdisciplinary meetings on the science of the living earth, bringing together statesmen, scientists and philosophers. These meetings have an

increasing influence on science and government. A fifth meeting is planned for Oxford in September 2006 for which the charity needs to raise funds - for more information see www.jameslovelock.co.uk

Mast Sanity - Blood Test Hope for Mobile Phone Mast Victims

People suspected of suffering ill-effects from phone mast emissions will now be able to request a blood test to ascertain the effects of non-ionising radiation. The German laboratory, which has pioneered the process will for the first time accept samples from British patients for analysis. Ingrid Dickenson, Director of Scientific Studies for national phone mast charity Mast Sanity is responsible for the initiative. "It seemed quite wrong to me that people in this country were being denied the chance to have this test," she said. "Although they will have to pay, we hope in time it will be included as one of the routine

tests available on the NHS." See www.mastsanity.org for this and news of other initiatives.

General

Right Livelihood Awards 2005

This year's Right Livelihood Awards (alternative Nobel Prizes) attracted 77 nominations from 39 countries and four awards were made. It is heartening to learn that the global media coverage was unprecedented. Francisco Toledo is an artist who has devoted himself to the protection, enhancement and renewal of the architectural and cultural heritage, natural environment and community life of his native Oaxaca in Mexico. Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke from Canada have been working for trade justice and recognition of the fundamental human right to water. Irene Fernandez from Malaysia is a campaigner working to stop violence against women and abuses of migrant and poor workers. Finally, Roy Sesana and the First People of the Kalahari are honoured for their resolute resistance against eviction from their ancestral lands and for upholding the right to their traditional way of life. In June, 80 of the laureates from the first 25 years met in Salzburg. 120 accredited journalists attended along with 4,000 people and 19 joint initiatives between laureates were set up. Further details: www.rightlivelihood.org

Institute of Noetic Sciences – Shift in Action

As well as rebranding its journal, *Shift: At the Frontiers of Consciousness*, IONS has inaugurated a new *Shift in Action* programme for its members. *Shift in Action* Partners Program offers a weekly stream of insight and inspiration via teleseminars, CDs, books, and access to a cutting-edge website with audio and video from pioneers. The Shift in Action program has been designed by the Institute of Noetic Sciences to empower people to become active partners in creating the kind of world we all want to live in – conscious, sustainable, and whole. There is also a quarterly CD – the latest from Van Jones on 'The Ruling Elite, A Failing Paradigm, and a Change of Heart'. See www.noetic.org

Universal Education Foundation

I have been involved with the International Futures Forum in helping organise two conferences on Futures of Learning, in Edinburgh and Paris. My colleagues Marwan Awartani from Palestine and Daniel Kropf from Belgium have attended both meetings on behalf of the Universal Education Foundation, whose purpose is to inspire people to listen more to children and young people and take more initiatives for their well-being. Their key values are respect, integrity, caring and learning by experiences. The Foundation is launching The Voice of Children as an international survey and will establish the Universal Education Awards. See www.uef-eba.org

review section

Books in this section can be purchased via the Network web site (www.scimednet.org) from Amazon.co.uk and the Network will receive a 10% commission. In addition, the Network receives a 5% commission on all sales if you log on through our web site!

SCIENCE-PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

New Consciousness Paradigms for a New Biology

Martin Lockley

THE BIOLOGY OF BELIEF: UNLEASHING THE POWER OF CONSCIOUSNESS, MATTER AND MIRACLES

Bruce H. Lipton

Elite Books, 2005, 224p, US\$25 p/b ISBN 0-9759914-7-7

The many positive pre-cover page endorsements signal this as a book well-worth reading. It is. Following a mid-life crisis Bruce Lipton, former University of Wisconsin School of Medicine Professor, came 'full circle from a reductionist scientific take on life to a spiritual one.' The result of this epiphany is a short, direct and enthusiastically radical exposition on the shortcomings of the *Central Dogma* (genetic determinism and the primacy of DNA). With his infectious love for cell biology, Lipton practically turns the cell inside out. He stresses that the nucleus, and its DNA are not the brains that control the cell, but merely the gonads - an 'understandable error' given the patriarchal nature of science! The membranes (mem-brains) and proteins are the real brains, interacting dynamically with the environment to

produce the genes organisms need: an 'inherent intelligence mechanism by which the cells evolve.' This 'new science' of epigenetics empowers the organism to interact with the environment.

In a few concise arguments, backed by excellent sources, Lipton covers essential ground concerning the growing evidence for gene transfer, GM problems and inheritance of characters acquired in life (Lamarckism). Likewise he demonstrates the conceptual shift from competitive win-lose Darwinism to co-operative, win-win synergistic paradigms like the Gaia hypothesis. I enjoyed his clear exposition on the role of electromagnetic charges in the dynamic or vital sculpting of proteins. Likewise his review of the results of the human genome project, which show that humans do not gain their 'undoubted complexity over worms and plants by using more genes,' is a model of simple clarity. His comparisons between triple unit membranes and bread and butter sandwiches are perhaps rather simplistic, but his description of receptor proteins, tuning into vibrational energy fields - like perceptive antennae - evokes a powerful image and shows how dynamic invisible forces cause intelligent configuration and behaviour changes in proteins and cells. In fact cells can self-charge like batteries. Membranes have liquid crystal properties, also described by Mae Wan Ho (1996), and have the functional properties of silicon chips which are crystal semiconductors with gates and channels: i.e., they are receptive or *programmable* (Lipton's emphasis).

Lipton considers the neglected implications to biology of quantum mechanics. Starting from the premise that the

universe is *one indivisible, dynamic whole* he stresses universal *intercommunication* (his emphases) between proteins, cells and organisms and the system wide influence of chemicals (pharmaceuticals) and electromagnetic forces, the former causing nasty side effects and iatrogenic disease. I'm reminded of Zhang's discussion of the importance of the electromagnetic versus the chemical body (Network, 81). Lipton is scholarly in noting that such biophysical/bioenergetics ideas are not new (Szent-Györgyi, 1960, McClare 1974)- simply too-long ignored or suppressed by pharmaceutical interests. In traditional medicine, non-invasive vibrational energy, although used in CAT scans and MRIs, for diagnosis, is only used for healing in rather simple cases like the breaking down of kidney stones.

Lipton next turns to the body/mind problem (ghost in the machine) citing the familiar example of how slime mould amoebas share 'co-ordinating information' as an 'elementary mind' and how Candace Pert shows that mind is distributed throughout the whole body not just the brain, as proved by extraordinary cases of hydrocephalus which have little effect on intelligence. Lipton distinguishes between the self-conscious mind associated with the prefrontal cortex, which can be controlled by will power and positive thinking, and the subconscious which is not so easily controlled. (Although he advocates treatment pioneered by Rob Williams www.psych-k.com). From here discussion extends to how the body does yield to control signals (from the nervous system) more readily than those from other organs. In this context he discussed the placebo or 'belief' effect which is effective some 80% of the time. Given the power of belief, Lipton argues that fear responses (e.g., activation of the Hypothalamus- Pituitary-Adrenal axis) has opposite, negative effects, suppressing somatic growth, releasing stress hormones into the immune system and causing fatigue and damage.

Lipton echoes the message of Joseph Chilton Pearce (Network 83) that conscious pre- and post- natal nurturing is essential for a child's health, providing an essential antidote to genetic myopia (determinism) which threatens to absolve us of parental responsibility for love and nurture. Responsibility begins even earlier: genomic imprinting actually affects the maturation of sperm and egg before

conception! Sonograms show that the fetus 'arches its body and jumps up as if ... on trampoline when [parental] argument is punctuated with the shattering of glass.' (Do Greek weddings convey a different vibe)?!

In the final epilogue Lipton turns to spiritual ruminations as to how the individual body is not the source of identity (self) but is a receptor that resonates with, or 'downloads' from, a 'complex signature contained within the vast information that collectively comprises the environment.' This view is supported by organ recipients who develop the very specific tastes of donors. Thus - 'because the environment represents 'all that is' (God) and our self-receptor antennas download only a narrow band of the whole spectrum, we all represent a small part of the whole.. a small part of God.'

Lipton clearly has supporters, as shown by the cover blurbs and Theodore Hall's endorsement which specifically uses Lipton's concept (www.Biofractalevolution.com) as a web site label (see book review in this issue). However, this fractal evolution concept, though a substantive and convincing new version of what previous generations have called iterative evolution is not much elaborated in this book. Lipton's naïve, adolescent ebullience and 'gung-ho' American expressions at times jar sedate sensibilities and he has yet to fully shed the mechanistic language he sometimes decries. But, I admit this latter is hard to do. Nonetheless for me the enthusiasm for his new biology paradigm was genuine and justified by the growing evidence that we are fast outgrowing the old biological consciousness.

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Professor Martin Lockley is the author of 'The Eternal Trail' and teaches palaeontology and evolution of consciousness at the University of Colorado in Denver.

Beyond Epistemological Imperialism

David Lorimer

WAYS OF KNOWING

edited by Chris Clarke (SMN)

Imprint Academic, 2005, 260 pp., £17.95 p/b – ISBN 184540 12 7

Subtitled '**Science and Mysticism Today**', this book is an important contribution to the continuing cultural debate about the validity of different ways of knowing and, more specifically, a challenge to the prevailing scientism which assumes that only empirical methods currently sanctioned by science are legitimate. Readers will be aware that the book is related to the conference, reported elsewhere in this issue by Jennifer Elam. The book is divided into four sections, with introductions to each by the editor: The Social Context, The Perspective of Psychology, Physics, Logic and the Pluralistic Universe, and The Nature of the Spiritual Path. There are 13 contributions in all and it is not

possible to review all of these in the space available.

The starting point of the book has much in common with the theme of this year's Mystics and Scientists conference, *Healing the Split*, at which the editor spoke. Here I referred to the split between inner and outer, mind and body, subjective and objective, spirituality and science, feminine and masculine, earth and humans, quality and quantity. Western culture, as also argued by Richard Tarnas in *The Passion of the Western Mind*, reflects the predominance of the second terms over the first, which many of us think has resulted in a serious cultural imbalance. This book (and Rick's forthcoming one *Cosmos and Psyche*) is part of a response to this situation and provides some philosophical groundwork for a new and more participatory outlook.

Socially, this becomes very clear in reading the first essay in the book, June Boyce-Tillman's *Subjugated Ways of Knowing*. It is very thorough analysis of different polarities (even dichotomies) and shows up a systemic bias against the intuitive, the body, the feminine and the earth. She labels these contrasting clusters of qualities System A (for objectivity and detachment etc.) and System B (for being and emotion etc.), corresponding to Type A and Type B behaviour

patterns. Interestingly, we know that overdoing Type A responses can create stress that undermines one's health. Of course, as she points out, we need a third point defining the connection between the polarities. Jennifer Elam writes about the important topic of mystical experience as a way of knowing, a position obvious to mystics but not to rational philosophers who distrust knowing by identity rather than separation (and doubt). She draws on a number of perceptive and complementary descriptions.

Turning to psychology, Douglas Watt highlights the theme of connection and continuity but in criticising the notion of disembodied existence fails to mention the possibility of other forms of subtle embodiment – in other words 'body' can be understood as form rather than physical matter. Isabel Clarke builds on the useful cognitive distinction by Teasdale and Barnard between what they call the 'propositional subsystem' and the 'implicational (or relational) subsystem'. Isabel sees this as a web of connection that is intimately related to spiritual experience. Later in the volume, Chris Clarke echoes the strand with his essay on both-and thinking and quantum logic, as does Rodney Bomford with his discussion of the work of Matte Blanco on symmetric (or associational) logic, which is the logic of the subconscious.

The challenge here is to let go of the conviction that there is only one valid form of logic. But as Bomford writes: 'a purely objective approach to reality ignores human subjectivity and leads to a soulless and incomplete understanding.' (p. 142) And Chris observes that 'our modern estrangement is not simply a reflection of the objective reality of the universe; it is a particular cultural phenomenon.' This in turn is based on realism where reality is by definition 'unengaged, separated from feelings.' Lyn Andrews uses her own mystical experience to reflect on the creativity of the mind as it constructs interpretations of reality – making seams out of the essentially seamless.

Jorge Ferrer summarises and elaborates the participatory

thesis of his seminal *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory*. His work is both lucid and revolutionary, proposing that 'spirituality emerges from human cocreative participation in an always dynamic and indeterminate spiritual power.' (p. 107) Spirituality is thus enactive and not reactive in nature. A consequence of Jorge's view is that the validity of spiritual knowledge does not derive from an accurate matching with a pregiven content, as many perennial philosophers would argue. The key for him is the quality of selfless awareness disclosed which is also emancipatory, liberating the individual from narcissism and self-centredness. His spiritual universalism embraces a variety of insights without, he claims, falling into relativism.

Coming now to the essays on the nature of the spiritual path, Neil Douglas-Klotz reflects on ways of knowing in Islamic mysticism, relating this to the work of Maslow and Reich. Maslow's work has been pursued to a much greater extent than Reich's but our current levels of dysfunctionality in aggression and sexuality make a revisiting of Reich's insights an important task. The last two essays are ecologically oriented, by David Abram and Anne Primavesi. Abram's work is central to our recovery of what he calls body-earth reciprocity and an ethics based on the recognition of fellow-feeling. Anne sees the mystic as one in touch and communing with the greater whole or sacred unity that binds us together.

Chris Clarke rounds the volume off with both a summary and a prescription, with which readers of the book will surely concur: 'the way out of this cycle [of aggression and violence] involves the re-integration of our thinking, honouring diverse ways of knowing while being open to the constant growth and change that flows from the Spirit.' It would be an encouraging development if this volume became an integral part of philosophy and psychology departments where the need is greatest and where an incomplete way of thinking is systematically perpetuated.

'Oneness' Trumps an Abominable Evolutionary Doctrine

Martin Lockley

OVER THE BONES OF THE DEAD: EVOLUTIONARY SCIENCE- PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Theodore D. Hall

Hallograph Publishers, 2003/5, 145p, \$14.97 p/b - ISBN: 1-4116-2153-0, or \$7.21 downloaded from www.biofractalevolution.com

American historian Theodore Hall (Ph.D) joins the growing ranks of independent thinkers who have something to say about the shortcomings of Darwinism, which still clings to its claim as the pre-eminent theory of evolution. Much of the problem, from Hall's valuable perspective, stems from what Samuel Coleridge called 'the abominable doctrine' of Thomas Malthus regarding the so called 'population problem.' As any student of evolution knows Darwin was strongly influenced by Malthus' 1798 essay which argued that population increase causes competition for scarce resources. Thus, Darwin inferred, with a little help from Alfred Russel Wallace, that 'natural selection' ensured the 'survival of the fittest' (a phrase borrowed from Herbert Spencer). This established a competitive, rather than a co-operative, doctrine in evolutionary theory. Darwin, who appears quite a borrower,

derived his ostensibly biological theory from such socio-political domains, as social Darwinists firmly note.

What evolutionary science overlooks in its inadvertent but nonetheless revisionist desire to recognise Malthus as a clever population statistician, is that by modern standards, he was a shameless lackey of the moneyed establishment. He warned of the dangers of charity and welfare for the poor and disenfranchised victims of industrialisation, who could weaken the race and interfere with the manifest destiny of the privileged classes. Thus, Malthus who worked for the East India Company, one of the first multi-national corporations, created the eugenics mentality which reared its ugly head so blatantly in the early 20th century and, alas, still lingers in the abomination of ethnic cleansing and the indulgent fantasy of designer babies. The ruling classes, according to Hall, found it easy to blame the breakaway independence of Americans and such radicals as Tom Paine on the 'population problem,' rather than on their own monopolistic, robber-baron policies.

Let me digress to note that early 20th century Neo-Darwinism heavily based on quantitative *population* genetics. It also coincided with the most overt eugenics movements, not only in Nazism but also in a bizarre eugenic literature on health and hygiene. Mention of Coleridge reminds us that Owen Barfield (1971) studied his thought and offered penetrating 'evolution-of-consciousness' insights into the pitfalls of idolatry that await those who mistake our 'collective representations' for ultimate reality. It strikes one as a huge irony that the present political idolatry of unbridled private (corporate) enterprise, especially in the USA, is so intimately

wedded to the roots of Darwinism while claiming to be so anti-evolution!!

Hall, therefore, as a good historian, prompts us to look closely at the reality of the corporate agenda that motivated the population problem doctrine, and suggests we discard the revisionist gloss that paints Malthus and Darwin as infallible heroes of modern science. As Hall notes Darwin at times borrowed distasteful Malthusian language to warn against the 'weak members of civilised societies propagat[ing] their kind' in a process 'highly injurious to the race of man.' (See *War against the Weak* by Carl Zimmer). However, later in life Darwin revealed another, more repentant side in *The Descent of Man* where he acknowledges human altruism and adherence to the golden rule of love (see my review of David Loye in Network 80).

One of the strengths of this short, concise and well-rounded little book (and bibliography) is that it balances its criticism of orthodox Darwinism with a well-informed presentation of alternatives. We are reminded that the unjustly-maligned Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, who held that variation acquired in life by individuals could be inherited, was really the father of the evolutionary concept, which Darwin subsequently elaborated. Likewise Alfred Russel Wallace was also an unsung hero whose ideas and life were significantly more creative and visionary than Darwin's despite the latter's eminence, and his lack of culpability for subsequent distortions or simplifications of some of his ideas.

Hall points out the current need for alternatives to Darwinism ('a textbook orthodoxy which remains oblivious to its own demise') and so selects various evolutionary paradigms for special emphasis. The first, developed from obscure progenitors by Lynn Margulis into an established *Symbiogenesis Theory*, is perhaps the most accepted, even by ultra-Darwinists like Richard Dawkins. Inherent in this paradigm is the idea that organisms co-operate rather than only compete. A second alternative centres on evidence of *membrane expansion* promulgated by biologist Bruce Lipton, who argues that the nucleus and the genome are not the

brains of the cell but merely the gonads (reproductive organs that can be removed without destroying the cell). The membrane, however, is essential to the cell's vitality and is in constant interaction with the environment, sending signals from impish *integral membrane proteins* (IMPs) back to the genome, which happily responds in Lamarckian fashion. Lipton and Hall equate expansion of membranes (e.g., prokaryotes to eukaryotes to multicellular organisms) with the evolution of intelligence and consciousness (enhanced receptivity and relationship with the environment). Lipton also stresses the fractal nature of this organisation, likening the epithelium to the membrane. (One might also liken the biosphere to the Earth's intelligent skin).

Although these concluding hypotheses are rather sketchily presented I believe they are essentially correct, as long as we attribute intelligence to the whole system. The Earth's vegetation (biota), fresh water, salt water and soil are like the biosphere's lungs, arterial, venous and digestive systems respectively. Goethean biology already recognises this bio-fractal organisation on many levels from cell to organ, individual, species, family and so on (especially in the case of mammals: Schad, 1977). Hall ends with a reminder that institutional paradigms eventually fail, and in a speculative afterword predicts the same imminent fate for the 'Church of Materialistic Scientism.' Hall boldly picks 2012 as the date for a marriage of 'Symbio-Darwinism and bio-fractal evolutionary theory' claiming optimism about a future religio-scientific synthesis: 'The Oneness' predicted by Nostradamus. So ... might we anticipate that in seven short years the abominable doctrine will be history?

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Reading the Mind of God

Max Payne

GALILEO, DARWIN and HAWKING

Phil Dowe

Wm Eerdmans Pub. 2005, 205p., \$21.00, ISBN 0-8028-2696-2

This book starts with percipient insights but fails to live up to its own implications. Dowe suggests that the relation between science and religion can be divided into conflicts and resolved harmony. This pattern can be further subdivided. There are conflicts in which science is held to disprove religion, or alternatively where religion rejects the findings of science. Harmony can be obtained negatively by erecting 'no trespassing' notices between the fields of religion and science. This was Wittgenstein's solution. Science and religion are different language systems and should not be confused. Rightly Dowe gives little time to this cop out. Most interesting and most important are the situations where apparent conflict between science and religion is solved by either religion, or science, moving from an entrenched position to a higher recognition of a harmony between the two.

Dowe analyses three major conflicts in astronomy, evolution and cosmology and quantum physics under the names of Galileo, Darwin and Hawking. The conflict over Galileo is old hat. The church has long recognised it was mistaken, and Copernican astronomy is now thought to be no threat to Christian belief, as indeed Galileo, himself, thought at the time. The fact that the Bible is resolutely geocentric in its cosmology is glossed over by all parties. Evolution presents a greater challenge. Dowe rehearses all the arguments, including those of contemporary American advocates of 'Intelligent Design'. Dowe considers that evolution and Christianity can be brought into harmony. Evolution is not a problem for Teilhard De Chardin and Sri Aurobindo; for them it is an integral part of the Divine drive into creation. But Dowe does not mention this.

There is, however, a deeper question posed by evolution and geology. Life has evolved on this planet for billions of years, and the human race for millions. There were no primal parents in the Garden of Eden, and no Fall, and hence no Atonement as preached by St. Paul. All subsequent Christian theology is based on the Atonement, and therefore fails from this point onward. Dowe does not mention this problem.

Hawking has suggested that to find an equation which unifies the fundamental forces of nature would be to 'know the mind of God'. Dowe links this the question of the

'Anthropic Principle' which notes that a fantastically improbable fine tuning of the laws of nature have been required to produce intelligent life on this planet. Whether this fine tuning is by design or chance, he argues that either is equally compatible with a Theistic God. He also argues that the idea of a law giving God was crucial to the rise of science. Mediaeval China was technologically far in advance of Europe, but did not invent science, because nature was thought of as a fluid living thing. Europe, in contrast, had the image of a transcendent personal God who gave dead nature laws. It was therefore reasonable to try to discover what those laws where.

It may be that the icon of an anthropomorphic law giving God was necessary to kick start Western science, but it could be that a very different religious vision is more likely to provide a reconciliation between religion and science in the future. Dowe considers the options of a vague Pantheism,

the remote God of Deism, and a Theism which is largely Christian with a brief reference to Islam. The highly sophisticated Monisms of Buddhism and Hinduism are totally neglected. Yet the kalpas and mahakalpas of Hinduism fit better with the billions of years in modern cosmology than the earth centred space of the Bible, with time measured in generations from Adam. The subtleties of the interconnection between mind and matter in quantum physics are better reconciled with Mahayana metaphysics, than the crudities of the book of Genesis. The harmony between science and religion which Dowe points to may require more movement on the part of religion than he seems to allow for.

Max Payne is a Vice-President of the Network.

MEDICINE-HEALTH

Towards an Integrated Psychiatry

Julian Candy

BEYOND PROZAC: HEALING MENTAL DISTRESS

Dr Terry Lynch

PCCS, 2004, 316 pp., £13.00 p/b - ISBN 1 898059 63 2

During my time as a trainee psychiatrist I worked for a while for Dr William Sargent. As Dr Lynch points out, he was well known, even notorious, for his unrelenting advocacy of drugs and other physical treatments for mental illness, especially depression. His powerful personality helped him to achieve good short-term results, though the longer term outcomes appeared less favourable. In those days the psychoanalysts stood at the other poll. Their techniques, effective or not, were excessively time-consuming and therefore for the most part impractical. Dialogue between these two camps was scant and generally bad tempered or worse. As a result many patients got a raw deal.

How far we have come since then? This book provides little ground for complacency. As a GP, Terry Lynch recognised the harm done by the narrow biological focus of much medical practice, not only in mental health. Courageously, he began with himself, completing an MA in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy before taking up work again as a GP with a special interest in mental health. 'In practice, I work primarily as a psychotherapist. I prescribe medication when I believe it is appropriate to do so.' (p. 7)

Pointedly, his first chapter concerns medical research. He draws out the poor quality of much published work, particularly though not exclusively in mental health. He highlights the careless use of statistics, and in particular the dependence of much research on the support of and implicit endorsement of the drug manufacturing companies. Using many examples, he identifies the poor quality of the evidence for many of the medications prescribed for mental illness, and the way in which single unreplicated studies are often used to market new drugs. Perhaps he might have emphasised that the rest of medical research is in little better case.

He goes on to debate whether 'mental illness' really exists. Unlike some commentators, he does not

underestimate the importance of diagnosing and treating biological pathology, such as thyroid deficiency, but emphasises the need for a whole person approach. However, the need for psychiatrists to establish themselves as practising a 'scientific' specialism has led, he claims, to the unjustified assertion that mental distress can be equated with mental illness, and thus almost always has physical, biological or genetic causes. In general he challenges this, and uses poignant case examples in support. Along the way he analyses many of the groups of drugs used in psychiatric practice, pointing out their limited effectiveness, proneness to side-effects and often late recognised propensity for dependence.

A chapter is devoted to depression. He is critical of attempts to classify and provide operational definitions for the condition, the use of which he believes stultifies doctors' ability to respond empathetically to their patients. The overuse by both psychiatrists and GPs of antidepressant medication is castigated, and the continuing controversy concerning the SSRIs, of which fluoxetine (Prozac) is an example, is given a personal touch as he describes his own intervention in the debate. In my view, the moving stories that follow might be illuminated by bearing in mind that 'depression' has three meanings which though they may overlap need as far as possible to be distinguished: a normal human response to adverse circumstances; a symptom of another condition, for example an underacting thyroid; and an illness per se to which biological and psychological elements play a part in both symptomatology and management. Overdiagnosis of the third category by doctors springs as much from lack of time, facilities and inclination as from poor training or a desire to 'play God'.

Schizophrenia, manic depression, anorexia and bulimia, and substance abuse are analysed along similar lines. Evoking, listening to, and responding to the content and meaning for their lives of patients' symptoms is what's needed, rather than prescribing the latest drug peddled by the representative of the pharmaceutical company. Once again the account is enlivened by apposite though not necessarily representative case histories.

Within these two chapters the increasingly important place in the management of mental distress and illness of psychological interventions, in particular cognitive behavioural therapy and its relatives, might have been more fully acknowledged.

The rest of the book is devoted to suicide: its causes and its prevention. He contrasts the tendency amongst doctors

to explain suicidal behaviour by finding evidence of depressive illness with an approach based on understanding the person's story in its own terms. Sensitively he unravels stories that enable to understand how vulnerable people can be driven to despair by circumstances, among which may sometimes be included ill-judged medical intervention. This distinction between explanation and understanding has in fact a long and resonant history within psychiatry, and every psychiatrist should strive to honour both aspects as he encounters people in distress.

This book is timely, and well-written. Its message is clear though inevitably perhaps somewhat oversimplified. He is right I believe to emphasise the often pernicious influence of the drug companies, who have a vested interest in medicalising mental distress, and some psychiatrists are still too willing to accept their embrace. However, I have witnessed great changes since the days when William Sargant was set against the Tavistock Clinic. Before retirement I spent ten years as an examiner for the Royal College of Psychiatrists. We expected trainees at the clinical examination to demonstrate the ability to develop and convey to us an account - however tentative - of why this person should be suffering in this way at this time, and to develop a comprehensive plan of management based on this formulation. Any candidate who ignored or distorted the central place of psychological and personal factors for both

formulation and management would fail the examination. The challenge of day-to-day practice as a psychiatrist, and at a simpler though even more significant level as a GP, is to maintain the high standards that the examination reflected, while the obligation of management is to provide a setting which permits those standards to be met. Sadly, even today neither the challenge nor the obligation is reliably taken up. Many of us consider that a particularly encouraging development in the maturation of psychiatry is the establishment in 1999 of the Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group within the Royal College, which currently is one of the largest, fastest growing and most active of such groups.

How we respond to those amongst us in mental and emotional turmoil, particularly when such distress is linked with untoward or threatening behaviour, will always be difficult and controversial, since the issue impinges on fundamental questions concerning the nature and destiny of the individual, the relation between body, mind and spirit, and consciousness itself. This contribution is valuable, but its necessarily polemical emphasis overlays important and fascinating complexities which deserves more open debate.

Dr. Julian Candy is a retired psychiatrist who works in a hospice and has a deep interest in Goethe.

World-views in Practice

David Lorimer

HANDBOOK OF PSYCHIATRY AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

edited by Allan M. Josephson and John R. Peteet
American Psychiatric Publishing, 2004, 179 pp., n/p - ISBN 1 58562 104 8

This book could not have appeared ten years ago – it is a tribute to progress in the field of spirituality and health that it appears now. The last decade has seen the foundation of the Spirituality and Psychiatry special interest group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Transpersonal Section of the British Psychological Society and huge advance of spirituality and health courses in US medical schools – from 4 to over 90 of the 125 or so in existence. And the Royal College SIG has over 1,000 members. The four parts cover conceptual foundations, clinical foundations, patients and their traditions, and worldview and culture.

The preface notes the burgeoning literature on spirituality and health, and observes that all patients and clinicians have a world-view, whether they realise it or not; in other words, atheism and agnosticism are included. Although the editors say that it is important to gain an understanding of 'our own and our patients' worldviews', in practice the focus is largely on the patient, while the conceptual foundations of Western medicine are not subjected to close scrutiny. However, it is true to say that the interaction of physician and patient implies an interaction of their worldviews. The introductory chapter concentrates on Freud, whose thought was very unsympathetic to spiritual worldviews, considering

the implications of his worldview for his own clinical practice. Armand Nicoli concludes that 'the patient's worldview gives the clinician insight into the patient's self-image, relationships, values, and identity, as well as how he or she confronts illness, suffering and death.'

The second part considers worldview in psychiatric assessment, in diagnosis and case formulation, and in terms of therapeutic implications. There is a useful discussion of an in-depth interview guide covering developmental history, community, God, belief, rituals and practices, and spiritual experience. Again the emphasis is on the patient, when it would surely be useful for each clinician to respond to the questions as an exercise in self-awareness. John Peteet then examines the overlap between existential and clinical concerns in terms of meaning and purpose attributed to life in general and hence to illness.

Part three – patients and their traditions – follows a common framework and covers Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, atheists and agnostics. An introductory section is followed by a description of core beliefs and practices, clinical implications, variations of therapeutic encounters and collaboration with faith communities. It might make a considerable difference, for example, if a patient has a strong belief in original sin or the healing power of God. The case histories bring the concepts to life and show how worldviews shape the interpretation of symptoms. .

The final part looks at the wider relationship between culture and worldview. Both situate an individual within a group with shared beliefs, but clearly many different worldviews can exist within the same culture. Overall, the volume should enable clinicians to adopt a more sympathetic approach their patients' worldviews, especially if they differ from their own, but a greater self-awareness on the part of the physician is no less important.

DIY Health

Anne Silk

I'M A PATIENT - GET ME OUT OF HERE....

Dr Diana Samways (SMN)

P O Box 52, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 1JA, England.

Tel: 01428 643021. £7.99 + p&p (UK: £2.50)

ISBN 0-9549252-0-3

Dr Samways is a GP with the ability to look 'out-of-the-box' who has succeeded in gathering together the many neostressors in the 21C environment which can and do cause adverse health effects. She writes in a frank and refreshing style, staying true to medicine, yet looking at new problems and their solutions. As she writes, people are different and what affects one may not affect another - she comments on the fact that many symptoms reported are so bizarre that unless the doctor is prepared to look at further environmental factors many treatments may be ineffective.

As Somerset Maugham wrote 'The only important thing in a book is the meaning it has for you' (*The Summing Up 1938*). This common sense book written by a doctor with the experience of years of general practice can be thought of as a DIY guidebook for many common health problems. She has a particular interest in allergies, candida, addictions, moulds. The latter is a subject rarely discussed yet it can lie at the root of many health problems and much sensible advice is given here for those with this sensitivity. Diet is also well addressed with much advice not involving 'the Pill fairy'. On page 26 she uses a wonderful analogy of the human gut as a garden with the natural balance of weeds and flowers - but put in weedkillers (antibiotics) and the balance is altered. And on page 13 are two Riverbank stories, one of babies floating down the river and being rescued, the second told by a wise old priest relating to the river-of-life itself. Both are prime examples of lateral

thinking, sorely needed in current health care.

Regarding electromagnetic fields as Dr Samways writes, our homes are effectively Faraday cages, with more and more electrical and electronic devices being installed. But she could, with advantage, in the next edition detail standing waves, RF 'hotspots' as quoted in WHO literature and pulsing of signals. The recent (January 2005) Stewart Report by the National Radiological Protection Board draws attention to areas of concern, not only heavy use of Mobile phones, especially by children, but also effects on the brain of pulsed fields however sourced. One very important fact is stressed - the importance of good history taking from a patient by the health professional. Indeed your reviewer, when in contact lens practice, found that a good history, when trying to establish causative factors in problem cases, was a very worthwhile time investment. But can GPs, with the heavy pressures on their time, take time for the luxury of history taking?

If your reviewer may make two small criticisms, firstly there is no index and secondly on page 61 the term 'cluster' is used regarding a Scottish fishing village and leukaemia cases. But clusters are of many types - some seven in all varying with type of illness, whether it is rare or common, how long in an area, the latency period of the diseases etc. Many local groups are gathering all illness under one heading and terming it a cluster with no awareness of the many occupational and environmental factors involved. In all this book should be in every home, whether your family is young, grown up or retired - sensible self-help is timely, vital and must surely be welcomed by the medical profession. And your own feeling of pride when you can knock that irritating symptom on the head without recourse to the 'Pill Fairy' will be worth its weight in gold!

Anne Silk is a contact lens consultant interested in the systemic effects of non-ionising radiation.

The Presence of the Past

Gunnel Minett

HEALING YOUR PAST LIVES, EXPLORING THE MANY LIVES OF THE SOUL

Roger Woolger, Ph.D. (SMN)

Sounds True, USA, 2004, £15.99, 85 p, Hardback, ISBN 1-59179-183-9

Past lives is a topic about which science still displays a lot of scepticism. Still there is a growing number of people who, not just claim to be able to remember their past lives, but that this actually has a beneficial effect on both their mind and body.

I guess I fall into this category, although I still don't know if I have been able to remember a 'past life' or if it has been something else, that has had a positive effect on me. All I know is that up until about twenty years ago, I had a mild phobia, thinking someone was standing right behind me and that this somehow scared me. I also found eyes behind a mask very frightening. Not that either bothered me too much, but I was surprised to find myself having an intense experience of being executed by a man with a masked face, during a breathwork session (a form of intensified meditative breathing). Why I had this strong image I don't know, but after it my 'phobias' disappeared never to return.

Reading this book, I realise that my experience seems very similar to the case stories quoted in the book. Although, at the

time I had my experience I did not know about (or believe in) past lives. I was just surprised to have such an intense experience out of the blue, and that it somehow got rid of my fearful thoughts, without me understanding what it was all about.

In this book Woolger presents a brief but clear overview of the basic principles of past life therapy in a poetic language that emphasises the spiritual aspects of this technique. By referring to Eastern philosophies, Woolger also shows that scientific scepticism has more to do with our limited Western worldview than with the possibility of Reincarnation being real.

The book deals with 'the Story behind the Story', how to remember past lives and how they relate them to present problems. We also learn about 'the Soul's Unfinished Business', what Buddhists know about existence between lives, and how to make our souls whole again. The concluding chapter offers a brief overview of the secret history of Reincarnation.

The book comes with a CD with 5 short but powerful guided exercises where Woolger guides us through the different parts of his technique of accessing past lives. Although they are perfectly safe to do at home, it is always recommended to get the added support that a training/workshop can offer. Woolger runs workshops in many countries and has a website with more details: www.rogerwoolger.com.

In short, the book is a wonderful presentation of a very exciting technique, that regardless of whether it can be explained, has been found to have a very healing effect on a growing number of people worldwide.

Gunnel Minett is author of 'Exhale'.

PHILOSOPHY-RELIGION

Mystical Origins of Western Culture

David Lorimer

REALITY

Peter Kingsley

Golden Sufi Centre 2003, 591 pp., \$19.95 p/b – ISBN 1 890350 09 5

The legend of the Grand Inquisitor is one of the most famous chapters of *Dostoevsky's Brothers Karamazov*. In it Jesus comes back to Seville at the height of the Spanish Inquisition and has an interview with the Grand Inquisitor himself. 'We have corrected your work', he advises him. The demands of freedom and responsibility are too great for most individuals, hence they are happy to hand their freedom over to the Church. *Reality* is Peter Kingsley's third book about the ancient Greek philosophers Parmenides and Empedocles. His central contention is that rational philosophers have 'corrected their work' by ignoring the mystical and shamanic origins of their insights and settling for a safe rationalism instead of the existential grilling of an initiatory process. Nor is this book a straight academic treatise; it is rather a mystically subversive and passionately intense direct appeal to the reader to enter a transformative path of initiation pioneered by these philosophers.

Reality is a long book, demanding stamina from the reader who must embark on an inner journey by means of the book. Not only does Kingsley turn upside down centuries of scholarship, but he also seeks to turn the reader inside out in the process, issuing challenges at every turn. *Reality* is effectively two books in one, the first about Parmenides and the second about Empedocles, but with linking threads running throughout. The chapters are divided up into shorter sections, and all the section notes are gathered at the end. The tone of the book is simple and informal, and it has a special rhythm where short and arresting epigrammatic sentences are interspersed with longer explanations and an awareness of what the reader may be thinking. For instance: 'In terms of reality there is no past. You may think I am joking. But this is perfectly serious; it calls for a little explaining' (which he then provides).

For Parmenides, our rational sense of familiarity is an illusion that must be challenged. As Kingsley says, speaking about himself as well, 'if you want to keep a grip on what you know, you will have to dismiss what I say' (p. 15). There is a knowing (*gnosis*, *noesis*) beyond the rational knowledge that analyses, divides and classifies. And if we are to undertake this journey, then we must have the requisite thumos or longing, dying before we die and practising stillness of body and a silence of mind that 'lies beyond thought'. This is an experiential and not a rational process, hence the impossibility of pursuing it in a philosophy department (where a wall has been built between thinking and reality) and the challenge of creating the right conditions even in a 'University for Spirit'.

Here and elsewhere the reader benefits from Kingsley's linguistic and philological brilliance. The Greek word *noein* is a 'whirlpool of subtleties' that means a lot more than just thinking. It also implies direct intuitive perception beyond the senses; and this is precisely what we have lost but which is now in the process of returning. It overcomes separation in a direct apprehension of wholeness, and this 'oneness, fullness, absence of separation is...a reality we

are living without even realising it.' (p. 81) We look everywhere for this reality except within ourselves, and in this respect learning can be a further impediment.

The key term for understanding Parmenides is *mêtis*, meaning cunning, skill, practical intelligence, a capacity for trickery that would outwit the gods. It is not a concept but rather 'a particular quality of intense awareness that always manages to stay focused on the whole' (p. 90) and is on the lookout for subtle hints on the path. According to Kingsley, it is *mêtis* that also enables us to realise that the fabric of reality itself is trickery and illusion. The need for the exercise of *mêtis* becomes a leitmotif in the book and pushes us into a paradox beyond our limits where 'our longing for harmony is just a deep division.' It is also an awakening of consciousness from sleep and forgetfulness to the realisation that 'reality is trackless and pathless' and, like Eliot in the Four Quartets 'you have already arrived at the end, are exactly where you always longed to be.' In your end is your beginning and in your beginning your end.

The journey continues with the appearance of Socrates and his common ground with Parmenides in demonstrating (*elenchos*) that we do not in fact know anything. Philosophy is love of wisdom, not love of talking about it; 'There is only one way to wisdom: by facing the fact that we know nothing and letting our reasoning be torn apart. Then reality is what is left behind.' (p. 156) If reality is trackless and pathless then our ideas about it are just constructs (or names), which we then mistake for reality – Whitehead's fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Stilling the mind, we can realise that we are the whole we are seeking. We can realise, like Eckhart, that 'reality is perceiving itself through you.' (p. 187) – this completes the circle, connecting the end to the beginning, seeing only the one, the source, the nameless behind the names (but also that the deception is what is real). Kingsley points out that the very notion of transcendence is an unfortunate construct expressing 'the need to get from here to there even though there is no there apart from here.' (p. 305)

We move on in Part Two to Empedocles, a shaman, a sorcerer, a magician, in spite of the best efforts of his successors to remember only his concepts. His aim, according to Kingsley, was to free people from themselves. The snag is, however, that 'there is no way that people can see or hear or consciously grasp the things I have to teach.' (Empedocles quoted p. 326) Mortal *mêtis* is not up to the job and an admission of this fact is a first step, although in spite of this the exercise of *mêtis* is still essential.

The next section turns upside down centuries of interpretation about the nature of Empedocles' two principles of Love and Strife (uniting and separating, binding and releasing). Aphrodite is depicted as the deceiver who, through sex, tricks immortals into incarnation in limited mortal form where we forget that we are essentially immortal. It is Love, not Strife, that traps the soul in form, and, paradoxically, Strife that releases it from the body and sets it free. This thought reappears, as Kingsley points out, in Gnostic thought where love, pleasure and sex make the soul forget its real identity by drawing it into incarnation. So 'everything is masquerading as its opposite.' It is conflict and suffering that wake us up and 'the very act of becoming conscious is, itself, a process of destruction; of separation; of learning to die before we die.' (p. 435) But be on your guard, exercise *mêtis*: 'talk about truth and you lose sight of it. Understand illusion and you will find truth right in the middle of it.' (p. 495)

Kingsley's prescription for the modern West is not to look to the East but 'to penetrate to the roots of this western world and release the wisdom that has been waiting there

for so long.' (p. 497) This can only be a process within consciousness, which begins with becoming aware of the witness – perceiving that one is perceiving and realising that 'all we need has already been given and lies quietly inside us.' (p. 524) The seed lies dormant but can be activated but activation will transplant you into a completely different mode of being so that a new world is born in us and we discover that there is nothing outside us, the whole universe is within.

Is this realisation enough? What does the reader do having finished the book? Here one of the difficulties is that the tradition it describes has been severed many centuries ago (another, completely unrelated, is that there is no index). Jung argued, like Kingsley, that we should find our spiritual sustenance within our own tradition, and criticised Westerners turning East. He himself found what he was

looking for in gnosticism and alchemy. Kingsley is on a similar track in the way he describes Parmenides and Empedocles as initiates and brings them forward for our consideration. However, we need distinctive forms of spiritual practice and a community of like-minded practitioners. Having asked myself a similar question – where I could find what I am seeking within the Western tradition – I came upon the Bulgarian sage Beinsa Douno (Peter Deunov) whose core principles are Love, Wisdom and Truth but whose teaching has an ecological and a musical dance dimension that anchor the spiritual teaching.

Having said all this, Reality is a work of extraordinary penetration and brilliance, reaching into almost inexpressible subtleties of consciousness and language. As such it repays careful study and contemplation.

Dawkins' Undoing: beyond 'meme-ing' to meaning

Martin Lockley

DAWKINS' GOD: GENES, MEMES AND THE MEANING OF LIFE

Alister McGrath

Blackwell Publishing, 2005, 202 pp., h/b ISBN 1-4051-2359-X US \$49.95, p/b 1-4051-2358-1

The golden rule might be paraphrased to suggest 'not doing unto others what you would not want them doing unto you.' Richard Dawkins certainly has a reputation for charging those with religious sensibilities as irrational, stupid, non-scientific victims of blind faith. But such rhetoric begins to sound hollow, and many thoughtful critics of his work have come to realise that he is blinded by a type of anti-religious fervour which is itself both irrational and unduly fanatical. This is essentially the conclusion of Alister McGrath (Oxford Professor of Historical Theology and PhD in molecular Biophysics) in *Dawkins' God*. As one cover blurb succinctly states, Dawkins is taken to task 'on the very ground that he holds most sacred – rational argument' and is completely disarmed.

McGrath must have found it difficult to compile such an effective and penetrating critique without doing unto Dawkins what no author would like done unto them. Nevertheless, McGrath has been ruminating on Dawkins' often strident pronouncements for more than 25 years. I was fascinated to learn that, in 1978, he had been asked to write a response to Dawkins' *Selfish Gene* from a Christian perspective. Given that he declined, until now, one must admire his restraint and the long gestation period. But the time has come. McGrath attempts restraint and is quite generous in his praise of Dawkins' ability to write popular science with laudable clarity. But this is not the point of the book. The problem is that Dawkins strays from his chosen field of evolutionary biology to attack religion and persons of faith as freakish and thoroughly misguided, and he does so with little attempt at rational or scholarly argument. In short Dawkins reduces his philosophy to 'science good, religion bad.' Thus, he fails to understand or appreciate the broader theological and philosophical implications of human endeavour, such as the simple fact that science and religion both spring from human consciousness, and that serious scientific philosophy willingly acknowledges uncertainty, paradox, ambiguity and even faith in the shifting foundations of epistemological and methodological consensus.

Throughout the book McGrath methodically takes Dawkins

to task for his assumptions, and his 'conjuring away of philosophical problems' through selected analogies. Darwinism is not the only and necessarily atheistic and scientific alternative *explanation* of reality as Dawkins would have it (p. 43) but merely a *description*, which in Feynman's words is never 'absolutely certain.' Even T.H. Huxley, Darwin's Bulldog, held that science was necessarily agnostic on matters of religion. He warned against the dangers of anti-theology and by the 1880s acknowledged that many in the church had found Darwinism consistent with Christian theology. As early as 1912 evolution was accepted as the new name for creation even among American fundamentalists! As Gould put it 'either half my colleagues are enormously stupid, or ... Darwinism is fully compatible with ... religious belief.'

Dawkins' definition of faith bears no resemblance to what most Christians believe. He clearly misses the point in telling them what they believe and overlooks the many theologians who cherish a world view that allows creative interaction with the best science of the day, even if it means fighting ecclesiastical dogma as done by Teilhard de Chardin.

In the late 19th Century acceptance of the Darwinian paradigm marked what William Bateson labeled 30 years of apathy characteristic of an age of faith. Dawkins' fervent and atheistic Darwinism has clearly become his faith and has spawned fanatical rhetoric. But as McGrath points out, although religious fanaticism historically has a lot to answer for so too does atheism, which is responsible for more atrocities than religion in the last century.

Next, McGrath tackles Dawkins *meme* concept and cogently argues, as Mary Midgley has done, that it is an unobservable, hypothetical, scientifically-unwarranted construct dying a slow death of self-referentiality: a redundant hypothesis just waiting to be eliminated. Not only is God not a nasty virus of the mind, but most evidence (79 % of recent studies) suggests that God/religion is good for you.

McGrath concludes with a chapter on the growing dialog between science and religion and notes the 'new interest in spirituality at every level' in western culture. Religion has had mostly a 'benign and constructive relationship with the natural sciences' as shown by the religious founders of many scientific institutions, including the Royal Society. The notion of protracted warfare can be dismissed as 'Victorian propaganda' reflecting minor skirmishes in various socio-political or historical contexts. Dawkins' postures, therefore, only revive rather trivial historical debates and create unnecessary polarisations which divert us from the main issues, which are how the rational and intuitive human mind

probes the vast mysteries of the cosmos. Such genuine questing can follow either scientific or theological avenues and converge in the same philosophical territory, where questions of the meaning of life and the awe inspiring vastness of the cosmos remain central.

Interestingly, McGrath concludes that Christian theology, like natural science takes 'rational trouble over [understanding] mystery.' I found a similar sentiment

intimated by B. D. Josephson: 'mysticism [unlike religion] is concerned with fundamental laws' ... it is 'something universal like science.' So, McGrath thanks Dawkins for raising some interesting questions but charges that his divisive suggestions lack any rational backing. Having undone Dawkins' arguments, we should move beyond 'meme-ing' to a more conciliatory dialog on the meaning of life.

A Philosopher's Tale

David Lorimer

THE OWL OF MINERVA - MEMOIR

Mary Midgley (SMN)

Routledge, 2005, 220 pp., £20 h/b – ISBN 0 415 36788 3

On the front cover of Mary Midgley's memoir is a short comment from Mary Warnock – 'I hugely enjoyed it' – I defy anyone to disagree. Mary is known as an original and forthright moral philosopher who has written widely in the field. Many of her books have been published since her retirement from Newcastle University philosophy department in 1980, and she is still active today well into her 80s – having recently, for instance, taken up the argument for the Gaia Hypothesis. The book is delightfully written and full of amusing anecdotes and witty asides about the many interesting people she has known, of which more below.

Over three-quarters of the book relates to the period before 1950 when she moved to Newcastle with her husband and fellow-philosopher Geoff. Among her ancestors and immediate family are many colourful characters, not least her father Tom Scrutton, a politically engaged cleric, and her grandfather Sir Ted Scrutton, who was a high court judge of noted independence of mind. She reports that her earlier forebear Sir Thomas Urquhart died suddenly in 1660 'in a fit of excessive laughter, on being informed by his servant that the King was restored'. This same man translated Rabelais into English.

Mary's early days are vividly evoked with slightly mischievous humour. A scheme to throw conkers at passers-by failed to materialise as no one passed, but had anyone done so and asked who had thrown the stone, they could truthfully reply that they had done no such thing. And when at the age of eight she was told that she had to pass her large teddy-bear to her small cousin Daphne, 'I saw the force of this reasoning, but I had to explain it pretty carefully to the bear himself.' At school she soon became a voracious reader, so much so that when, during a break in which she was catching up with *Pride and Prejudice* and had reached the passage about Lydia's elopement, 'I found it quite impossible to abandon that crisis for what is laughingly called the real world...I ended up being shockingly late.'

It was at Downe House School that Mary discovered Plato on 'a wet, discouraging Saturday afternoon when I was sixteen.' She begins with the Phaedo and is gripped by the image of the cave in *The Republic*. She then finds a more congenial home with Aristotle (unlike Iris Murdoch) who felt that mind and matter, reason and feeling were kindred aspects of life rather than separate forces. History introduces her to the thought of R.G. Collingwood and the importance of knowing the wider background against which philosophy formulates its questions. All this reading fed into her general paper at Oxford entrance, on the strength of which she was awarded a scholarship to Somerville, where

she went in 1938, but not before having spent a fascinating month in Vienna just as the Nazis were taking over.

On arrival at Oxford, Mary soon came across Iris Murdoch, who became a lifelong friend. Many of her contemporaries, including Iris, became communists. At the time it seemed that communism could be construed as a force for good, generating 'an immensely powerful kind of hope, a hope whose power became stronger the more the surrounding horrors darken.' As she rightly says, this kind of hope affected people's moral responses to events in Russia during the 1920s and 30s. Marxism, she thinks, has been replaced by a series of techno-myths - 'the migration of our species into outer space, or its improvement by genetic engineering, or its conversion into cyborgs, or the mere accumulation of information, take the place of the Marxist revolution to produce a final Utopia.' (p. 93). These visions are, in Mary's view, even less realistic, but also, more seriously, 'they completely lack any moral core'. This strikes me as a seminal point of reflection before we allow ourselves to be caught up in techno-myths.

A number of dons, including the Professor of Greek E.R. Dodds, (Mary was studying Greats), and of Latin, Eduard Fraenkel are vividly portrayed in a series of charming anecdotes; also the legendary Donald McKinnon, who must have spawned more stories than any other don in the 20th century. Around that time that they were graduate students after the war she recalls a conversation with Iris Murdoch and the redoubtable Elizabeth Anscombe, who later became professor of philosophy at Cambridge. They were discussing the descriptive and evaluative meanings of the word 'rude', which prompted Iris to remark to Elizabeth that some people might have described her as rude. However, despite her 'unbridled rudeness being so proverbial'. Anscombe had a complete sense of humour failure leading Mary to observe that those who tread on other people's toes often have little idea of what feels like to be trodden on.

The Oxford philosophy scene is evoked on a number of occasions, along with its prevailing styles of argument, dominated as it was by Ayer's logical positivism and later linguistic analysis. 'Not noticing their own metaphysics...they suppose metaphysics itself to be simply a vice of their opponents.' Later on she quotes Colin McGinn to the effect that philosophy is a 'clashing of analytically honed intellects, with pulsing egos attached to them; and suggests that perhaps department of cognitive poker could be set up. After the war, Mary spent a period as Gilbert Murray's secretary, which was an extraordinarily taxing assignment, mainly owing to the high-handedness of his wife Lady Mary, the epitome of the blue blood battleaxe. Around that time she also had to stay up all night marking general paper essays for Somerville and relates that 'however much black coffee I used, towards three in the morning all the essays looked exactly alike.'

In the late 40s Mary spent a year teaching classics at Bedford School before taking up a philosophy post at Reading in 1949 and moving up to Newcastle in 1950. At

various points in the book she reflects on the nature of university education, deploring the product- and audit-oriented approach that dominates these days. It is another manifestation of what Rene Guenon called the reign of quantity, while the essence of education is strictly qualitative. Her life with Geoff Midgley exhibits an equal love of life and talk, and a deeper vision of philosophy as a

means of facing the darkness and difficulty of life – hence the title of the owl of Minerva which ‘spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk’ and represents wisdom. So coming full circle back to Mary Warnock’s comment above, the book is not only hugely enjoyable but also perceptively instructive and can be highly recommended as a holiday read.

Enlightenment – What Enlightenment?

Dr Mike King

ON SECULARIZATION – TOWARDS A REVISED GENERAL THEORY,

David Martin

Ashgate, 2005, ISBN: 0 7546 5314 5 - 216 pages PB: £16.99
HB: £55.00

I was pleased to receive this book for review, because its subject – secularisation – is one I have been concerned with for twenty years. However, on the first scan of the contents, index, references and sample pages I was bewildered: there seemed almost no points of contact with my own research. When I started to read the book in earnest, I realised that its location in the sociology of religion was one reason for the unfamiliarity of its style and reasoning, and in the end I concluded that the book was very useful, though a little alarming. For others it might be only a little useful and very alarming, though I will explain this a bit later on. In fact the book is a collection of essays that expand on Martin’s seminal work *A General Theory of Secularization*, beautifully written, and drawing on an encyclopaedic understanding of contemporary Christianity and its relation to the social and political landscapes across the globe.

The usefulness of the book lies precisely in this large sweep of Christian social history, but the last thing it does is present a theory of secularisation, never mind a general one. Although Martin at several points in the book states that he is going to summarise his general theory – in order to revise it – one is forced to work very hard to garner its outlines. As far as I can make out ‘secularisation theory,’ as it had developed from its origins in sociology with Durkheim and Weber, states that religion will inevitably decline in the face of modern rationalism. Martin’s contribution, as far as I can see, is to attack this concept as a form of discredited historicism. So far so good: Popper’s attack on the historicism of Hegel and Marx for example makes clear that a belief in the historical inevitability of some chosen trajectory is at best unfounded, and at worst can lead to totalitarianism. Historicism is pseudo-science; what real science demands is a cool look at the evidence, and theories that are more than projections of human fantasy. Hence Martin’s advance is to challenge the assumption that religion is destined to be swept away. Instead he offers a ‘centre-periphery’ account which proposed that liberal elites impose secular systems of thought, emanating from centres of learning such as Paris, and which tail off in influence in the provinces where ordinary people are largely unaffected by such intellectual fancies.

The bulk of Martin’s writings do indeed present us with evidence that Christianity in Europe, North and South America, Russia and parts of Asia continues largely in its traditional mould, making only small compromises with secular modernity. He avoids statistical presentations, for which I am grateful, though one is left with the feeling that a close look at the figures would probably support his thesis. This is not where I argue with Martin. What is astonishing, and a little alarming, in his work, is the impression that slowly

forms from the deafening silence on certain topics, and the quiet asides on others, that he loathes secularisation. One begins to think that a better title for his work would be *On Secularization – How I Wish it Hadn’t Happened*. In one way my sympathies are with him: the loss of the sacred in the modern world has been nothing short of catastrophic. Where we part company is that he seems to regret the entire Enlightenment, whereas I believe that it has paved the way for what I regard as crucial to the spiritual life of the future: spiritual pluralism.

At first I thought it was simply the location of Martin’s scholarship in the sociology of religion that made him view the Enlightenment in such a radically different way. Sociology is not so concerned with the history of ideas as with how contemporary citizens negotiate their relationships with each other and the State. But Martin constructs a discourse in which he jettisons the ideas of the great Enlightenment thinkers as ‘avant gardism;’ he dismisses the notion that ‘the intellectual elite propose today what the mass will accept tomorrow.’ He is frank, saying: ‘I found it very difficult to absorb approaches to secularisation based on the history of ideas.’ But the advantage for Martin is that he can retain his Christian beliefs unchallenged by Locke, Voltaire, Paine, Ingersoll and Bradlaugh – iconic figures in bringing Enlightenment concepts to the masses – and effectively shut out the modern world. Hence there is no engagement within this book with the core ideas of the secular mind, no suspicion that these represent enormous advances in liberty, freedom of expression, women and gay rights, and democracy. Nor does he raise key questions that come out of a direct engagement with secular thought, for example why is mainstream popular culture in the West so intensely secular? If the masses at the periphery reject the liberal elites, why do they consume their secular cultural productions so avidly? Why were secularists consistently ahead of the Church in the abolition of slavery, and in establishing women’s and civil rights?

Martin’s book is a fascinating read, but leaves one with a concern for academic scholarship in general. He was Professor at the London School of Economics (1962-1989), and is highly regarded in the sociology of religion, but one does wonder about the deployment of such academic erudition and literary skill in the pursuit of Christian apologetics. To adhere to faith in the modern world is valuable, but surely that faith is much more convincing when it confronts the challenges of modernity head on. A book on secularisation that effectively writes it – and its Enlightenment origins – out of history can be fascinating, but surely it is a little alarming. Don’t we expect more from our academics?

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A Minimal Coherence

Max Payne

THE SACRED NEURONE

John Bowker

I.B. Tauris 2005, , 226 pp £17.95 - ISBN 1 85043 481 6

This book is called 'The Sacred Neurone' and the front cover has the picture of a head with a key in its forehead and the legend 'extraordinary new discoveries linking science and religion'. This naturally arouses the expectation that neurophysiology has discovered a 'God spot' in the brain which becomes active during religious experience, and this is going to a philosophical, theological and scientific discussion of its implications.

The book starts well. Bowker argues that aesthetic beauty is not an objective fact in the world like atomic weight, nor is it merely a subjective emotional reaction which is totally personal, neither is it an arbitrary cultural convention. Deep seated in the brain, somewhere in the amygdala there is a complex of neurones which respond to visual or musical harmony. Beauty is not perceived directly by this brain complex, but is mediated through a structure of cultural learning and personal emotion. Beauty is therefore what Bowker terms a 'conducive' property. Moral goodness is analysed in exactly the same way. The Good is not a Platonic fact, neither is it a matter of personal subjective emotion.

The human brain is hard wired to recognise ethical values, though what these values are seen to be is mediated through layers of cultural conditioning and individual emotional sensitivity.

At this point the reader might expect that the next move will be to show how the inclination towards the spiritual may be rooted in deep brain structure. On the one hand this might show that spiritual experience and all religion is just a function of brain structure, on the other hand just as the optic nerve and the visual cortex are part of the brain, nevertheless they exist to receive impressions from outside. One looks forward to the argument. Instead Bowker changes his line of argument completely. He argues that the higher order discussion of religions involves the search for coherence. Fundamentalist or traditionalist religious systems simply have a search for coherence within their given religious scriptures and dogmatic traditions. More liberal systems seek a wider coherence between themselves and the advancing tide of scientific knowledge. There is also the wider problem of coherence between the different religions.

And Bowker leaves it at that. There is no attempt to make a systematic judgement between the wider and the narrower coherence. He raises the question of what coherence, if any, there is between all the religions of mankind. Yet this is a key question in the philosophy of religion. The book simply moves on to discuss coherence between different patterns of sexual morality, and again reaches no clear conclusion. It is disappointing that a book with such an interesting starting point should lose itself in such vague conclusions.

A Literary Initiation

Julian Candy

RESTORING PARADISE: WESTERN ESOTERICISM, LITERATURE, ART, AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Arthur Versluis

SUNY Press 2004, 170 pp., \$35 h/b - ISBN 0-7914-6139-4

Appropriately dedicated to the memory of Kathleen Raine, this volume was initially conceived as an introduction to the literary and religious history of Western esotericism. In the writing a wider perspective and a particular intuition emerged. As the author puts it, '[this book] is an in-depth examination of how initiation can take place through the written word or image' (p 10). His claim is that '... in the West, esoteric literature and art can function rather like the koan in Zen Buddhism, as a means of initiation, and that this is in fact the primary means of initiatory transmission in the West — through word and image.' (p. 12)

This unusual thesis is worked out in considerable detail. In a chapter devoted to origins, he notes that gnostic Christians took (and take) the view that the Word is not literal but spiritual, and thus that revelation could as well take place today as in antiquity. His reading of the Corpus Hermeticum, the Revelation of St John and other non-canonical works leads him to insist that gnosis, or direct knowledge of the divine, is 'the red thread that will guide us to the labyrinth of the centuries'. (p. 22) He sets out four characteristics of this thread: inexpressibility, the mystery of names, the gnoses of numbers and letters, and imagery.

These concepts are developed and explicated in what follows.

Moving forward in time, he interprets the chivalric tradition and the grail legend as inheritors of this insight. They, like Sufism, as brought to Western attention by the 'Christian Islamicist' and remarkable syncretist Ramon Lull, accord an exalted place to women and to the figure of the Beloved. Lull also 'created a kind of Christian Kabbalism' (p44). An outline of this system leads on to consideration of the Jewish Kabbala, alchemy, the work of Jacob Böhme, and of the theosophic, Pansophic, Rosicrucian and Masonic literature. The complexities of these overlapping and intertwined movements make gripping reading. The accent throughout lies on the power of the word and the image to transform, and to point towards unity: 'in alchemy, literature, religion and science are one'. (p 66) He stresses though that '...there is exoteric language, which is veiling and limited; and there is esoteric language, which is unveiling and virtually unlimited in its ramifications.' (p 51)

The final and longest chapter concerns modern implications of the thesis, and is particularly stimulating. While conceding that superficially the thread appears to have gone underground, he finds numerous instances of writers and artists, contemporary and near contemporary, whose work takes up the Western esoteric tradition. He deals in particular with the poet O V Milosz, authors H D (Hilda Doolittle), C S Lewis and Dion Fortune, and the artist Cecil Collins. Milosz and H D were both unusually well read in the esoteric literature, both experienced spiritual illumination and both can be characterised as 'initiatic poets' representing male and female aspects of the hidden thread, one in the line of Swedenborg, Blake and Goethe, the other of Emily Dickenson and Margaret Fuller.

Next, he treats of 'magical fiction', invoking Tolkien and Charles Williams and giving a penetrating interpretation of C S Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*, contrasting it with magical initiations in the work of Dion Fortune, a self-acknowledged magician.

Two of the illustrations that adorn the book are of works by Cecil Collins. As articulate with words as paint, Collins wrote that we live in a 'time of the apocalypse, and the word 'apocalypse' means to unveil.' He goes on, 'This is the time of unveiling, the unveiling of the atom, the opening of man's in the nature, his inner world. But there is something else that has to be opened, and that is the eye of the heart. If the eye of the heart is closed then the whole of the universe is dead, a mere turning of the wheel of existence, of mere desires. Creative art has always been concerned to touch and open the eye of the heart.' (p 132)

In the concluding section, entitled 'Literature, Art and Consciousness', the author cites a description by the poet A E (George William Russell), of the 'spontaneous' creation of a poem. He goes on, 'in this exaltation or transcendent creativity the poet or seer enters into a realm where conventional notions of self begin to vanish.' This leads to a concluding point: 'we have seen Western esoteric traditions as including the restoration of Paradise, which also be expressed as the ending of objectification or division of into self and other.' (p 150) Thus we arrive at the annihilation of the false self in the real, a concept common

of course to Western and Eastern traditions.

The substance of this book is well served by the clear style in which it is written, while its subject matter and the denseness of the material presented make the reviewer's task particularly difficult. Rightly regarded, this problem supports the thesis here presented, since an everyday exoteric exposition can always be put in different words, but for a text on an esoteric theme form and content move towards identity and cannot be reshaped without distortion or worse.

Partly because of its detailed treatment of the historical antecedents that lie behind aspects of contemporary culture, the message here presented is right up to date. There is much talk today about the expansion of consciousness. Such expansion requires initiation, a stepping over the threshold, and this book sets out how we in the West might take that step. The signs are that the time is at hand for the red thread of esotericism to come once again to the surface, when the Western tradition will be reclaimed as a significant part of our own heritage, worthy to stand alongside and indeed to complement the more visible Eastern tradition. This volume provides an excellent and fascinating stimulus for that most desirable and essential development. And couched as it is in well-crafted words, it may be said to be itself an example of the initiatic process it sets out to delineate.

Warts and All: the honest confessions of a Fourth Way seeker

Holly Baggett

GURDJIEFFIAN CONFESSIONS - A SELF REMEMBERED

James Moore

Hove: Gurdjieff Studies Limited, 2005, 281 pp., £26.98., h/b
– ISBN 0 9549470 0 2

In this highly engaging memoir James Moore, biographer of George Gurdjieff (1866-1949), Greco-Armenian philosopher and gnostic teacher of the Fourth Way, shares an inside view of London Gurdjieff circles from mid-50s Britain to roughly 1980.

Introduced to Gurdjieff by public library copies of Ouspensky's *In Search of the Miraculous* and Kenneth Walker's *Venture with Ideas*, Moore summons up the courage to write Walker a letter. An invitation to his first meeting ends with the door slammed unceremoniously in his face, but our young hero perseveres. Moore never really explains (if such a thing is possible in this type of memoir) what it is precisely about the Gurdjieffian universe that captures him so completely. It is clear, however, that the secret society aura makes for a dramatic contrast from his day-to-day drudgery as a civil servant in the Admiralty.

Moore is an accomplished autodidact. There are philosophical conundrums for him - he longs to understand Gurdjieff within a larger cultural and historical context - where does he fit in with 'Adorno, Buber, Eliot, Heidegger', et al., and he is fascinated by the possibilities of germane paths in a variety of religious and artistic traditions. Persuaded by his teachers not to entangle Gurdjieff's ideas with strands of modernism, Moore soldiers on.

In fact, he sticks with it for fifty years in spite of suffering the absurd politics of huge and petty egos so often displayed by

the spiritually advanced. Not that he lets them off the hook. Indeed, while Moore portrays himself as an earnest young man who respectfully defers to the Gurdjieffian hierarchy, the reader suspects his only genuine reverence is for his mentor Henriette Lannes, one of the few to escape his scathing characterisations. A small sampling of portraits includes 'a poisoned gumdrop', 'small grey squirrel with an attitude' and 'looking like Shelley Winters on a bender.' We have firsthand accounts of Jane Heap, Pamela Travers, and J.G. Bennett, all legendary figures who met the master himself, but in Moore's hands fare no better in presentation than those lower on the esoteric food chain. This tone does not come off as mean spirited, however, and the reader can't help but smile, if only from the sheer cheekiness of it all.

One unintended slice of humour is Moore's rendition of the pompous super-secret machinations to hide the preparations for Peter Brook's film adaptation of Gurdjieff's memoir *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, given the fact that the finished product embarrassed almost everyone involved. To their credit Moore and most of his contemporaries were brutally honest about the film — Moore recalling that the script 'seemed pitched at an audience with learning difficulties.'

Moore eventually blooms as the author of two impressive books *Gurdjieff and Mansfield* and the authoritative biography *Gurdjieff: Anatomy of a Myth*. He ascends to the role of teacher, but the future is anything but smooth. He uses his literary talents launching 'counter thrusts against the opportunistic appropriations and distortions which multiplied worldwide' but it will be his own work that is seen as threatening to the powers that be.

His article 'Moveable Feasts: The Gurdjieff Work' which criticised the twin movements of watering down the message while creating a fossilised 'church' led to his 'excommunication' and temporary spiritual and social limbo. As Moore points out, it now seems like a tempest in a teapot but the Gurdjieffian orthodoxy, unlike the master himself, had no sense of humour.

The entire story is not of Gurdjieff family dysfunction, but endearing tales of his own family and affectionate portraits of friendships that lasted for decades. At the age of seventy-five Moore's story inevitably contains losses poignantly remembered. A gifted writer, he does an admirable job of evoking England from the post-war Angry Young Men to the late seventies Winter of Discontent. *Confessions* is not the bland mind-numbing account of one man's spiritual journey so often

found in this genre. It is a gem of a book, equally fascinating for those inside and out of 'the Work.'

Professor Holly A. Baggett teaches American History and Gender Studies at Southwest Missouri State University. She is an authority on Gurdjieff's pupil Jane Heap, whose letters to Florence Reynolds she edited for New York University Press.

Is God There?

ATHEISM & THEISM

J.C.C Smart & J.J. Haldane
Blackwell 1996, 2nd ed. 2003, 270pp, £16.99 p/b - ISBN 0-631-23259-1

This book shows contemporary academic philosophy at its best, though this may be a damning comment. There is no nit-picking linguistic analysis, or post-modernist relativism. It is a serious dialogue in clear English on the existence of God between Smart (Atheist) and Haldane (Theist and Catholic Christian). The argument is conducted politely with the authors exchanging nothing more than polite slaps, though at times a kick below the philosophical belt might have been more appropriate.

Smart argues that scientific knowledge reigns supreme, and that therefore our picture of reality has to be a form of materialism. God is an unnecessary hypothesis which gives no verifiable knowledge about the universe. Haldane contends that science cannot explain itself. The search for meaning takes place within consciousness; it is not a function of matter. This is quite a good point. For him religion gives meaning to reality, and religion means theism, and theism means the Christian God ; following Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas he gives an up to date version of the 'First Cause' argument. Haldane admits that this is as far as philosophy can go, but asserts that he finds it necessary to go further and accept every dogma of the Roman Catholic church down to the Immaculate Conception.

Amazingly Smart lets him get away with this. A key problem of theology is how to get from Aristotle's impersonal First Cause to a personal God. Jews, Moslems and Christians all have separate answers to this, and the difference has caused some conflict. A systematic philosophical examination of the case for the existence of God might have considered this. Again Haldane answers the question of how a good God can allow unmerited suffering by arguing that free will and inconvenient physical laws are necessary to the evolution of intelligent life. So they probably are, but this makes God a cosmic Stalin who cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs. How to square this with a personal God who cares lovingly for each of his creatures is not answered. It might be argued that the vaster cosmic metaphysics of the *Gita* do answer this with an immanent deity and a vast panorama of reincarnated life, but Vedantic Idealism and its modern variants are dismissed in one inadequate paragraph.

The whole argument is conducted within the range of the set books for a traditional undergraduate course in the history of Western Philosophy. There is no examination of the idea that since matter has now been reduced to quantum mechanics, mathematics may give us insight into the mind of God. Religious experience is dismissed as a problem for psychology, not philosophy. The evidence from parapsychology that there are dimensions beyond the physical is left unexamined. This examination of rather dated philosophical arguments is unlikely to slake the spiritual thirst of the 21st century.

PSYCHOLOGY-CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

Survival of Physical Death

David Fontana

IMMORTAL REMAINS: THE EVIDENCE FOR LIFE AFTER DEATH

Stephen E. Braude
Rowman & Littlefield, 2003, 329 pp., £18.95 p/b - ISBN 0 7425 1472 2

I was about to start this review by saying that whether or not we survive physical death is arguably the most important question with which we are faced. I then decided to dispense with the language of caution so typical of the academic world, and strike out the word 'arguably'. Arrogant perhaps, but to my mind there is no doubt that the

question of survival is by far the most crucial issue we face, not simply because we would like to know whether or not life goes on, but because the survival question is linked inexorably with all other questions about our nature, about our meaning, and about how we live our lives when in this world. In short, are we nothing more than biological accidents, programmed by our genes and our conditioning and by evolution, or is there something more to us, a nobler destiny if you like, that provides us with purpose and with a sense of the sacredness of our lives and of the rest of creation?

It was my interest in questions such as this that helped take me into psychology as a profession, and it was my interest as a psychologist in the nature of mind and consciousness that brought me to psychical research. Carl Jung once said that we do not know where the mind ends, and it is equally true to say that although we have learnt a great deal more about the brain since his time (it is fair to say that no secret places remain to be discovered), we still do not know if brain generates mind or if mind works through brain. I doubt in fact if we will ever know so long

as we approach the mysteries of mind with only the tools of materialistic science. Valuable as this science is within its own range of convenience, this range is limited, and it is indeed unfortunate that since the arguments against vitalism put forward by Helmholtz, the father of modern psychophysiology, in the early 19th Century, the notion that mind may be separate from brain has been dogmatically removed from scientific consideration together with any hypothesis that points towards the existence of phenomena uncongenial to the materialistic agenda. I have no objection to anyone preferring materialism to vitalism, but I do object to the impression so frequently given that modern science has somehow 'proved' beyond reasonable doubt that there is nothing more to us than our material selves.

Things are gradually changing. Within psychology we have persuaded colleagues at the British Psychological Society to allow us to found the Transpersonal Psychology Section, and research into psychical research is now accepted as a university subject at four British universities. Which brings me, by means of a rather circuitous but I hope relevant route, to the subject of research into survival and to Stephen Braude's book. Stephen Braude is a highly respected philosopher, and his interest in the question of survival is an indication that things are moving on within his subject too. Regarded by some people as initially sceptical about the possibilities of survival, Braude's research into the subject has helped change his views. At the end of his detailed and scholarly book he reaches the conclusion that:

I think we can say, with little assurance but with some justification that the evidence provides a reasonable basis for believing in personal post-mortem survival. It doesn't clearly support the view that everyone survives death; it more clearly supports the view that some do. And it doesn't support the view that we survive eternally, at best it justifies the belief that some individuals survive for a limited time.

(page 306)

Many readers of the book will welcome this conclusion, although there are a number of things that can be said about the qualifications in the last two sentences, and I shall return to these in due course. But not only does Braude accept that the evidence for survival is worth taking seriously he goes further in his references to psychic phenomena in general. For example (page 281) he puts it that 'the existence and features' of ESP phenomena 'have already been established'. This is a bold statement, and although I consider it to be amply justified by serious scientific research it may raise eyebrows among many of Braude's colleagues who are less familiar with the evidence than he is.

What in fact is this evidence, or rather what examples of it – from the vast range that now exists - does he choose to quote? He devotes nearly 50 pages to cases associated with reincarnation and possession, and a further 30 pages to just one of them, the Sharada case (investigated by Professor Ian Stevenson), which means that around a quarter of the book is devoted to these subjects. The Patience Worth case is then given over 40 pages, while the chapter on trance mediumship and drop-in communicators, which constitute some of the best evidence we have for survival, have only some 70 pages between them. The other main topics covered are hauntings (11 pages), transplant cases (individuals who manifest characteristics reminiscent of the people whose organs they receive, eight pages) and Out-of-Body and Near-Death Experiences (36 pages).

In Professor Braude's view, how strongly does each of

these areas support the evidence for survival? He considers the results from trance mediumship, although in some cases acceptable as paranormal, favour the Super-PSI hypothesis (i.e. the notion that the information given by mediums comes telepathically from the minds of the living or clairvoyantly from the environment rather than from the deceased) equally with that of survival. The Sharada case and that of Patience Worth he regards, on balance, as favouring normal explanations such as disassociation, latent creative capacities and secondary personalities rather than survival. Reincarnation and possession he sees as tilting the balance towards survival (though not we gather by very much). The evidence for hauntings appears to him to break evenly between the survival explanation and that of Super-PSI, while he argues that OBEs and NDEs provide little independent evidence for survival. As for drop-in communicators (communicators unknown to sitters who intrude unannounced into sessions with mediums and give details of their identity that may subsequently prove to be accurate), the best of the evidence 'although be no means coercive ... seems to strengthen the case for survival' (page 51).

The various pros and cons are carefully considered by Braude in each of the cases quoted, and valuable guidance is given on how to evaluate evidence in an area as complex as survival research. But one can question whether his choice of cases presents this research at its best. The selection of what cases to quote is obviously a personal thing, and no two commentators would be likely to make the same choice. Nevertheless, we may wonder why 40 pages are devoted to the Patience Worth case (in which St. Louis housewife Pearl Curran received novels, poems and other material by automatic writing from a supposed 17th Century American immigrant called Patience Worth) if the case is then to be dismissed as explicable by normal means? The Patience Worth material is certainly intriguing, but is not usually held out as particularly strong evidence for survival since it lacks verifiable details of the earthly life of Patience Worth.

The Sharada case, although in my view strongly suggestive of paranormality, is again not an especially good one from the point of view of survival. Similarly, the evidence from transplant cases is not yet strong enough to provide much support for survival (if behavioural similarities between donor and recipient do emerge subsequent to transplant these could arguably be due in any case to physical factors rather than to psychic ones). Given the apparent weakness of these cases, are there better examples that could have been used? I think so. Surely the Cross Correspondences, which are given only five pages, are of more interest to survival research than Patience Worth? In the context of mediumship, surely Eileen Garrett is worth more than the half page given to her, and the R101 case in which she figured prominently is worthy of at least a mention.

Gladys Leonard's book tests are mentioned, but there is no reference to her work with Drayton Thomas on the newspaper tests carried out with him from material in the London Times, which stand as better evidence for survival than the book tests. Experiments into physical phenomena are given no space, and the phenomena produced by physical mediums such as Home, Palladino (at least in the context of the research conducted into her mediumship by Everard Feilding and his colleagues), Stella Cranshaw and Etta Wriedt receive no mention.

References to poltergeist cases are also conspicuous by their absence, perhaps because of the argument that poltergeist phenomena are explicable as psycho kinesic

(PK) from the living, an argument that fails however to explain cases where information is provided that is unknown to the living individuals thought to be responsible for the PK, or where phenomena are seen to occur even when these individuals are not present. Also missing is any reference to so-called Instrumental Transcommunication (ostensibly paranormal communications received through electronic media), even though recent acoustic analysis of the voices concerned appears sometimes to show they lack characteristics normally present in the human voice (details of ongoing research in the area are reported in the ITC Journal, details of which are available on the Net under that title).

It would be wrong to pursue the absence of these and other cases pointing towards survival too far. As already mentioned, the selection of best cases is very much a personal matter. My point is simply that it seems a shame to devote so much space to cases such as Patience Worth when better ones are not mentioned. This rather upsets the balance in what is otherwise a scholarly and admirable book, particularly as the sub-title is *'The Evidence for Life After Death'*, which to readers new to the subject may suggest a comprehensive survey. Furthermore Braude tells us in his Preface that 'My case selection was guided by my primary objective ... to determine whether there's any reason for preferring a survivalist explanation ... over explanations positing ... activities among the living'. This does suggest again that the best cases needed to meet this objective are covered.

Let me finish by returning briefly, as promised, to the qualifications included in the last two sentences of Professor Braude's conclusions quoted earlier. The first is that the evidence 'doesn't clearly support the view that everyone survives death; it more clearly supports the view that some do'. It would be difficult if not impossible to know what kind of research could be conducted to demonstrate that all survive death. In much of science we

have to extrapolate from the few to the many. And although it is true that only a small number of post mortem communications compared to the number of people who die find their way into the research literature, studies such as those by the Guggenheims (whose data base is now held by the University of Virginia) and by the Religious Experience Research Unit (now at the University of Wales, Lampeter) suggest that, when asked, a sizeable proportion of people who have lost loved ones do in fact consider they have received contacts (e.g. visual and auditory) from them. Even if we dismiss some of these reports as due to wishful thinking and imagination, the findings suggest that after death communications may be much more common than we suppose. In answer to Professor Braude's second qualification – that the evidence surveyed by him 'doesn't support the view that we survive eternally, at best it justifies the belief that some individuals survive for a limited time', we can point out that if consciousness exists briefly after death, why and how does it then expire completely? What further action within the body – which is already clinically dead – would take place to lead to the expiry of a surviving non-physical consciousness, and what non-physical factors could be responsible? (The notion sometimes advanced that any surviving consciousness would consist of no more than fragments of memory that would quickly dissipate of their own accord appears to have little in its support.)

I welcome this book as an important contribution to the debate on whether or not we survive physical death. Scholarly, carefully argued and elegantly written, I hope it achieves the success it so clearly deserves.

David Fontana is a professor of psychology and a past President of the Society for Psychical Research and current Chair of the Society's Survival Research Committee. He has been involved in research into survival for over 30 years, and his latest book on the subject, 'Is There an Afterlife?', published by John Hunt. (see opposite page)

A Seismic Shift?

Max Payne

IS THERE AN AFTERLIFE

David Fontana (SMN)

0 Books 2005, 496 pp, £14.99 p/b - ISBN 1 903876 90 4

In modern times in the West any communication from the afterlife has been officially a dead subject. In reaction to the superstitions of mediaeval Catholicism Protestantism declared that the dead slept until the Resurrection. The rise of science produced a mechanistic world view in which mind was simply the result of atoms vibrating within the brain box of the skull. Either way, when you were dead, you were dead. However the world view of orthodox science has not kept pace with the actual advance of scientific knowledge. Solid atoms have dissolved into packets of energy that pop in and out of existence, and are 'spookily' entangled across the vastness of space. Matter may consist of 12 dimensional superstrings. Cosmologists speculate that our universe is but a four dimensional slice or 'brane' across a greater reality.

Materialism has therefore lost its meaning. Even if mind is carried by matter, what might be the properties of mind if it is carried by a modulated neutrino, or a virtual gluon? Might not

mind operate in other 'branes' than this one, as gravitation is speculated so to do? Thus on the strictest scientific terms the paranormal has become the speculatively possible. Parapsychology is no longer beyond the fringe, but on the cutting edge. This book is an admirable survey of the evidence for the afterlife, and is therefore a book whose time has come. It is a compulsory read for anyone whose interests have led them to take the 'Network Review'.

Even in times of the greatest scepticism, there has always been anecdotal evidence of communication from those who have departed this life, chiefly about the time of death, or shortly after, and usually to relatives and friends. Our culture has discounted this mass of popular experience, because it has not been scientifically verified, and because it is assumed that it contradicts what science is. Fontana limits his argument to well attested cases, confirmed by trustworthy independent witnesses, with precautions against fraud. It is essential that where information has been given, the subject or the medium could not have been aware of it at the time. The sheer accumulation of evidence is impressive. Some of the cases are well known: the medium Helen Duncan received a message from a sailor who died when HMS Barham was sunk. Since at the time the loss of the battleship was a wartime secret, Mrs Duncan was investigated as a possible spy, but later prosecuted for witchcraft instead!

As an alternative to a proof for survival, the insights of

mediums have been explained away as a sort of 'super ESP'. However as Fontana points out, the thought that the unconscious mind of the medium can search out the thoughts of people on the other side of the planet, and rifle through dusty archives, strains credulity more than the possibility that personality survives death. As well as apparitions and seances with mediums, Fontana examines 'Instrumental Transcommunications' - ITC, and out-of-body and near-death experiences. The Scole experiments were investigations into ITC carried out by Arthur Ellison and Montague Keen, both well known to SMN members. There it seems it that, despite the most elaborate precautions against fraud, communicators out of the physical body were using electronic equipment and film to convey their messages. Again the evidence from OBEs and NDEs suggests that human personality is something different from the physical body, and can be separated from it.

What does all this evidence add up to? What is the afterlife, and what happens to human personality when it gets there? Fontana's summing up is cautious, and will not send anyone

hurrying back to church to renew their cosmic insurance policy. There might be reincarnation, but not for everyone, and certainly not according to the rules given in the Tibetan Book of the Dead. The personality seems destined to go on a journey, but it does not appear to be the same as the stages of purgatory as given in Catholic dogma. Does the personality finally dissolve into nirvana, as the Theravada Buddhists teach? There are indications that the personality will change and move away from any contact with this world; whether that is dissolution or fulfilment we do not know, and probably could not understand anyway.

For those who can sense the movement of ideological tectonic plates, this book represents the beginning of a seismic shift. It rehearses much that is already known, much of it for a long time, but it rehearses it clearly and powerfully. The narrow arrogant materialist hedonism of the 20th century may be about to give way to a humble agnostic reverence for the mystery of the dimensions of human experience.

Science and the NDE

David Lorimer

What Happens When We Die

Dr. Sam Parnia (SMN)

Hay House, 2005, 210 pp., £14.99 h/b – ISBN 1 4019 0556 0

Readers will no doubt be aware of the broad outlines of research into near-death experiences (NDEs), pioneered by Drs. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and Dr. Raymond Moody in the 1970s. Since this time, numerous books and studies have appeared by psychologists, philosophers, theologians, sociologists and doctors. The most ground-breaking scientific paper was by Dutch cardiologist Dr. Pim van Lommel in *The Lancet* in December 2001. Here he described a prospective study of 344 cardiac arrest survivors from ten hospitals over a two-year period. Of these, 63 had a recognisable NDE and 41 what is technically called a 'core NDE'.

Working with neuroscientist Dr. Peter Fenwick at Southampton General Hospital, Dr. Parnia had set up a similar but much smaller study, which forms the core of this present book. However, he ranges much more widely, placing the NDE within current neuroscientific knowledge, writing in an accessible style that carries the reader through his story. He begins with a historical overview, summarising the phenomenon in a cultural context, and moves on to a useful account of current scientific explanations of the NDE, both physiological and psychological. He then describes how he set up the Southampton study and reports on a number of very interesting cases of the kind that will be familiar to researchers in this area, including a couple of experiences reported to senior doctors before they became common.

The scientific paradox of cardiac arrest NDEs is highlighted by Dr. Parnia explaining what we know about the physiology of cardiac arrest, especially the effects of lack of oxygen on brain cells. He goes on to describe the physiology of resuscitation procedures, during which the brain blood flow is less than 5% of normal. He expresses the paradox in the following way: 'Here we have a group of people who are so severely ill that they have reached the clinical point of death, yet somehow they report having lucid, well-structured thought processes, together with reasoning and memory formation from that time.' This highlights the question of the relationship of consciousness to brain processes in a context where the

mainstream view is that brain gives rise to consciousness. NDEs are, in my view, a fundamental challenge to this hypothesis, especially where there is verifiable evidence that a patient's NDE perceptions are accurate.

Dr. Parnia next considers more general theories of consciousness and brain function, ranging from conventional brain-based theories to non-conventional views from Stuart Hameroff, Sir Roger Penrose and Sir John Eccles. He also analyses some of the limitations of brain-based theories in relation to the nature of subjective experience and the 'binding problem' of how distributed processes give rise to unitary sensations. The last part of the book advances the author's own view of consciousness and the significance of the NDE.

Here I found some of Dr. Parnia's assumptions required further analysis. For instance he claims that consciousness must necessarily be confined within the realms of physics and matter (it manifests within the material universe but need not be confined within it); that he is a collection of billions of cells (assumes that he is identical with his physical body); that consciousness must be made up of subatomic particles since everything else in the universe is so made up (assumes the physical universe = cosmos). Hence, effectively that outer = inner, where outer is form and inner is consciousness. He is right to point out the limitations of the physical senses, but it seems to me that we might also have subtle senses and hence a subtle form or body, which can occasionally be perceived by others as an apparition.

Another way of addressing the issue is Dr. Parnia's categorical statement that brain processes undoubtedly mediate the experience. They certainly mediate the recollection of the experience but there are indications that the essence of the NDE – and indeed of mystical experience – is ineffable and not fully expressible in language. So while we may discover more about the molecular mediators and correlates of these experiences, the experiences themselves may transcend such mechanisms. Later in the book, Dr. Parnia does acknowledge this point, but he could have made a clearer distinction between epistemology (theories of knowing) and ontology (the nature of reality). And although the NDE is hugely significant in studying what happens when we die, there are other lines of evidence to be considered, as put forward in David Fontana's new book *Is there an Afterlife?* reviewed above. The NDE is not the last word, but this book is a significant addition to the field.

This review was first published in Positive Health, November 2005.

Wisdom in Death

David Lorimer

TALKING WITH ANGEL ABOUT ILLNESS, DEATH AND SURVIVAL

Evelyn Elsaesser-Valarino (SMN)

Floris Books, 2005, 205 pp., £9.99 p/b – ISBN 0 86315 492 1

Evelyn Elsaesser-Valarino has been working in the NDE field for over 20 years. She herself has written a book called *On the Other Side of Life: Exploring the Phenomenon of the Near-Death Experience* and is co-author, with Kenneth Ring, of *Lessons from the Light: What we can learn from the near-death experience*. Here she distils her accumulated insight and experience, translating it into narrative form as the unfolding story of a young girl fighting leukaemia. The book is written in the first person from inside the experience of the girl, and makes for gripping reading. The only other book that it calls to mind is Tolstoy's *Death of Ivan Ilyich*, although Ivan does not achieve the wisdom displayed in this book.

The plot is relatively simple, revolving as it does around the progression of the illness. There is the girl's own experience and that of her parents and carers. The occasionally horrific physical symptoms are graphically depicted and the emotional reactions raw. How does the girl handle this and how does it affect those around her? So-called normal life recedes into the background as the girl confronts the likelihood then the reality of her impending death. This is the cue for the first wisdom track in the form of inner dialogues with her doll Angel, who explains that death is a change of form rather than extinction. Her understanding starts to shift as she realises that the ordeal of illness and suffering can be

turned into a lesson in living, and that one still has the choice of whether or not to trust the process of life. Fighting against the illness requires the mobilisation of all the positive forces of willpower, hope, courage and trust. It is a tall order for anyone, especially a young girl on the point of losing her future, but it carries the authentic ring of truth.

Other sick children add their voices. One of them, James, is especially sceptical of religious answers, but then he has a profound NDE which transforms his attitude root and branch. James's lengthy and detailed description summarises the core aspects of the deep NDE. In itself, the articulate eloquence is somewhat implausible in a person of his age, but it is a literary necessity for the structure of the book. James's insights reinforce those of Angel, highlighting the centrality of love and other core values, the experience of which changes the course of James's life and coincides with a miraculous cure of his condition. He knows that the girl understands him, and becomes her constant companion as her bodily frame inexorably weakens. In a sense, he carries her future.

Other visions and dreams indicate the coming transition, and the book ends with the girl seeing her grandmother and moving towards the light. The format is a tour de force. The simplicity of the narrative structure provides the vehicle through which spiritual wisdom is formulated and transmitted in an eminently palatable fashion. The reader feels a natural empathy for the girl's situation, which is ultimately that of every reader of this review. This makes it easier to absorb the insights and engage in the ultimate mystical exercise of dying before you die, remembering that a subtle aspect of ourselves is the silent witness of the drama of human life. Once you read this book you will understand why it is such a gift and can be passed on to those in need.

A Spiritual Path from Freud to Gaia

Chris Clarke

EMBODIED SPIRITUALITY IN A SACRED WORLD

Michael Washburn

SUNY Press, 2003, 233 pp., \$19.95 p/b - ISBN 0-7914-5848-2

This is a book about 'human development', from birth to fulfilment, written from a psychoanalytic, transpersonal perspective. For readers who, like myself, might come to the book from a different tradition, this very notion of human development will raise questions. Can there be a single theory of spiritual development, applicable to all cultures and all religious traditions (and to those with no religious tradition)? Is the account given supposed to be typical, recounting features that fit the greatest number of instances, or normative, describing the path on which one might most wish to travel? What is the evidence for the generality of what is proposed? The text gives few clues. So, after grappling with my questions for a while, I relaxed and enjoyed the story.

And I must admit that it's a good story: often resonating with my own experience, often illuminating other spiritual

teachings. His central metaphor for the spiritual path is the spiral (not, he stresses, to be confused with the different metaphorical use in the 'spiral dynamics' adopted in recent years by Wilber). Its trajectory initially leads from the oceanic, comparatively undifferentiated mental state of the newborn baby, through the classic psychoanalytic transformative stages of repression, ego development and reconstruction to, hopefully, mature functioning in the ordinary social world. Here a person might stop and live out the rest of their life. But alternatively, they might find themselves at a crossroads leading to a second phase, one which curves in a helix to encounter phases similar in some ways to those that had been earlier left behind, but which are now encountered in a new way and with the experience of maturity, so that 'the home to which we return at the end of the spiral path turns out to be the very home from which we first set out, now experienced on a higher level.'

The Ground, or dynamic core of their existence, with which conscious contact was lost beyond the age of around 5, is rediscovered, seen as a psychic underworld or sea, and progressively realised as illuminating Spirit. The polarisation of experience into good and evil, which dominated life around 3 years, producing splitting and repression, is re-encountered later at the spiritual level as

the angelic and demonic. Washburn explores this echoing of the early stages, as well as the fundamental differences between early and later stages, through a sequence of chapters which trace the path from the perspective of each in turn of the components that make up human experience: the Ground, its energy, the Ego, the Other, the body and the world.

As with all spiritual teaching, the characteristics of the approach are most clearly revealed in its more advanced stages. For Washburn the dominant image there is not the vertical take-off to heaven, but the return after enlightenment to the market-place of everyday society. 'We are inherently corporeal beings,' he writes, 'and our corporeality is inherently a spiritual corporeality.' Our final return is to a world that is perceived in a state of integration, in which 'the unqualified sacredness of the world is revealed in a wholly transparent way.' He goes on to stress that this is indeed the 'real' world (scare-quotes in the original). 'It is not a world that has been fabricated or has been given a false sheen by the experiencing subject.' This vision then naturally leads Washburn to stress the way in which this world 'of exquisite beauty, sacred value' calls us to exercise our responsibility of care for the world.

If the book's start aroused my doubts, this ending aroused my enthusiasm. Here, surely, is a vision that can be shared by spiritual explorers from a much wider field than the psychoanalytic, provided they can tread the path of integration, whether their methodology is shamanic, meditative, or the immersion in the reality of nature that has been described by the eco-spiritual writer David Abram. It calls also to a variety of philosophical and scientific methodologies. For instance, Washburn is strongly influenced by phenomenology: he adopts Husserl's concept of *Lebenswelt*, he often quotes the later Heidegger, and at many points his account is reminiscent of Varela. And yet his concept of the World often sits

uneasily between realist and constructivist views. There is room here for a deeper engagement with the modern resurgence of phenomenology.

For me the most interesting of these wider challenges is in connection with modern experimental psychology. Washburn's account of the way the spiral path echoes the earlier stages of development suggests that the same human faculty is engaged in each phase, but is less engaged in the intermediate phase – a suggestion that perfectly matches the analysis of the mind made by Teasdale and Barnard (1993) on the basis of painstaking cognitive research. Their conclusion is that our cognition is integrated not by a single master-system, but by two subsystems, with separate processing functions and memory stores, that normally work seamlessly together. One (the 'propositional' subsystem) is rationally and verbally based, the other (the 'implicational' subsystem) is sensorily and relationally based. Extensive clinical application (e.g. Clarke, 2001) has led to the identification of the roles of these systems in opening and closing to numinous or 'transliminal' experience. In the light of this, the characteristics of the life-path indicated by Washburn fit exactly with a move from implicational dominance, to propositional dominance, back to a recovery of the implicational, and finally to an integration where both are fully engaged.

This is a stimulating book whose final vision deserves widespread examination beyond the confines of psychoanalytic theory.

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Chris Clarke is a Visiting Professor in the School of Mathematics, University of Southampton

Heart as Higher Intelligence

David Lorimer

LOVE WITHOUT END....JESUS SPEAKS

Glenda Green

Spiritis Publishing, 2002, 335 pp., \$18.95 p/b – ISBN 9666623 1 8

(see www lovewithoutend.com)

Some readers may have raised eyebrows as they begin reading this review after having absorbed the title of this book. The author is a painter who had an immensely inspiring encounter with a dazzling spiritual being who ostensibly identifies himself as Jesus. I am not personally too concerned about questions of identity, but look rather for the quality of insight emanating from the source, which can be assessed on both rational and intuitive grounds. There is no doubt in my mind that we are dealing here with an intelligence of the highest order and a hugely rich tapestry of linked ideas.

We can begin by distinguishing soul and mind: 'the soul is the totality of your love, awareness, experience, ability,

emotions and potential which comprise your immortality. Your mind is the recorder and administrator.' It follows from this scheme that the mind is to be used as the servant of the soul; on its own it generates structure which it takes for reality, and, being closely allied with the ego, seeks control as a means of overcoming its inherent sense of separation and hence of fear. Structure is the letter, while the heart represents the inner spirit. Indeed, the book goes further by stating 'Love is who you are', a formulation similar to that of Neale Donald Walsch in his conversations with God.

The principle of Love reigns supreme, according to this picture. Then comes spirit, and thirdly a fine substance which forms the basis of material manifestation. Love is defined as 'the sacred aspect of beingness', while spirit is 'in all things, around all things, with all things, and of all things'. It is also 'whole, continuous and unbroken' (c.f. David Bohm): 'in spirit we live one life beyond the dualities created by structured thinking. Love both initiates and commands creation (c.f. the story of Jesus and the storm and other instances of highly evolved beings seemingly governing the elements). Command in this sense is contrasted with control as 'a ploy for achieving dominance

within a dualistic situation'. Worse still (and just look at US foreign policy) 'after control is established, the polarities will be maintained in order to perpetuate the control' (and maintain the necessary level of fear or anxiety). Philosophically, form (and hence particulate matter) is at once structure, separation and limitation. This sense of separation leads to suffering and the misguided attempt to resolve this through a strategy of control.

A seminal statement in the book is that 'Love has no opposite' since it is the solvent that ends all polarity. Moreover, spirit being indivisible is in fact separate from nothing. Indeed it is the very medium of connection enabling the divided to surrender back to oneness. Scientifically, the book states that 'defining clearly the point where indivisibility makes its transition into divisibility will launch science into the new millennium.' Communication can then become a transmutation of understanding that is actually facilitated by shared love. Love is also the universal facilitator of communication.

The next series of insights concerns the rhythm of life expressed between such polarities as birth and death, joy and sorrow, sowing and reaping, creation and destruction, appearing and disappearing, expanding and contracting, advancing and receding, giving and receiving, speaking and listening, teaching and learning, all of which are expressions of both the one and the many.

The heart is defined as the higher intelligence, in other words love is this higher intelligence. The book urges people to accept this proposition since the mind alone allied to new technology could constitute a lethal weapon.

It defines four levels of intelligence, namely survival (genetic), logic (mental), synchronicity (intuitive) and love (the heart). Collectively we seem to be operating mainly on the first two levels. In this picture, the higher intelligence of the heart needs to inform technology. There follows a discussion of the dimensions of intelligence in terms of unity, love, life, respect, honesty, justice and kindness (as the right use of will).

Many other ideas are elaborated in the book, with two separate chapters devoted to a commentary on the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments of Love. There is a chapter on science, which is interestingly defined as a dialogue between truth and reality: 'reality is where you start. Truth is what you distil through observing patterns of constancy' and is a consummation of an understanding that transcends reality as defined. The book is concerned with the current external orientation of science, which it feels is in need of balance as it opens to recognise spirit as the unbroken matrix of existence, the ultimate connection, the truly unified field. Synchronicity and mutuality are set to emerge as key principles of a new science, according to this approach. No doubt some of these formulations are metaphorical, but they do indicate a new and creative basis for science and philosophy. As the reader will now understand, the book is densely written but immensely liberating in the perspectives it opens up. It needs to be absorbed slowly since it involves a radical reprogramming of our default cultural and even neural software, but the effort is well worthwhile.

Do We Have to Come Back so Often?

Ronald Russell

THE REINCARNATION OF EDGAR CAYCE?

Wynn Free with David Wilcock

Frog Ltd, 2005, 416pp., £15.99 p/b - ISBN 1-58394-083-9

The question mark that found its way into the title of this substantial volume seems to indicate that a measure of doubt exists – a doubt not shared by David Wilcock who firmly asserts on his website that he is Edgar Cayce's reincarnation, thus fulfilling Cayce's prophecy of returning for yet another physical existence.

Edgar Cayce, known as the Sleeping Prophet, died in 1945. Described as 'perhaps the best known twentieth century practitioner of psychic diagnosis and prescription healer', Cayce was the subject of over 600 published works. He was also a profound believer in reincarnation, numbering among his previous incarnations John Bainbridge, an English adventurer, gambler and wastrel, and, going back a bit, Ra-Ta, an Egyptian high priest circa 10,500 BC who prophesied the disappearance of Atlantis, built the pyramids (levitating the stones by 'some esoteric means'), and ignored his own decrees of monogamy by enjoying many sexual partners in later life. By so doing he was karmically bonded to reincarnate on Earth over and over until the end of the 25,000 years cycle.

Wilcock graduated from the State University of New York in 1995 with a BA in psychology and an interest in jazz and New Age music. He was rejected by the Naropa Institute,

despite furnishing the admissions staff with a list of 300 metaphysical/spiritual books he had read in his spare time, and embarked on a series of poorly-paid jobs. His ambition at the time was to work in the mental health area and he managed to obtain an internship in a psychiatric ward, but very soon he was fired for being too friendly with the patients. Unemployed, he was driving to his parents' home when he stopped at a bookstore and, as he says, was guided to buy a book entitled *From Elsewhere*, by Dr Scott Mandelker. Here he discovered that the souls of people on earth come from a number of different origins, some of them, known as Wanderers, being angelic or extra terrestrial in nature. These Wanderers, numbering some hundred million, volunteered to come to Earth and have gone through very many human lives. Their purpose is to help humanity at times of crisis.

Believing himself to be a Wanderer, Wilcock was inspired to study the Law of One series of books that emanated from the entity known as Ra, channelled by an organisation called L/L Research. Ra appears to have been the source for Cayce's own channelled information. From then on Wilcock found himself communicating with a source of guidance he called his 'Dream Voice', from whom he received 'many startling prophecies of personal and global events, as well as gorgeous streams of poetic, intuitive information'. He embarked on a reading programme covering UFOs, metaphysics, ancient civilisations and the Law of One. Then in 1997 he decided to visit the Association for Research and Enlightenment at Virginia Beach, founded by Cayce's children to perpetuate his readings. There certain Association members declared

that he was 'the spitting image' of Edgar Cayce when he was young (although it's most unlikely that they ever saw Cayce in his younger days). Wilcock consulted his Dream Voice who told him that indeed he was Cayce's reincarnation and had a mission to deliver an urgent message to mankind. 'As our story unfolds,' says Wynn Free, 'we will make the case that Wilcock himself, in a previous lifetime as Ra-Ta, actually helped to create the Great Pyramid in Egypt, and now in this life as David Wilcock he's revealing the science behind the pyramid's power.'

Before long, Wilcock's Dream Voice identified itself as being Ra (described by Wynn Free as 'a group soul or social memory complex who evolved from a group of 17% of the third-density inhabitants of Venus, who ascended into fourth density and higher densities thereafter.') Guided by Ra, Wilcock began to give readings to clients and to create an extensive website (www.ascension2000.com) on which several of these readings may be consulted.

While advising his readers to come to their own conclusion, Wayne Free lays out the reasons why he is certain that Wilcock is the reincarnation of Edgar Cayce. These include astrological congruities, comparable missions and conflicts-of-life issues, prophetic abilities and physical resemblance. On this last point, those interested may consider the photographs of Wilcock and Cayce on Wilcock's website. Wayne Free also refers to

Cayce's prophecy that Ra-Ta would return in 1998, that he may become 'a liberator of the world', and would live in Virginia Beach among Cayce's old associates in this new lifetime.

The remaining chapters deal with Wilcock's channelled information from Ra, including personal advice for Wilcock himself, readings for clients, Ra's view on television and the media, on the importance of attitude, reconnecting with God, and 'Ascension and the Birth of the Christ within us all'. A final chapter from Wilcock's own published writings includes forays into science, including a thorough rubbishing of the Darwinian theory of evolution in favour of the theory of Intelligent Design, cosmic influences on matter, energy and consciousness, ideas about DNA, and the transformation of the solar system. He asserts that an Ascension, defined as a movement from one dimension to another, is taking place on Earth, and identifies a great source of energy that is transforming the solar system, raising the average IQ and producing a 'global awakening of consciousness'. The defining characteristic of this source of energy, he says, is Love.

Well, that's all right then. But – come on Wilcock – tell us exactly how those stones were levitated by esoteric means. That's what I'd really like to know.

Ronald Russell is author of 'The Vast Enquiring Soul'

Hemi-Synch

Max Payne

FOCUSSING THE WHOLE BRAIN

edited by Ronald Russell (SMN)

Hampton Roads, 2004, 317 pp., \$15.95p/b - ISBN 1-57174-378-2

This book is a celebration of the work of Robert Monroe. He used audio technology to synchronise the brain waves in both hemispheres of the cortex.

He found that sound patterns in the (4 - 7 Hz) range caused relaxation, concentration, subjective alertness could be stimulated by the (8 -14 Hz) and (13 - 26 Hz) ranges, and binaural beats of (1 - 3 Hz) could bring about deep sleep. These results are interesting in themselves, but it has been found that imposing these audio patterns upon the brains of hyperactive or autistic children produces beneficial results. In the same way adults can be cured of insomnia and depression.

So far this can be considered further evidence for a

reductionist view of consciousness. Manipulating brain rhythms alters the mind; therefore mind is a by-product of matter. Interestingly Monroe's research points in exactly the opposite direction. Synchronous beats across the cortical hemispheres can apparently bring about an intensification of consciousness and feeling of spiritual enlightenment. Sometimes, it is claimed, they can make the transition into death more meaningful, and this synchronisation of brain waves can bring on Near Death Experiences.

Hemispheric synchronisation has a Monroe centre in the USA with branches around the world, and the book has a long list of universities where it is claimed 'Hemi-Sync' s being researched. It also has what are in effect testimonials from well-qualified medical and educational professionals who have used the procedure with beneficial results.

It is necessary to be wary of directions of exploration which end up as cults or movements. Nevertheless the Monroe research into the results of hemispherical synchronisation seem to be exactly the sort of area on the boundary between science and wider consciousness in which the Network is interested.

DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL?

HAVE YOU RECENTLY CHANGED YOUR EMAIL?

If in doubt,
please email us at
info@scimednet.org

GENERAL

Breaking New Ground

Janice Dolley

HOLISTIC LEARNING AND SPIRITUALITY IN EDUCATION

John P Miller et al

State University of New York Press, 2005, 250 pp., \$24.95 - ISBN 7914 6352 4

There appear to be two seemingly opposed approaches to education in the contemporary developed world. The first is led by governments and driven by the economic imperative. This leads to a focus on information, 'teaching by tick box', on competition and testing of outcomes – and in the UK is even now being applied to Nursery levels of education (Times – 10 Nov 2005). The second approach is being led by a not yet co-ordinated movement of educators who, driven by an increasing awareness of the imperative of wholeness and connectedness, are seeking to 'break new ground'. This approach suggests a focus on wisdom and imagination, on teaching through relationships and meaningful processes, on co-operation and partnerships and on enriching soul-centred processes rather than outcomes.

Whether these two approaches eventually communicate, collaborate and coalesce or whether they develop into increasingly opposed alternatives is not yet known. For the holistic approach is still gathering its momentum through conferences, publications, growing national and international associations. This book represents this growing holistic movement and brings together the contributions to a pioneering series of conferences organised under the inspirational leadership of John (Jack) P Miller by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE) since 1997.

In his introduction Miller stresses that the contemporary approaches to education, whilst to some extent addressing the intellectual, emotional, physical, social and aesthetic needs of students, generally ignore the spiritual dimension. It is this ignored dimension that underpins the contributions in this book. If indeed "unity is achieved by a detour through diversity" (Koestler 1973), then this is the treat in store for readers who, like myself, feel that restoring this ignored dimension to the field of learning is part of the 'great work' of our time.

As the unity emerges from the diversity that is offered, several themes can be distinguished, of which four appear as centrally important:

- A holistic perspective of both a person and the planet
- The common urge for connection and transcendence
- A soul-centred approach
- The fact that 'we teach who we are'

Anna Lemkow, a delightful Russian born Canadian of not so young years, stresses that our journey here is in fact a learning journey – a "prolonged journey in consciousness, in self unfoldment". The 'here' that we journey through is not a universe consisting of the sum of its parts, as reductionists declare, but one which is underpinned by the profound metaphysical truth that there is a radical unity of

existence in which everything is dynamically connected. This interconnection is revealed even in the Latin meaning of the word 'universe' which suggests a dynamic unicity. Lemkow not only affirms that "knowledge is one and divisible" but that "self transformation can't occur without the exertion of our higher faculties – our intuitive, aesthetic, unitive, spiritual faculties. These components of ours include reason and the physical senses but transcend them."

This expansion of consciousness is not only a vital response to an inner call for transcendence but is much needed in today's world because it "fosters global mindedness, a sense of being a planetary citizen irrespective of place of residence". So transcendence is not only 'my' journey – it is also our collective journey.

The theme of 'educating for the soul' is introduced by Thomas Moore and is taken up by many contributors to the book. "I picture the soul as a sphere surrounded but its eternal dimensions, its spirituality as rich and deep in its body as at its periphery." Moore stresses that in educating for soul a teacher will help the student to explore a territory of "liminality" and develop a capacity to "stay on the border between the universal and the unique."

If modern secular educators feel challenged by the need to honour the deep longings of the soul for beauty and insight, then they are equally challenged by the notion of eternity. For 'secular' refers to our age, our time and place with future seen as more and better of what we already, materially, know. For Moore, the "eternal is that which is beyond time and yet fully present" and that a few seconds of reflective reverence can lift us into an eternal moment – now. How urgently this is needed amidst the emphasis on learning for skill and success which obscures the need of the soul.

Change, however, is underway in different places. At Suhiko Yoshida is enthusiastic about the changes underway in Japanese schools. He writes of the interface between government-led approaches in Japan and Waldorf Education which has challenged the western culture which is focussed on "outward" economic and political values that relate to the needs of modern industry and the traditional eastern connection with "inwardly" experienced spiritual life. This has emerged as critical right now because the traditional complement in Japan between a school system focussed on the intellectual and competitive needs of industry and the informal education of the family and community focussed on inward spiritual and soulful development has been breaking down as family life in modern society has become less influential. In response, the Japanese government has been influenced by the experience of Waldorf education, based on the principles proposed by Rudolph Steiner, in formulating its 2002 reform plan. This revolves around three key Japanese words which translate as education from the heart and soul, integrated learning and the uniqueness of each individual and school. It could be that this influence is also making itself felt in the West with the British government currently funding a feasibility study towards the possibility of setting up a first Steiner Academy for nursery, primary and secondary years.

Rachel Kessler runs the 'Passages Programme' in Boulder, Colorado. This is a curriculum of the heart for adolescents which she sees as a generation at risk – "the void of spiritual guidance and opportunity in the lives of teenagers is still a rarely noticed factor to the self-destructive and violent behaviour plaguing our nation. Drugs, sex, gang violence and even suicide may be, for

some teenagers, both a search for connection, mystery and meaning and an escape from the pain of not having a genuine sense of spiritual fulfilment". This message needs to counter every piece of media hype on the destructiveness of young people. No wonder they flock to read and see Harry Potter etc., to maybe affirm that their sense of a transcendent dimension, which they sense so strongly but most adults appear to ignore or even deny, is not a sign of approaching madness. Society tends to be acting as 'muggles' who just don't understand that what young people yearn for is meaning and purpose, silence and solitude, creativity and connection and a restoration of the rites of initiation which were inherent in traditional societies.

Riane Eisler, well known in education circles in the USA, suggests a fourth "R" to the usual curriculum three "R"s – that of Relationships. She works to promote a shift from 'dominator' models of education in which hierarchies of subject dispensers and controllers direct the learner to 'partnership' models in which the learner is self-directed, works collaboratively with mentors and facilitators and is supported by human values which meet a students' yearning for joy, validation, love and creative expression. She stresses the obvious fact, that is one of the underpinnings of the holistic education movement, i.e. that as a society we can not meet our need for high quality

human 'capital', nor our need for a respectful relationship with the earth unless we challenge the 'hierarchies' of domination – of both young people and nature – and replace these with hierarchies of actualisation which are based on creative power rather than fear-based power.

Because OISE has declared its interest in the "generalisation of energy for radical vision, action and new ways of being", it is not surprising that all 22 articles offer a different perspective on the promotion of holistic approaches to learning. Meditation as a way of "reconnecting with the fundamental unity of life" shines through several contributions as does an emphasis on the act of teaching being an act of Eros – an act of creation and of love. This book just might help shift the compartmentalised national-industrial view of teaching and learning to one more appropriate to what Swimme calls the "ecozoic" era which is characterised by a holistic planetary mindset in which our souls are connected within ourselves, to each other and to the cosmos.

Janice Dolley, after 30 years as a lecturer at The Open University, is now Executive Director of the Wrekin Trust, co-ordinating the University for Spirit Forum. She was a co-founder of the international series of conferences on Soul in Education and co-author of 'The Quest: Exploring a Sense of Soul'.

A Hidden Trail

David Lorimer

THE SHAKESPEARE ENIGMA

Peter Dawkins (SMN)

Polair Publishing, 2004, 477 pp., £16.99 p/b – ISBN 0 9545389 4 3

Readers may have noticed the Shakespeare authorship controversy surfacing in the news recently with the publication of new book, *The Truth Will Out: Unmasking the Real Shakespeare, written by academics Brenda James and Professor William Rubinstein and arguing that the plays were written by Sir Henry Neville*. Another recent publication is Michael Holroyd's widely reviewed biography of Shakespeare. Peter Dawkins's book, however, has received no attention in the press at all, despite its foreword by Mark Rylance, the artistic director of the Globe Theatre. Peter has devoted his life to the Francis Bacon Research Trust, and this fascinating book is the fruit of over 30 years of carefully documented research.

I have not had the chance to read the Neville book, but reviews indicated that it shares a central argument with Peter's analysis: that there is a poor match between the author of the Shakespeare plays and the known life of Shakespeare the actor. Peter discusses this issue in great detail early in the book. The author of the plays must have been able to read Latin and Greek in the original (as well as French, Italian and Spanish) and his reading extends to over a hundred classical authors. His vocabulary was at least twice that of Marlowe (15,000 words minimum) and his knowledge of the law is deployed with a degree of precision that indicates a legal training.

Moreover, there are insider references to Cambridge University and court life, and descriptions of places that the author must have visited (an argument also used in Neville's case).

Shakespeare the actor and businessman does not appear to have had access to this range of learning (and it is no argument to say that this is snobbery). He left no letters, and no tributes were published on his death while lesser contemporary artists received fulsome eulogies. Bacon himself was the subject of numerous and varied tributes on his death. Other circumstantial evidence is provided by corrections to the plays corresponding with Bacon's revision of his own scientific knowledge and the existence of a notebook that was only published in 1883 and is now kept at the British Museum. It consists of entries in many languages along with words invented by Bacon himself, many of which are used directly in the Shakespeare plays. Indeed 'some of them appear in print uniquely in the Shakespeare plays, and many are used frequently therein.' (p. 210)

In the space of a short review it is not possible to adduce the range of evidence that Peter brings to bear on his case. There are full biographical details of Bacon and his family, accounts of his overall cultural scheme of the Great Instauration, explanations of the Shakespeare monuments, descriptions of the – to us unfamiliar - use of ciphers and pseudonyms, a background on Rosicrucianism and other playwrights of the day (especially Ben Jonson), a review of the Northumberland manuscript, plus a wealth of pictorial illustrations. This leads Peter to the conclusion that 'the Shakespeare Folio is the careful production of a secret, cabalistic fraternity, associated with (or comprising) the Rosicrucians and Freemasons of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, whose 'Apollo' or 'Shakespeare' was Francis Bacon.' (p. 350)

A further scholarly impediment against giving Peter's position a fair hearing is the pervasive rationalism of universities and their consequent bias against esoteric understandings. However, it is not good enough to dismiss evidence on a priori grounds without careful consideration. Another possible factor is that acceptance of Peter's conclusions would cause a seismic tremor in the English tourist industry. Moreover, Shakespeare is part of the English psyche, so replacing him with Bacon would require some very major recasting and would

revolutionise the public perception of Bacon himself. Already he is recognised as one of the greatest men of his generation, a consummate writer and the founder of modern inductive science. If one adds the Shakespeare oeuvre then Bacon's stature reaches that of a universal genius.

Readers who would like to know more are also referred to Peter's essay in Members' Articles.

World Soul - A Crop Circle Revelation

Peter Welsford

CROOKED SOLEY

Allan Brown & John Michell with an afterword by Patrick Harpur.
Roundhill Press, UK, £6.99 p/b - ISBN 0-9549855-0-8 -
www.roundhillpress.com
Email: info@roundhillpress.com

Crop circles are the finest, most beautiful and original art forms of modern times, and they are totally mysterious. Behind the crop circle phenomenon is an evident purpose. Some intelligence, human, alien or spiritual, is in the process of communication. It is exposing us to a course of re-education, beginning with the symbols of sacred knowledge and wisdom.

The crop circle phenomenon is wondrous and inspirational, and it is also most dangerously powerful. To many people it has brought a new interest in life, but others have been upset and disillusioned by the trickery surrounding it or by its failure to develop according to their expectations.

So says John Michell, now President Emeritus of the Research Into Lost Knowledge Organisation (RILKO) of which he was a founder member, in 1969. Together and in partnership with Allan Brown skilled in computer graphic designs, they present the serious researcher with a compendium, setting out a comprehensive explanation and description of *The Crooked Soley* - the manifestation in Wiltshire, in August, 2002.

The most striking evidence for their work is the amazing formation that appeared at Crooked Soley in a wheat field near Hungerford on 27th August, 2002.

On the front page of their book - *Crooked Soley*, there is depicted in colour a symmetrical pattern of a 'doughnut', the inside of which the mathematicians call an annuli - the space between the outer and inner circles. Within this so-called geometrical 'torus' is the clearly identifiable shape of the double helix spiral of the DNA structure, replicating its rotational symmetry and hydrogen bonding in 3-D: but this is conjoined in an unbroken chain which remarkably is absolutely circular.

Together, the authors analyse scientifically the many interpretations of the comprehensive patterns and symbols so expressed, giving the reader a graphic account of the explicit descriptions, leading on to various predictions forecast by the

end of the book. Clearly expressed in its design is a certain code of numbers that John Michell, the leading

international cosmologist tells us are known esoterically as 'The Keys to Creation'. He says that they are also keys to that universal science associated with the Holy Grail.

As John remarked the other day: 'At school, they tell you to think for yourself. But, when you do - they don't like it!' We know that a symbol can be defined as something found in letters, words, texts, sounds, numerals, harmonics, geometry or patterns - which in turn may have 'multiple meanings'. Their various interpretations have enabled John Michell, the pioneer and author of so much published material based on the divine proportions he originally discovered by his study of Plato, to distil and immaculate his work in a form now readily accessible for today's reader.

Combined with the explanations provided by so many excellent visual graphics, their book, firstly, deconstructs the evidence provided by *Crooked Soley* down to the structure of the basic, original Hides of Glaston, the 3-4-5 Pythagorean triangles and the underlying canon of numbers. The subsequent reconstruction builds up the many 2-D blueprints and corresponding patterns, leading to several 3-D interpretations, implying the design and structure of a 'dynamic and harmonic process', the method used in some way by the creators of this strange manifestation, whoever they were, into and out of another, - at present - little understood dimension ~ 4-D.

Secondly, John Michell the veteran, reverts briefly to his earlier study of *Gematria* (Bligh Bond's original work republished by RILKO in 1977) and what he calls the mystical technique of the Canonical circle. By utilising the Science of Cryptography he elaborates on arithmetic as a sacred science, identifying a key number in the Crooked Soley formation, 720 which, 'he says', implies Understanding or nous, meaning the enlightened state achieved through initiation. Another key number called the marriage number, adds to 1296, which he tells us is Goddess of All.

The colourful symbol on the front cover represents the 'objective' exterior of a soul's journey in 4-D as experienced 'subjectively', linked through a labyrinthine DNA thread and implying a timeless, infinite continuum, reflecting Plato's World Soul Number - which in terms of symbolic logic can be interpreted as: True by Virtue of its Form.

'From time to time an evident purpose is revealed again, and when that happens, culture and the human spirit are renewed and life on earth is restored to its natural state as a reflection of paradise'. It becomes self-evident that this Crop Circle is deterministic (who was the author?) and its interpretation appears Universal (independent of intellect and Space-Time).

CROOKED SOLEY - should be on the bookshelf of any serious researcher into Esoteric wisdom and is a real starting point for the study of symbolic logic. As John has said: 'for better or worse, crop circles are highly addictive. If you need an addiction, this is the best one you could find'. It is truly - **A CROP CIRCLE REVELATION.**

Peter Welsford, FCA., © 2005, a former Treasurer of The Scientific & Medical Network, a researcher and writer in physics, mathematics and philosophy. Currently researching the H-H Factor, Hidden Harmonics and their implicit connections with subatomic particles, superstrings and spacetime, e-mail: pawelsford@hotmail.com.

Survival of the Funniest?

Larry Culliford

HAPPINESS: THE SCIENCE BEHIND YOUR SMILE

Daniel Nettle

Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, 216pp., £9.99 h/b – ISBN 0-19-280558-4

What can you say about a book that has much to recommend it, but that also remains seriously incomplete? To be fair, Daniel Nettle makes no claim to do more than clarify current thinking based on existing research. He mentions three thousand studies published on 'hedonics' since 1960, many in the *Journal of Happiness Studies*, which has been published since 2000. He summarises admirably and succinctly, even at times with humour.

Look up 'happiness' on Amazon.uk and there are 4,500 titles (the figure for Amazon.com is 140,000). This book is currently listed in the top ten on both sides of the Atlantic. It is very readable, and is well organised in seven chapters. There are twelve pages of notes and fifteen pages of references, plus an adequate index and a section on 'further reading'.

Nettle says that evolutionary psychology makes it respectable to study happiness; because it is, 'A programme that seems to be there for a reason'. The purpose of this programme, he deduces, is not to increase human happiness but to keep us striving. Nettle's explanation of happiness leans heavily on Darwinism, but looks only backwards, to where we may have come from. He reports on no scheme looking at where we may be going in the future.

According to this book, most of us go around being fairly consistently happy, even taking major life events into consideration. Relatively stable neuroticism and extraversion scores are more important factors in a person's happiness, it turns out, than their sex, age, income, social class or marital status. The chapter on brain biology emphasises differences between right and left hemisphere activity and focuses on receptor systems for opioids, dopamine and serotonin. Later, Nettle summarises sociological studies by reporting that happiness in relation to income and material goods depends on how we perceive what others around us are getting. In the twenty years to 1990, average incomes in the USA rose by three hundred per cent in real terms, but there was no corresponding increase in wellbeing. Most people studied would prefer to earn \$50,000 when others earn \$25,000, than a \$100,000 when others earn \$250,000. What does this tell us, bearing in mind the millions worldwide with an income of less than a dollar a day?

Evolution, we read, should never make us completely happy (or not for long). It should also make us quickly

adapt to the baseline, so that we focus on the possibility of getting something better in the future (even if we don't know what it is yet). We are told, by way of at least partial explanation, that wanting and liking are not the same. For example, people may make choices reflecting what they want, such as working long hours for pay rises and promotions, while actively disliking the consequences that bring them no major increase in personal pleasure. It transpires that people also make inaccurate judgements about the effects of attaining, or failing to attain, their desires; both overestimating the positive effect of getting what they want, and underestimating their ability to adjust when things go badly. These are important issues, which the book oversimplifies. There is more to it than: 'People sometimes require training to make them do things they enjoy'. Walt Disney and Billy Butlin both understood that much already.

In this breezy overview, which includes several brief and interesting (rather than helpful) references to philosophers including Aristotle, Wittgenstein, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, also to Huxley's 'Brave New World', Nettle has done as good a job with the conundrum of happiness as any biological psychologist, heavily committed to evolutionary theory, could. Nettle is even encouraging about self-help books and videos, happiness training programmes and particularly meditation. He even mentions religious faith, describing it as connecting people to something beyond themselves, while adding that there is plenty of evidence that people who practice religion enjoy benefits in health and wellbeing. He stops short, however, of saying that the direction of evolution might be more spiritual than biological. Could it not be that our species is designed to develop incrementally, generation by generation, characteristics of kindness, compassion, honesty, wisdom and so on? It is relevant, then, that we are more likely to develop personal and collective maturity through experiencing adversity, rather than by constantly seeking to sidestep it. Happiness and tranquillity follow acceptance of loss, letting go of anger, sorrow and other painful emotions, and the natural healing of emotional wounds. I would have liked to see something along these lines in such a book.

Like me, SMN members may also have considerable reservations about happiness being described as nothing more than 'a programme' of the brain or mind, dominated by Darwinian imperatives. The way I see it, smiles often herald epiphanies; miniature moments of enlightenment. Watch dolphins at play, catch a friendly stranger's eye across a room, or recall to mind the features of a loved one, and the chances are you will in that moment know something about contentment, inner calm and sweet, perfect joy. This is how really to penetrate the mystery of happiness; and to do so without requiring any theory.

This is direct, incontrovertible, spiritual knowledge, *sapientia*, wisdom, accessible to all. It is, in my view, more

liberating and therefore supra-ordinate to factual knowledge, scientia, science. Those engaged in hedonics research may well, of course, disagree; but at least they have moved on from Paul Ekman's list of six 'basic emotions' – fear, sadness, disgust, anger, surprise, and joy – only the last of which is positive. It is good news that positive emotional experiences are under scientific enquiry as never before.

This book gave me a few small surprises, but no significant cause for any fear, disgust or anger. It may have caused a tinge of sorrow, of regret, but it also gave me a

fair degree of satisfaction, even momentarily of joy. It is not bland, and readers of this review might well therefore find pleasure in it. If so, I recommend it, for there is no harm in taking happiness seriously from time to time. The trick involves not overdoing it.

Larry Culliford is the author of several books on happiness under a pen-name (See: www.happinessite.com). 'Love, Healing and Happiness: wisdom for the post-secular era' is due for publication by John Hunt Publications during 2006.

In Search of Awakening - Poems by Tanja Kenton and Robin Richards, Music by Tim Jones, CD 40 minutes ISBN 1-904612-85-7 £12

This CD has been inspired by Kabbalah. The group Yarrow, students of Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi came together in the summer of 2005 to put their training and ideas into practice. The group are working together to keep in mind the inner symbolism of the sacred wildflower yarrow, the perfect balance between Yang and Yin, soft and hard. Yarrow endeavours to pay back their spiritual debt to the long lineage of poets and musicians throughout the ages who still act as teachers and companions to anyone who is willing to listen. The players want to share the spirit of the ancient tradition which is still very much alive in our times in various forms.

Part 1 is poems by Tanja Kenton, set to music by Tim Jones. Part 2 is poems by Tanja Kenton and Part 3 is Poems by Robin Richards. The readers are Tanja and Robin. The poems and music can be used as a basis for contemplation or meditation, as the words and the music are windows to other worlds. The soul and the spirit are always in search of awakening.

The music accompanying the poems reflects their meaning. The overall tone of each poem is the starting point. Purification begins with Earth, 'The walls I built around myself became a prison'. The music for the Four Purifications starts with a strong square rhythm for Earth followed by a flowing 11/8 pattern for Water. In Air, a brittle offbeat transforms itself into an exalted melody as the words describe the change from the flitting of uncontrolled thoughts to the radiant presence of angelic beings. The hypnotic, circulating effect of the music in Fire reflects the surrender of direction to Will which is hard to grasp.

In The Dark Night of Pluto, the violin whispers in the vast, mysterious darkness of space. The guitar in The Sky at Night reflects 'a shooting star'. The rhythm of the words contributes to the pattern of the music in for example Post Mortem where the first line 'Like in a dark tunnel' indicates the need for a compound rhythm. The music develops, firstly by reflecting the overall mood of the poems, then drawing on individual lines and words for detail. If You Pray begins with a call to prayer rather like the beating of cymbals and bells in Tibetan ritual and then continues the theme of bells behind the gentle words.

In Part 2, the poems by Tanja, read by Tanja and Robin, reflect a longing for enlightenment, the ensuing struggle, despair, followed by the understanding of the need for silence and contact with the hidden music of the inner

octaves, the simplicity, the presence of the invisible. The two readers are having a conversation together in their search.

Part 3, the poems by Robin, delivered by him with great passion and confidence, again reflect longing, waiting, hoping, dreaming, aching, yearning. The emphasis on listening and memory, dreaming of peace at the heart of the ocean.

Tanja Kenton, also known as Rebekah, was born in Finland. She wrote poems from an early age and had the eminent Finnish poets Matti Paavilainen, Vaino Kirstina and Risto Ahti as her teachers. She has studied several esoteric traditions including yoga and astrology. She lives in London with her husband Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi, who is a writer and teacher of Kabbalah.

Tim Jones was born in the Midlands in 1952. As a child playing the viola he discovered a passion for the guitar. He went on to play with an assortment of rock and blues groups including Bo Diddley in the 1980s. He studied composition with the composer Raymond Parfrey. He has studied Kabbalah with Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi for over 20 years. He lives in London with his wife, running workshops in which participants learn to express themselves through sound.

David Coussell was born in London in 1939. He studied at the Guildhall School of Music. He has pursued a varied career as an opera conductor, director, singer, choir master and accompanist in the UK and overseas. He has been interested in esoteric traditions for some 40 years. David currently lives and works as a freelance in London.

Robin Richards was born in the Midlands in 1952, where he attended the Anna Brown School of Dance and Drama. He toured with his own one-man show in the 1980s and later studied violin with, among others, Michael Thomas of the Brodsky Quartet. Robin holds a Poetry Society Gold Medal for verse speaking and the George Rochford Porter Award for the recitation of Romantic verse. In 1994 he gained a B. Mus. Degree from Middlesex University. His spiritual enquiry has lasted over two decades, leading to his writing a book. He currently performs and teaches violin in London. I hope this music and poetry which expresses the dynamic of imagination and creation will attract a wide audience.

Note: More information about Yarrow may be found at www.timandtanja.com where you may also purchase the CD In Search of Awakening for £12. The sheet music for this is available in a bound edition for £10.

Dr. Ann Roden is a paediatrician who now practises craniosacral therapy and teaches Ayurveda.

books in brief

David Lorimer

Science/Philosophy of Science

What's Out There

by **Mary K. Baumann, Will Hopkins, Lorelee Nolletti, Michael Soluri**

Duncan Baird Publishers 2005, 182 pp., h/b.

Subtitled 'images from here to the edge of the universe', this is a spectacular illustrated astronomical dictionary in large format. It is arranged alphabetically with photos corresponding to the entries which amount to a glossary of planets and astronomical terms such as corona, molecular cloud, phobos and prominence. Each photo has a succinct commentary and details of the photo itself.

Understanding Water

edited by **Andreas Wilkens, Michael Jacobi, Wolfram Schwenk**

Floris Books 2005, 112 pp., £12.99, p/b.

This book reports on developments from the work of Theodor Schwenk, whose classic book 'Sensitive Chaos' appeared nearly 30 years ago and before many scientists were referring to chaos. The book puts water and its patterns in perspective before describing and illustrating recent work in the 'drop picture method', which studies patterns made in water by arranging drops to fall onto a water surface with glycerine so that the results can be photographed and analysed. The authors conclude that we must understand the true nature of water as part of an effort to comprehend the cyclical workings of nature. In an age dominated by linear thinking and manipulation of nature, the significance of this lesson cannot be overstressed. This beautifully illustrated book will sensitise the reader both both scientifically and aesthetically.

Biodiversity - An Introduction

by **Kevin J Gaston and John I Spicer**

Blackwell Publishers 2005, 191 pp., £19.99, p/b.

Second edition of this concise introductory text on biodiversity. Although it is designed as an undergraduate text, the book can be profitably read by the general reader and contains a wealth of charts and tables. The book defines the field, giving a historical overview before going into mapping, the importance of biodiversity, human impacts on the environment and ways in which biodiversity can be maintained. The authors comment that, since the appearance of the first edition in 1998, 'there has been little, if any, reduction in the degree of threat faced by the variety of life on earth' and they add that 'if anything, there is now a sharpened awareness of how acute the threat is and how pervasive are its implications.'

Leaving us to Wonder - An Essay on the Questions Science Can't Ask

by **Linda Wiener, Ramsey Eric Ramsey**

State University of New York Press 2005, 163 pp., £19.95, p/b.

This book is the outcome of a collaboration between a biologist and a philosopher posing the question of how to live well in a technoscientific culture. This necessarily involves moving beyond scientism - hence the subtitle above and the

focus on science and ethics in a general sense. Our knowledge of the world is in turn related to our self-knowledge which the authors examine with the help of Merleau-Ponty. They home in on the work of the French philosopher Pierre Hadot and his book 'Philosophy as a Way of Life'. The practising philosopher is not simply a theoretician but one who cares for others, an ethical as well as a knowing being. Human consciousness is in fact the precondition of the very possibility of science.

Continental Philosophy of Science

edited by **Gary Gutting**

Blackwell Publishers 2005, 332 pp., £19.99, p/b.

This book fills a lacuna in British philosophy of science texts, where little if any attention is paid to currents of thought in Continental Europe unless one happens to be in a modern languages department. Among the better-known philosophers covered are Hegel, Bergson, Cassirer, Husserl, Heidegger, Foucault and Habermas. Fewer readers will have heard of Irigaray and Canguilhem. The format presents an essay about the philosopher followed by an edited extract from his writings. The piece on Bergson is well worth reading, containing as it does a discussion of his (sic) 'spiritualist' metaphysics. Although Bergson was interested in psychical research, the word here denotes a contrast with 'materialist'. His own piece explains his views on psychophysical parallelism. Not a book for the generalist, but those with a background in philosophy of science will find it fascinating.

Our Inner Ape

by **Frans De Waal**

Granta Publications Ltd 2005, 272 pp., £17.99, h/b.

Subtitled 'the best and worst of human nature', this book by a leading primatologist looks at the components of human behaviour in our closest relatives, the chimpanzee and the lesser known and less aggressive bonobo, described as egalitarian, erotic and matriarchal. De Waal considers power, sex and violence before coming to kindness and then his final chapter on the 'bipolar ape'. It is hard to disagree with his conclusion that we are born with a gamut of tendencies from the basest to the noblest. He rightly asserts that the view of ourselves as purely selfish and mean is inadequate. While recognising the human capacity for destruction, it is also important to remember that we possess 'wells of empathy and love deeper than ever seen before.' Hence his injunction to look in the mirror to gain a better understanding of our biological inheritance is timely - and even essential for the building of a positive future.

Medicine/Health

A Time to Heal

by **Beata Bishop (SMN)**

First Stone Publishing 2005, 325 pp., £9.99, p/b.

It is excellent to see this classic book back in print. It is the grippingly written story of Beata's espousal of the Gerson method to cure her secondary cancer nearly 25 years ago. It is a tale of radical hope that can be highly recommended to everyone interested in health, and can be especially useful to

those recently diagnosed with cancer. It is ultimately a book about life.

Cicely Saunders - Founder of the Hospice Movement, Selected Letters 1959-1999

by David Clark

Oxford University Press 2005, 392 pp., p/b.

Dame Cicely Saunders OM died earlier this year and must be counted as one of the most significant medical innovators of the 20th century. Her headmistress said of her 'I should be greatly surprised if anything deterred her once she has decided to embark on a piece of work'. Her seminal contribution in creating the hospice movement in the UK is documented in this extensive collection of letters. For the editor it is a real labour of love. He introduces the three sections with biographical material while footnotes identify both people and the background to references in the letters. They are full of passion, practical vision, humour and humanity and make for engrossing reading, especially for those with medical interests.

Complete Family Health Guide - New Medicine

edited by Professor David Peters (SMN)

D.K. Printworld Ltd. 2005, 512 pp., £25.00, h/b.

Subtitled 'how to integrate complementary and conventional medicine for the safest and most effective treatment', this book is a landmark reference in bringing together the two fields. It begins with an editorial section on well-being and health, moving on to a discussion of conventional medical treatment before detailed briefings by specialists in the field of nutrition, bodywork, Western herbal medicine, homoeopathy, traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture, environmental health, mind-body medicine and psychological therapy. The remaining 400 pages are devoted to diseases and disorders of every kind - brain, skin, circulation, digestion, musculoskeletal systems, women's, men's and children's health, mind and emotions, and allergies. The book is a model of clear layout and vivid illustration, itself an editorial triumph. There is even a glossary and resource list at the end.

Terrors of the Table - The Curious History of Nutrition

by Walter Gratzer

Oxford University Press 2005, 288 pp., £18.99, h/b.

A book of astonishing scope and full of unusual characters and intriguing snippets of information. Although trained as a biophysicist, the author's erudition is prodigious as he single-handedly tells the story of nutrition in both scientific and social terms. Nor is malnutrition omitted; indeed it forms a historical leitmotif up to the present time, with some specially graphic examples from the last World War including the siege of Leningrad as it then was. Food has thrown up its fair share of eccentrics and later chapters are entitled 'Fads and Quacks' and 'Profits and the Higher Quackery'. Not all readers will agree with Gratzer in where he draws the line, for instance in relation to Linus Pauling and Vitamin C. However, they will read the book with real relish.

Passionate Medicine - Making the Transition from Conventional Medicine to Homeopathy

edited by Robin Shoheit

Jessica Kingsley Publishers ISBN 1 85302 554 2 - £9.95

Charla Devereux writes: Five doctors and two veterinary surgeons, all members of the Homeopathic Professionals Teaching Group (HPTC) describe their individual journeys from conventional medicine to homeopathy. One of the threads that connects their experiences is the recognition of the important role that emotions play in health, those of both the patient and physician, as opposed to a detached clinical approach to illness. The relationship between orthodox medicine and

alternative therapies is another important issue considered, making this a good read, especially but not exclusively for those in or contemplating a career in medicine.

Philosophy/Religion

The Way of the Practical Mystic

by Henry Thomas Hamblin

Polair Publishing, 2005, 381 pp., £13.99 p/b

Henry Thomas Hamblin launched the Science of Thought Review in Bosham, Sussex, in 1921 and the publication continues to this day under the new title 'New Vision' (liz@thehamblinvision.org.uk). As the title suggests, Hamblin was a practical mystic with a similar outlook to Ralph Waldo Trine ('In Tune with the Infinite') and some of the American transcendentalists like Emerson. This 26-part course was conceived in 1920 and was recently found in Hamblin's papers. It is a real treasure trove of spiritual wisdom and practice.

I have been using it as contemplative reading for some time and have been enriched by its content and practices. At the beginning of the book Hamblin observes that it is not the amount of study that leads to realisation of truth, but rather sitting in silence on a regular basis and opening up to the abundance of the inner world. Moreover, the fruit of contemplation is not self-absorption but service to others. The material is Christ-centred in a mystical sense, although the emphasis is on the development of the inner life working with the power of positive thought. The lessons are accompanied by letters and other helpful notes of advice. In a time when there is so much fear and negative thinking in our collective consciousness, Hamblin shines like a beacon, encouraging us to align ourselves with the Source of the Good, the Beautiful and the True.

Meanings of Life

by Alex Wright

Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd. 2005, 144 pp., £10.95, p/b.

This book follows up an earlier work entitled 'Why Bother with Theology?' in putting forward an understanding of a secular spirituality in the sense of seeing more deeply into everyday life, including one's own. The four main themes - self and world, loss, love and fulfilment - are all interlinked meditations on the author's personal experience with apposite illustrations from novels, films and poetry. Alex writes sensitively and perceptively about life as mirrored in both experience and books. And he is more than usually familiar with books and their process as an editor himself who was unexpectedly made redundant three years ago. Here, as he also remarks elsewhere, loss is gain, since the experience allowed space for the thoughts in this book to gestate and mature. Two other themes are worth mentioning: the role of memory in love and loss, and the pathos of human existence when seen against the backdrop of deep time. However, as Alex indicates, fulfilment is at least partly the realisation of one's own oneness as a manifestation of kaleidoscope of creation in time, a sense of oneness that overcomes our physical distinctiveness.

The Worlds We Live In

edited by Claire Foster & Edmund Newell

Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd. 2005, 129 pp., £10.95, p/b.

A series of four dialogues on global politics and economics with Rowan Williams, organised by the St Paul's Institute and held in the Cathedral. The themes addressed include world governance, global capitalism, the environment and health. The format includes a distinguished chair and two other

commentators, with responses from the Archbishop. With other speakers and chairs like Lord Owen, Baroness Williams, Philip Bobbitt, Mary Midgley and Mohammad Yunnus, the level of dialogue is sophisticated and certainly achieves the aim of the events in applying Dr. Williams' own faith and very considerable knowledge to pressing material concerns. It also shows his intellectual calibre, arguably unmatched in any Archbishop of Canterbury since William Temple. In his Afterword Dr Williams comments that the issues are all interrelated and that they reflect a crisis of trust and consent. It is also clear that the Christian perspective has a great deal to contribute to contemporary social debates.

Tomorrow's Faith - A New Framework of Christian Belief

by **Adrian B. Smith**

John Hunt Publishing 2005, 107 pp., £9.99, p/b.

This book could serve well as a text for a discussion of various aspects of faith. In the introduction Fr Smith urges the reader to remember that love is more important than knowledge, and that we are here to grow in love. What follows is a series of short chapters on the Bible and Revelation, God, Jesus Christ, human beings and the Church. At the head of each chapter Smith places a traditional understanding alongside a contemporary understanding, which is then elaborated in the text. Sometimes, as in the Resurrection for instance, the contemporary understanding makes the whole episode symbolic and metaphorical, which may miss an important psychic dimension.

This Holy Man - Impressions of Metropolitan Anthony

by **Gillian Crow**

Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd. 2005, 251 pp., £17.95, p/b.

I remember listening to the wisdom of Metropolitan Anthony at an early Mystics and Scientists conference in Winchester. He had a remarkable presence, to which this book by one of his students bears witness. It tells the story of his life and inner struggles in a way that does not daunt the reader with a vision of unmitigated greatness. However a remarkable singleness of purpose emerges from the narrative - and it is interesting to reflect that this prelate was also a qualified physician, a training which gave his pastoral care an extra dimension.

On the Nature of Significance of the Crafts

by **Brian Keeble**

Temenos Academy Review 2005, 59 pp., £6, p/b.

Three short essays on the architect W. R. Lethaby, the calligrapher Edward Johnston and the writer Ananda Coomaraswamy, with an introduction by Keith Critchlow. The underlying theme is the effect of a climate of mechanistic materialism and functionalism on the arts and crafts, using the three subjects as a lens. Work has more or less lost its sacred dimension and the attention is dissipated by an onrush of ephemeral sensations and stimulations so that we lose our connection with being and are wholly caught up in doing. These essays provide an anchor and a necessary antidote to the tyranny of the machine.

God's Advocates - Christian Thinkers in Conversation

by **Rupert Shortt**

Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd. 2005, 284 pp., £12.95, p/b.

Rupert Shortt is Religion Editor of the Times Literary Supplement and author of books on Rowan Williams and Benedict XVI - hence he is well placed to undertake this series of conversations covering a huge range of Christian thought. Beginning with an overview with Rowan Williams, the book moves on through philosophical theology, philosophy of religion, ethics and society, feminism and black theology in a

series of exchanges that elicit significant and accessible insights for the lay reader, especially in relation to the challenges posed by secularism.

Providence in the Book of Job

by **Jeremy I Pfeffer**

Sussex Academic Press 2005, 212 pp., £49.95, h/b.

A scholarly work addressing the problem of theodicy - the search for God's mind as the author puts it - through an analysis of the Book of Job. It begins with a synopsis before moving on to introduce the personalities of the book and the way in which providence is understood in other books of the Old Testament. The rest of the book is devoted to a series of mediaeval commentaries by the greatest scholars of their day, struggling as we do to explain why bad things happen to good people. My own interest dates from Jung's 'Answer to Job' and his discussions with Fr Victor White. In this case, the author is trained as a physicist but has steeped himself deeply in the text and takes the reader along with him on his quest.

The Kabbalah Experience - The Practical Guide to Kabbalistic Wisdom

by **Naomi Ozaniec**

Duncan Baird Publishers 2005, 454 pp., £12.99, p/b.

This book is true to its subtitle - it is indeed a comprehensive practical guide to the Kabbalah, bringing it into a contemporary idiom corresponding to the search for wisdom in our time. The 34 chapters combine the symbolic imagery of the Tarot with that of the Tree of Life, making for a rich and interesting confluence. There are spiritual exercises built into the text, which is best used as a form of lectio divina over a period of some months and the author brings considerable erudition to bear on the subject matter.

Jesus in the World's Faiths

edited by **Gregory A Barker**

Alban Books Ltd 2005, 193 pp., £9.99, p/b.

A unique book giving perspectives on Jesus from five religious traditions: Buddhism, Christianity itself, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. The format is a lead essay with three extended responses from other scholars. The result is a rich variety of contrasting views but most written in a spirit of ecumenism - a 'myriad of images', as Dan Cohn-Sherbok writes in his foreword.

Truth - A Guide for the Perplexed

by **Simon Blackburn**

Penguin/Viking Books 2005, 238 pp., £14.99, h/b.

A book emerging from the author's Gifford Lectures in Glasgow in 2004, its central theme is the tension between absolute and relative viewpoints, especially in our own time when both tendencies are as pronounced as ever. Citing Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum* at the start of each chapter, Blackburn traverses a great deal of epistemological terrain, touching on faith, science, history and the puzzles thrown up by different approaches as well as the results of deconstructionist post-modernism. Refreshingly, he argues that there are real standards of argument and discourse, of objectivity and confidence in our views. A skilful modulation that leaves the reader with a more sophisticated understanding of competing viewpoints.

Holy Terror

by **Terry Eagleton**

Oxford University Press 2005, 148 pp., £12.99, h/b.

The title of this book highlights the paradox at its heart, namely that the sacred is a Janus-faced power, 'at once life-giving and death-dealing' which the author traces back to the orgies of Dionysus and which also reappears in the Eros and Thanatos of Freud. Eagleton also argues that this ambivalence is found in the modern form of freedom with the martyrdom of

the suicide bomber and its obverse, the sacrificial scapegoat. The book's range of erudition is exceptional, both in the history of ideas and the examples drawn from many literary traditions. It sheds new light on the notion of holy terror by seeing in both in terms of the sublime and of evil.

The Thoughtful Guide to Science & Religion

by **Dr Michael Meredith (SMN)**

O Books 2005, 201 pp., £10.99, p/b.

Subtitled 'using science, experience and religion to discover your own destiny', this is a rich book that weaves these three themes together with significant experiences from the author's own life. It is intimately written so that the reader follows his journey through the lands of science, consciousness and the spirit, time and eternity and shares his insights as they emerge from reading, meditation and life experience. The book ranges widely through the sciences and different religious traditions and practices which the author has pursued. As Rowan Williams writes in his Foreword, 'this is a programme for human maturity'. Here is an extract defining prayer: 'ultimately prayer is holding in your mind, at all times, compassion for another. It is like a small candle brightly shining in the background of your thoughts. It is empathetic and caring and naturally changes from a glow to a bright illumination of one's whole being when someone needs you to help or comfort him or her. And at all times God is your guiding companion.' A gem for the modern spiritual seeker.

The Challenge of Islam

by **Douglas Pratt**

Ashgate Publishing Limited 2005, 257 pp., p/b.

Written by a New Zealand philosopher, this book is a timely contribution to interfaith dialogue. It falls into three parts which deal with understanding Islam in historical, scriptural, social and legal terms; then the context of Christian-Muslim encounters as well as Jewish-Muslim relations, leading to a discussion of real engagement through dialogue. Of special interest is a chapter on barriers to dialogue that covers the shaping of media images relating to Islam. Much of this is predictable but the author does not mention the covert ways in which media images are shaped, for instance the image of an Arab woman rejoicing at 9/11 - when it turned out that she was in fact enthusing about something quite different and only discovered this sleight of hand a few days later. We must beware of the manufacturing of images.

10 Good Questions about Life and Death

by **Christopher Belshaw**

Blackwell Publishers 2005, 178 pp., £9.99, p/b.

An informal and clearly written book addressing some central questions: Is Life Sacred? Is it Bad to Die? Might I Live On? Should I Take the Elixir of Life? Is It All Meaningless? Does Reality Matter? Central questions indeed and the author guides the reader through his discussion in an engaging manner. The only trouble is that, like many philosophers, he is woefully uninformed when it comes to the evidence for reincarnation and survival. He discusses the issues in a theoretical manner and his bibliography is rather thin. This allows him to conclude that 'there is just no good reason, no strong evidence, to think that any of us will live on'. In these matters C.D. Broad is a much better guide than David Hume, but most professional philosophers are disciples of Hume.

The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy

by **Nichola Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu**

Blackwell Publishers 2005, 766 pp., £85.00, h/b.

An impressive work in spite of my reservations expressed below in the review of a comparable book by Simon Blackburn. The layout is especially clear, with cross references indicated

in bold rather than with asterisks. What distinguishes the book are direct quotations from philosophers writing about the topic at the end of each entry. This means that the dictionary has an extra and very useful dimension as the reader glimpses the often felicitous formulation of some leading philosophical thinkers. It would have been instructive to add quotations at the end of the biographies too, but this would have added to the already extensive labours of the assiduous editors. The price will mean that most potential readers will have to await the paperback.

Islam and the West - Post 9/11

edited by - **Ron Greaves, Theodore Gabriel, Yvonne Haddad, Jane Idleman Smith**

Ashgate Publishing Limited 2005, 226 pp., £17.99, p/b.

An important volume by scholars who have long been involved in Christian-Muslim studies. Divided into two parts - theoretical and case studies - the book covers a lot of ground. Among the issues are the general attitude of Islam to the West, roots of violence and extremism in the Abrahamic religions, the evolution of American and British Muslim responses to 9/11 and Israel as a focus of Muslim resentment. The book is closed by a brilliant overview of the themes presented, drawing together a number of significant threads.

The Spiritual Dimension

by **John Cottingham**

Cambridge University Press 2005, 186 pp., £14.99, p/b.

Subtitled 'Religion, Philosophy and Human Value', this book is based on the Stanton lectures delivered in the University of Cambridge. The author's approach will interest Network readers as he engages with spirituality as primarily a matter of praxis rather than belief: 'the envisaged process of internal transformation, in contrast to the intellectual business of evaluating propositions, seems to me fundamental to understanding not just the nature of spirituality but also that of religion in general.' The book goes on to discuss the interfaces between religion and, respectively, science, value, self-discovery, language, the Enlightenment, the good life and pluralism. Cottingham treats psychological and emotional as well as intellectual issues.

The Buddha and the Terrorist

by **Satish Kumar (SMN)**

Green Books Ltd 2005, 75 pp., £4.95, p/b.

A timely retelling of the story of Angulimala, a serial murderer who was converted by the Buddha and became one of his disciples. Satish creates a vivid narrative that brings the characters and their experiences to life. The real issues arise after Angulimala becomes Ahimsaka: first the King is convinced of his sincerity but his law officers and ordinary people are harder to persuade. They demand justice and revenge. However, as the Buddha points out, violence breeds violence, so forgiveness is the only real way to advance. In the end, it is the witness of a victim's widow which proves decisive. It is a parable for our times and indeed for all time, the triumph of forgiveness over revenge.

The Secret Gospels of Jesus

by **Marvin Meyer**

Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd. 2005, 338 pp., £12.95, p/b.

This book lives up to its subtitle as 'the definitive collection of gnostic gospels and mystical books about Jesus of Nazareth'. The author has produced new translations of key texts and has provided a highly informative introduction that presupposes no previous knowledge on the part of the reader. He points out that in the gnostic gospels Jesus reveals

wisdom and knowledge, and the corresponding central issue is not so much sin as ignorance - as it was also for Plotinus. A key concept is that of 'epinoia' or insight. In turn each text is introduced and placed within the context of the book as a whole. An excellent source for both seasoned and new readers.

Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy

by **Simon Blackburn**

Oxford University Press 2005, 405 pp., £9.99, p/b.

This book is a remarkable one-man achievement by the professor of philosophy at Cambridge. The new edition contains over 500 new entries (just think of the amount of work involved) with 500 biographies and a chronology of philosophical events from 10,000 BCE to the present day. In addition, there is a comprehensive explanation of key philosophical terms with extensive cross-references. And it is impressive to find such names as Steiner and Swedenborg included, along with an awareness of the interest of such philosophers as C.D. Broad, H.H. Price and Henry Sidgwick in psychical research. These are normally blind spots in such volumes, as in the Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy reviewed above. Anyone with a serious interest in philosophy should have this book on their shelves.

The Moral Mind

by **Henry Haslam**

Imprint Academic 2005, 106 pp., £8.99, p/b.

This short study begins from the premise that the moral mind (or moral sense) forms an important component of our humanity and that we need to counter the trend claiming that morality was not important. Although the author is a Christian, the book seeks out the common ground that can be widely shared by people of different beliefs. The middle section covers moral instincts, custom and the reaching out of 'the morality of beyond'. Haslam then sketches out his idea of a new morality of consensus that includes an appreciation of the subjective nature of the moral sense as well as the reality of objective morality. Moreover, the future of the planet demands the nurturing of the moral sense.

Psychology/Parapsychology

The Unbelievable Truth

by **Gordon Smith**

Hay House Publishers 2005, 239 pp., £7.99, p/b.

Gordon Smith is a well-known medium who has collaborated with many scientific tests of his capacities. This book takes the reader on a tour of paranormal phenomena and Gordon draws on his insights and experiences to explain consciousness, second sight, NDEs and OBEs, altered states and hauntings. Each chapter contains a section entitled 'Truths and Misconceptions' which debunks a number of common fallacies. The curious reader will find that him a level-headed guide, who is recommended by Member and former President of the SPR, Archie Roy.

Future Studies/Economics/Ecology

Sekem - A Sustainable Community in the Egyptian Desert

by **Dr Ibrahim Abouleish**

Floris Books 2005, 233 pp., £16.99, p/b.

The amazing story of the Sekem (literally the life-giving force of the sun) community in Egypt. The author was trained as a physician but returned to his native Egypt from Austria at the age of 40 after a trip home had made him aware of the parlous state of agriculture. He resolved to create a sustainable

community in the desert, and set about this task with considerable resolve and creativity. The pictures in the book tell the story alongside the text, with flourishing plants and people. It has made itself financially viable by selling its produce, including medicinal herbs, and now oversees a network of over 800 farms in Egypt. It is a deeply spiritual story involving Islam and Anthroposophy that reminds one of Giono's Man Who Planted Trees but on a grander and more diverse scale. The initiative was rightly awarded an alternative Nobel Prize and will surely be an inspiration for our current century.

Hope Dies Last - Making a Difference in an Indifferent World

by **Studs Terkel**

Granta Publications Ltd 2005, 326 pp., £8.95, p/b.

The subtitle carries the message of this engaging book where a multitude of activists tell their stories in a simple and often disarming manner. The emphasis is on the influences that have shaped them. Many interviewees will not be known in Europe but a few are, like Dennis Kucinich and Francis Moore Lappe. Her next project is about overcoming fear with hope and she conveys a wonderful image of individual raindrops creating a bucket of hope. We need plenty of them and this book is one such.

The Little Green Data Book

by **World Bank**

Eurospan 2004, 237 pp., £9.95, p/b.

This pocket book is based on the the World Development Indicators 2004. It contains a wealth of statistics on population, agriculture, forests, energy, emissions and pollution, water and sanitation, and a number of national accounting aggregates. Although there is a section devoted to biodiversity, it mostly only indicates the percentage of land area under national protection. Overall data are provided by region and income distribution, then each country has its own entry. It is a useful snapshot but is not designed to track trends. Information can be accessed online at www.worldbank.org/environmentaleconomics

At Home in Nature - Modern Homesteading and Spiritual Practice in America

by **Rebecca Kneale Gould**

John Wiley & Sons Ltd 2005, 350 pp., £38.95, h/b.

A very interesting book giving the history of homesteading and spiritual practice and taking as its starting point Thoreau's 'Walden'. The reader is introduced to other pioneers like John Burroughs, while much of the book is devoted to the lives of Scott and Helen Nearing. Wendell Berry also features as a modern exponent. Themes treated include tensions between contemplation and action, personal renewal and cultural reform, and the question of how to relate homesteader identity to its wider social context. It hardly needs saying that a sustainable relationship to nature is a key theme and one that will assume greater prominence in the future.

Ecological Literacy - Educating our Children for a Sustainable Future

edited by **Michael K Stone and Zenobia Barlow**

John Wiley & Sons Ltd 2005, 275 pp., £10.95, p/b.

A key volume for anyone engages in education for sustainability. In his preface, Fritjof Capra points out that the systemic understanding of life emerging from science is based on three fundamental insights: the web of life, the cycles of nature and the flow of energy. The classroom is the school garden - a point increasingly recognised as valuable by educational authorities and which helps forge an emotional bond with nature which is not simply an intellectual understanding. There are four sections: vision, tradition/place, relationship and action. Wendell Berry contributes an essay called 'Solving for Pattern' in which he

shows the irony of agricultural methods that destroy first the health of the soil and then that of human communities. The action section contains practical examples like schemes to change school lunches. I remember over 20 years ago visiting Satish Kumar's small school where they grew their own food, baked their own bread and cooked their own lunch - ecoliteracy in action.

Education

Reinventing Education

edited by Vincent Nolan and Gerard Darby

Synectics Education Initiative 2005, 249 pp., £19.50, p/b.

This unusual book represents the result of a thought experiment in which 21 authors were asked how they would meet the educational needs of the next fifty years if they were entirely unconstrained by existing institutions, beliefs and assumptions. The contents are stimulating and creative, ranging across a number of issues according to the writers' special interests. Among the ideas advanced are individual mentoring rather than class teaching, the development of competencies rather than the acquisition of information, more personalised learning, and going beyond purely academic objectives. In fact some of these things are already happening, partly in reaction to the perceived shortcomings of existing systems.

Special Education Needs - A New Look

by Mary Warnock

Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain 2005, 59 pp., £6.99,

Mary Warnock's engagement with special educational needs dates back to the mid-1970s when she chaired an influential government commission on the subject, whose recommendations have become part of official policy. Here she revisits the key issues such as inclusion, and sides with critics calling for a reconsideration, commenting that a refusal to address genuine differences may undermine attempts to meet the needs of all children. Will be of interest primarily to those involved in education.

Phases of Childhood

by Bernard C J Lievegoed

Floris Books 1985, 203 pp., £9.99, p/b.

This book was written after the Second World War by a physician steeped in the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. As such it gives equal weight to the different realms of development within the overall concept of humans as souls. The physical aspect is covered in great detail through to puberty, then the development of the self, and finally more specifically of thinking, feeling and willing. A thoughtful and informative book.

General

The Secret of Laughter - Magical Tales from Persia

by Shusha Guppy

I B Tauris & Co Ltd 2005, 202 pp., £19.99, h/b.

A real delight of a book that should be in the library of all who love spiritual narratives evoking perennial truths about human life. The stories are all moving, and many are heroic, where the protagonist is called upon to exhibit immense courage and ingenuity in pursuit of an objective. The language vividly paints people, animals and landscape, passions and sacrifices, indeed a whole range of emotions and situations. A riveting collection.

Humming your Way to Happiness

by Peter Galgut

O Books 2005, 136 pp., £9.99, p/b.

An unusual book by a medical scientist that takes the reader into the cross-cultural landscape of sound with special emphasis on Tuva an Overtone singing. The author puts his journey in a wide context so that the reader can understand the role that sounds have played in various parts of the world. He also considers sounds, music and religions as well as the use of sound therapy. It makes for an engaging tour of the field.

The Art of Fugue

by Joseph Kerman

University of California Press 2005, 173 pp., h/b.

A relatively technical work but one that will delight any lover of Bach fugues, especially as it comes with a special CD. It treats some of the great works of the 48 along with the amazing Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue, but, sadly, none of the great organ fugues. A quotation in the preface from Charles Rosen indicates correctly that a fugue can not only be heard but also felt through the muscles and the nerves (also for the careful listener); and how the individual voices can be heard 'as part of an inseparable harmony'. Speaking of which, Rosalyn Tureck is playing a fugue on the harpsichord as I write.

Anthropology - The Basics

by Peter Metcalf

Taylor & Francis 2005, 212 pp., £9.99, p/b.

Although written primarily as an undergraduate text, this book also provides a good introduction to the general reader, starting with encountering cultural difference and moving on to other areas such as the relationship of culture to language, nature and the individual. Boxes on special topics and chapter summaries add to its usefulness. Of more general interest is Metcalf's story of the evolution of the discipline itself beyond the imperialistic and paternalistic models of the founders towards a deeper and more personal engagement in the research process.

A Social History of the Media - from Gutenberg to the Internet

by Asa Briggs & Peter Burke

Polity Press 2005, 304 pp., £16.99, p/b.

A book of extraordinary scope that brings the reader right up to date and which has already been translated into ten languages. The fact that it begins with the invention of printing makes one reflect on the larger context of the development of media communications and their relationship to emerging technologies, social trends, transport, trade and economic life more generally. The 19th and 20th centuries have seen extraordinary technological advance as well as media used as a mixture of education and entertainment. The last two chapters address the convergence of technologies and the use of multimedia. The many strands of the book do not amount to an argument for uniform progress as each new technology also brings up it's own issues and challenges.

Becoming - A call to love

by Claire Blatchford

Lindisfarne Books 2004, 184 pp., £12.99, p/b.

This book is the sequel to 'Turning', which was published in 1994 as an inspirational book of reflective guidance that speaks to the deepest aspects of the human condition. The author explains that the words are heard inwardly and simply transcribed in their powerful simplicity. Here they are arranged sequentially and thematically. The following extract gives a flavour of this highly recommended book:

Do not get all caught up in thinking about what you have to do. That will exhaust you.

Believe you have all the time you need. Trust that all the strength you need will be there. Have faith in my near presence and help.

Darwinian Conservatism

by Larry Arnhart

Imprint Academic 2005, 156 pp., £8.95, p/b.

A well-argued book proposing that conservatives need the Darwinian insight that human beings have a 'natural moral sense that supports ordered liberty as secured by the social order of family life, the economic order of private property and the political order of limited government.' This in turn is related to the right considering human beings as naturally imperfect and limited in virtue in contrast with the leftist vision of human perfectibility (and the consequent emphasis on rational planning). Arnhart concentrates on five thinkers - Edmund Burke, Friedrich Hayek, Russell Kirk and James Q. Wilson - and focuses on five propositions and five objections to his position, which structure the book. Or special interest to Network readers will be his discussion of Darwinism and religion with respect to morality, ID and biotechnology.

Executive Coaching - The essential guide for mental health professionals

by Len Sperry

Brunner Routledge 2004, 240 pp., £24.99, h/b.

Coaching is a new and growing profession which I believe is partly the outcome of increased business pressures at high level and the need for leading executives not only to perform optimally but also to reflect on the larger scheme of work and life. Len Sperry has written an excellent introduction to the field. Although the book is slanted towards mental health professionals, it can be usefully read by anyone interested in the subject. As one would expect, it treats the differences between coaching and

therapy. It also discusses various modes of coaching, dividing the field into the three broad areas of skills, performance and development. The book contains many helpful tables and case studies.

The Fall

by Steve Taylor

John Hunt Publishing 2005, 336 pp., £12.99, p/b.

I reviewed Steve Taylor's interesting book on time 18 months ago. Here he has produced a major work that recasts the story of human social evolution. The main argument is that developed humanity has been suffering from a collective psychosis for 6,000 years, following serious drought in the Saharasia region that drove people out of their original habitat and led them to disturb and conquer other societies that had hitherto been living in harmony with nature and at peace among themselves. Psychologically, this shift was due to an 'ego explosion' producing a sense of psychic insecurity resulting in war, patriarchy, inequality, child oppression and alienation from nature (including the body and sexuality). It also produced spectacular technical advances, but based on a separation of head and heart. Taylor thinks that there are signs that we are emerging from this dark period into a 'trans-fall era' with a corresponding new psyche where ego-separateness is transcended: 'we will no longer be separate, and so we will no longer be afraid - afraid of death, afraid of the world, afraid of God, afraid of our own selves, afraid of other people. The disharmony of the human psyche will be healed, and the insanity to which it gave rise will fade away.' It is a powerful message and a beacon of hope in a world in which fear still rules supreme.

Jane Goodall - My Four Reasons for Hope

It is easy to be overwhelmed by feelings of hopelessness as we look around the world. Is there, in fact, hope for Africa's future? Yes. Provided human populations develop programmes that will stabilise, or optimise, their growth rate. It is very important to implement child healthcare programs along with family planning so that women can expect that their children will live - instead of knowing, as they do today, that many of them will die. There are many signs of hope. Along a lakeshore in Tanzania, for example, villagers are planting trees where all the trees had disappeared. Women are taking more control over their lives, and, once they become better educated, then the birth rate begins to drop. And the children are being taught about the dire effects of habitat destruction. There is the terrible pollution around the world, the balance of nature is disturbed, and we are destroying our beautiful planet. There are fears of new epidemics for which there will be no drugs, and, rather than fight the cause, we torture millions of animals in the name of medical progress. But in spite of all this I do have hope. And my hope is based on three factors.

The Human Brain

Firstly, we have at last begun to understand and face up to the problems that threaten us and the survival of life on Earth as we know it. Surely, then, we can use our problem-solving abilities, our brains, and, joining hands around the world, find ways to live that are in harmony with nature. Indeed, many companies have begun "greening" their operations, and millions of people worldwide are beginning to realise that each one of us has a responsibility to the environment and our descendants, and that the way each one of us lives our life does matter, does make a difference.

The Determination of Young People

My second reason for hope lies in the tremendous energy, enthusiasm and commitment of a growing number of young people around the world. As they find out about the

environmental and social problems that are now part of their heritage, they want to fight to right the wrongs. Of course they do - they have a vested interest in this, for it will be their world tomorrow. They will be moving into leadership positions, into the work force, becoming parents themselves. Young people, when informed and empowered, when they realise that what they do truly makes a difference, can indeed change the world.

The Indomitable Human Spirit

My third reason for hope lies in the indomitable nature of the human spirit. There are so many people who have dreamed seemingly unattainable dreams and, because they never gave up, achieved their goals against all the odds, or blazed a path along which others could follow. As I travel around the world I meet so many incredible and amazing human beings. They inspire me. They inspire those around them.

The Resilience of Nature

My fourth reason for hope is the incredible resilience of nature. I have visited Nagasaki, site of the second atomic bomb that ended World War II. Scientists had predicted that nothing could grow there for at least 30 years. But, amazingly, greenery grew very quickly. One sapling actually managed to survive the bombing, and today it is a large tree, with great cracks and fissures, all black inside; but that tree still produces leaves. I carry one of those leaves with me as a powerful symbol of hope. I have seen such renewals time and again, including animal species brought back from the brink of extinction.

So let us move into the next millennium with hope, for without it all we can do is eat and drink the last of our resources as we watch our planet slowly die. Instead, let us have faith in ourselves, in our intellect, in our staunch spirit. Let us develop respect for all living things. Let us try to replace impatience and intolerance with understanding and compassion. And love.

The Scientific and Medical Network website has been redesigned for your benefit. For up-to-date information on local groups, talks and conferences, and a full directory of members' articles and book reviews, visit:

www.scimednet.org

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The Scientific and Medical Network is a leading international forum for people engaged in creating a new worldview for the 21st century. The Network brings together scientists, doctors, psychologists, engineers, philosophers, complementary practitioners and other professionals, and has Members in more than fifty countries. The Network is a charity which was founded in 1973 and became a company limited by guarantee at the beginning of 2004.

The Network aims to:

- challenge the adequacy of scientific materialism as an exclusive basis for knowledge and values.
- provide a safe forum for the critical and open minded discussion of ideas that go beyond reductionist science.
- integrate intuitive insights with rational analysis.
- 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

Network Services

- Network Review, published three times a year
- Monthly e-newsletter for members with email
- promotion of contacts between leading thinkers in our fields of interest
- contacts and information exchange with similar groups world-wide
- a website with a special area for Full Members
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The Network's annual programme of events includes:

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Full membership of the Network is open to university-qualified scientists, doctors and other professionals. Anyone sympathetic to the aims and concerns of Network Members may join as an Associate or Student Member. Students must be studying towards a first degree engaged in full-time study.

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Associate Membership: £27 (€ 44), reduced to £24 (€ 39) by Banker's Order or autobill.

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To request a membership application form, please contact:

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