

Electronic Journal of Sociology (2005)

ISSN: 1198 3655

The Death of Newton: Consciousness, Spirituality, and the Second Scientific Revolution

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Introduction

Everyone who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that a spirit is manifest in the laws of the Universe. **Albert Einstein.**

Newtonian science is in crises. Respected scientists and institutions have been researching Noetic phenomenon (read paranormal like PK, ESP, Remote Viewing, etc.) for decades and while it seems that these researchers face an uphill battle with regards to the respectability and acceptability of their chosen area of inquiry, in fact it is getting harder every day to dispute the veracity and revolutionary character of the Noetic phenomena they research. A challenge to scientific dogma is being posed, a line has been drawn. How do we explain these phenomena? What theories do we use? What are the appropriate methods? Can these phenomena be explained within the parameters of materialist science or must we go beyond the walls of Newtonian science?

Some scientists would argue (when confronted with the evidence) that we do not need to go beyond the walls of Newtonian science. "Things," they say, will be explained sooner or later as emergent from the physical properties of matter. Others "explore the boundaries" by considering alternatives to the reductionist, mechanistic, Newtonian worldview of regular science. These "boundary explorations" are gentle

explorations, careful and rigorous yet despite the caution they all too often solicit conservative, fearful, even aggressive responses (Freeman, 2006) from Newtonian scientist.

At first I believed the aggressive, often dismissive, and sometimes even disdainful response of some traditional scientists was because of substantive ontological and epistemological differences. Those who prefer reductionist explanations of Noetic phenomena hold fast to their materialist ontological and epistemological positions and defend these positions with rigor and force. Those who do not, those on the “other side,” have a tendency to “loosen” strict materialist cannon (though none, as yet, have actually discarded materialism). This causes tension and can even be seen as a threat to the academy. Why? Well the polite answer is that since its inception science has made unspeakably massive gains in all areas where it has cast the light of its reason. We (and by we I mean scientists) are taught (and believe at the core) that these gains are the result of our “science” (i.e., our materialist worldview and rigorous methods). Thus we feel justified in guarding the boundaries with determination and force. After all, nobody wishes a return to the dark ages of pre-enlightenment animisms and superstitions from which science has lifted us all. We (and by we I mean classically trained scientists) have convinced ourselves that what matters in our disciplines, what distinguishes us from the lay people of today (or the superstitious masses of the past), is our method and our world view. We see the power of our science, which is (except for the mystical incursions of Quantum physicists) a Newtonian one, and conclude that we are “ontologically privileged.” Only a fool would argue with the face value of materialist, Newtonian science, says we.

Personally however, I think it is time to argue with the Newtonian face of science. The evidence, as we shall see below, requires it. I would also like to propose that the problem of communication, the problem of incommensurability, the reason why some scientists enforce Newtonian canon with such force and aggression is not so much for ontological or epistemological reasons but because of a more fundamental (but perhaps easier to circumvent) problem. It might even be that, as I would like to show in this paper, the problem is more of an illusion than anything else. It is my hope that once we prick that illusion, the bubble of Newtonian science can be deflated and the charged defences of a dying paradigm put aside in favour of a dialogue that encourages incredible scientific productivity can be opened.

In this paper I would like to explore this idea. I would like to start by using my unique biography as an example of how to traverse the materialist boundaries of Newtonian science and move comfortably within a non-materialist, even mystical, realm, without putting aside the strengths of science. Beyond this I would like to review Noetic research and the many anomalies which challenge the dying paradigm, offer a mystical theory that I feel explains Noetic phenomenon, and provide a rough outline of scientific research which may flow from the fundamental paradigm shift which I am calling for in this paper. It is my hope that by exposing my biography and exploring the limitations of the Newtonian Paradigm I will contribute, in a small way, towards a productive avenue of consideration and forward movement that will lead quickly to both a synthesis of science and spirituality and global paradigm shift out of the boxed in world view of the Newtonian paradigm.

Biography

So, what is so unique about my biography? Well, in many ways nothing. I am a standard example of a functioning junior academic. I was trained as a sociologist, received my PhD at the University of Alberta in Canada, and in my early years went on to perform the typical round of academic duties expected of all junior academics. I was fortunate enough to receive an appointment shortly after graduating but since this appointment coincided with the birth of the Internet, and since I was extremely familiar with Internet technologies, I immediately began to assist my university with the transition to new technology. This was a productive period for me but it was not what could be considered traditionally academic. Thankfully, at some point the university no longer required my services in the area of technological development and deployment and so I began a move back into academics.

Unfortunately for me, by the time I started making a move back into formal academics, a problem had emerged. Towards the end of 2001 world events, coupled with interactions with a new age counsellor, coupled with a little personal experimentation, led me towards a rather dramatic and ongoing “breaking open of the head” of the type described by Daniel Pinchbeck (2002). After confronting and clearing some deep psychological fears (terrors would probably be a better description), I began developing a career as a practicing, professional mystic. In the

time since what I call my “awakening” I have written intuitively derived books on chakra and kundalini activation, cosmology and theology, new age thinking, and even the tarot. Lately I have even ventured into spiritually sophisticated children’s books. Obviously, this is a leeward move from my traditional roots as a classically trained academic and it was this leeward move that was the problem. As a result of my awakening experiences, I rather abruptly lost interest in traditional sociological content. Do not get me wrong. It was not that I lost interest in sociology and its typical topics (i.e., questions like inequality, distribution of power and resources, oppressive class systems, etc). It was also not that I lost interest in science, the scientific enterprise, or the lofty goals of science (i.e., the discovery of truth). It was just that my awareness of reality had shifted. After my awakening I saw the world quite a bit differently and as I started my move back into academics, I was not sure how I was going to fit my new and expanded world view with the rather more narrow and confined view of reality to be found in sociology and other disciplines. This was a problem not only because of the perceived epistemological and ontological disjuncture in the two “realities” (more on this below), but also because I was not sure it was wise to even try. As readers of this article will be aware, the realm of the professional scientist is different than the realm of the professional mystic. They are two different worlds that are, we all know, in epistemological and ontological, if not conflict at least, opposition.

Epistemologically, and although both realms are ostensibly about the search for truth, how they go about apprehending “truth” is quite different (Srinivasan, 2007). Science is empirical, logical, and objective. Evidence is primary and objectivity the cornerstone. This is very deeply ingrained in us. Indeed, the “indoctrination” starts in the very first year of our university training where we are told, over and over, and in every single standard introductory text we care to survey, objectivity, empiricism, and rationality is what distinguishes science from everything else. It is what has set us apart from day one. It is what distinguished, for example, Galileo from the bishops and cardinals who suppressed him.

Ontologically speaking the possibility of objectivity is based on the fundamental philosophical assumption of science which is that there is a duality between subject (the “I” in your brain) and object (the world you apprehend). According to the philosophy of science there exists a reality “out there” that is independent of the

observer and therefore open to the possibility of objective apprehension by the subjective “I.” I say “possibility” here because, according to science, objectivity is not something we automatically achieve. It must be struggled for and that is what science is all about. The rigorous methods of science (empirical observation, logical deduction, experimental verification) are presumed to be able to pry an objective knowledge from the otherwise hopelessly subjective world of the observer. This is the classic Newtonian worldview. This is the world that hardcore materialists inhabit.

Standing opposed to the objective world of science is the subjective world of mysticism. As we all know, mysticism is epistemologically and ontologically different. In general, mystics search for truth not through external empirical observation and experiment (though logic should be important) but through *internal* journeys of cosmological discovery (Pinchbeck, 2002). For a mystic, truth is revealed via a journey in consciousness. There is of course a methodology to it (Furst, 1972; Roman and Packer, 1987; Harner, 1990; Gore, 1995; Strassman, 2001; Ingerman, 2004), but it is a methodology quite different than what we find in a laboratory. What is more, in mysticism we do not find the separated observer or the struggle for objectivity. Indeed, in mysticism, objectivity is not even a topic of debate. In a fully developed mystical worldview, objectivity is not even possible (and is even ridiculous to suppose) because ontologically there is no separation between subject and object. In a mystical worldview, they are identical.

Traditionally, the two professional careers stand apart and are not to be blended. Despite the fact that we all learn the “Parable of Kekule,” the dogma of science stipulates there is a boundary between the two that cannot be crossed because they are incompatible; because they are opposite. The two stand opposed on every epistemological or ontological hierarchy we could think to devise. What is worse one, science, thinks its better than the other. For science, internal truths derived through intuitive means via consciousness expanding methodologies are of much, much less value than external truths derived through objective observation and experimentation. But it goes farther than mere dismissal of the “other way.” We have all been trained the same way and we all know that there is no deeper or more penetrating heresy than to put the observer, i.e., the variable “I,” at the centre of our research and equations. The truth of this hardly needs rehearsing. Acceptable ontological positions are programmed into us from the moment we open an

undergraduate textbook and are reinforced as we ascend the initiate's ladder. In the hallowed hallways of science it is quite literally a sin for "I" to affect the equation. Dogmatic utterances abound. Remain objective and separate, we are told. Do not bias results with your subjectivity. Take yourself out of the experiment. Do not allow the filters of your subjective consciousness to enter the equation for that is a step backwards to the primitive, dark past. For scientists, subjectivity is a weakness to be avoided at all costs. As scientists, we defend the boundary to the death and heap contempt on those who attempt to traverse (Mousseau, 2003). Taboos are erected, threats of excommunication are given and books are burned (Freeman, 2006; Sheldrake, 2002). As Radin (2006: 262) has noted, "In the eyes of mainstream science, to [even] express sympathy for mysticism destroys one's credibility as a scientist" (Radin, 2006: 262). The only reason we don't see many excommunications and burnings these days is that most scientists, even if they are sympathetic, generally keep their mouths shut and their research and writing on the proper side of the boundary.

I have to admit that at first I succumbed to the propaganda and fear of excommunication¹ even though I knew from my own academic studies in the Social Studies of Science that science is a much dirtier affair than the "ideal typical" representations of it given to the initiate chelas (i.e., the first year students). As a scientist I understood that science's stance as final arbiter of truth is neither a wise nor warranted position to take (Stevenson, 1999; Collins and Pinch, 1998). The truth is, science is far less rigorous, systematic, logical, and objective in its approach to

¹ As I later found out, I need not have been so fearful. After submitting this paper to the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, it was rejected by the editor Anthony Freeman on the grounds that there was nothing new or original in this paper and that it was a mere rehash of ideas already out there. Of course, I totally disagree with him. There are several areas in this paper which are new and novel including the rather direct criticisms of several of the "founding fathers" of Noetic research (re: their seemingly inability to come to theoretical grips with the phenomenon they research), the template suggested for a social science program of research, the unique presentation of a theory of consciousness, all combined in a unique and novel fashion with a direct attack on the epistemological and ontological foundations of Newtonian science. Still, I must say (as weird as it sounds) I was quite relieved to here him utter the rejection since the blasé rejection totally vindicated the direction of research and theoretical inquiry that I was pursuing.

knowledge than is admitted by the “high priests” who defend it. As Arp (2000) says, science is a lot like a religion.² It goes about “widely promulgat[ing] theories that are contradicted by observation and experiment,” relies on “outrageous authority” to defend its stories, ignores contradictory evidence (Collins and Pinch, 1999), practices its black experiments on hapless human subjects (Moreno, 2000; Washington, 2007; Welsome, 1999) and even jettisons the holy grail of scientific theory, parsimony, in favour of outrageously complex formulations with little extra explanatory value (Arp, 2000: 447). Scientists are not “without sin” we could say. However, despite the obvious grey area, I did not cross the boundary. Although I remained active as a mystic and on the lookout for a way to blend the two careers, I nevertheless hived off my mystical persona from my scientific persona. I felt safer doing this and in the first year or two of my career as a mystic I immersed myself in this mode and did not look up, almost exclusively on my internal journeys for my elaboration of truth.

Still, I never lost site of the academic side. Throughout this period I remained anxious about my internal and external separation of professions and on the lookout for ways to blend the two. After a brief dive into the rather insightful area of the Sociology of Religion (Berger, 1970; 1999, 2003; Woodhead, 2001), and after an examination of other shallow attempts to understand the spiritual (Polkinghorn, 1998; Otto, 1958; Proudfoot, 1985), the solution to my dilemma seemed to emerge as I stumbled upon the *Noetic Sciences*. Here I found scientists that were investigating anomalous physical and psychical phenomena and pushing the boundaries of traditional scientific inquiry and method. If there was any possibility of integrating my mystical persona and my scientific personal, I felt certain it would be here. Importantly, these individuals were not abandoning the traditional epistemology of science, they were merely expanding it in a way that honoured and remained consistent with academic principles and moralities *but* that also appeared to open the door to a mystical consideration of reality. It was an exciting time for me and I plunged into Noetic phenomenon in the hopes that here I would find a way to blend the mystical and the scientific. It is to a consideration of these striking Noetic phenomena that I would like

² Or as I have said in my mystical writings, science is exactly like a religion.

to turn to now.

Phenomena

Come to the edge, he said.
They said: "We are afraid".
Come to the edge, he said.
They came.
He pushed them... and they flew.
Guillaume Apollinaire

As noted above, what first drew me to the Noetic Sciences was the fascinating research into anomalous phenomena that they were doing. I understand anomalous here in the Kuhnian sense. Anomalous phenomena are experimentally observed phenomena that **do not fit** into the dominant (i.e., Newtonian/Atheistic) paradigm. What I found fascinating and promising about Noetic anomalies was that the phenomena being observed challenged the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the classic scientific paradigm in a way that as a scientist I could appreciate and as a mystic I could understand.

It all began when I came upon Princeton's Global Consciousness Project (GCP) (noosphere.princeton.edu/). At the time I remember I was quite startled to find a prestigious research institute like Princeton allowing research into such a fuzzy concept as the impact of consciousness on reality. I was quite excited at the time not so much because of the anomalous findings but because, as a mystic, I understood the mechanisms that were behind the empirical findings of the GCP. As a mystic I understood what "global mind" was, how it was formed, and why it had a real impact on reality or, in this case, random number generators. As a mystic I had even coined a phrase "As above in consciousness, so below in matter" to reflect this basic spiritual truth. The phenomena under observation at the GCP may have been anomalous for traditional scientists, but as mystic, the GCP findings were both comprehensible and expected. I was, to say the least, excited.

Finding the GCP project was only the start. Primed by the fact that researchers were looking at things that I found interesting, I began looking further a field where I discovered, or rather rediscovered, the mystical leanings of quantum physicists (Wilber, 2001). I say rediscovered because, as a psychology undergraduate, I had

become aware of the anomalous nature of quantum physics (Zukav, 2001; Capra, 2000) and the rather fascinating work they were doing on the importance of the *observer* at the quantum level. This was promising, exciting even. As a scientist I could see how challenging this was to the dominant ontological canon. As a mystic, all I could say was “of course.”

After I re-familiarized myself with quantum anomalies, I then came across the work of Ervin Laszlo and once again found observational support for my peculiar mystical view of reality. I was even fortunate enough to publish a short summary paper of his in my journal where he summarized the well documented “coherence” in the quantum, mezzo, and macro levels of reality (Laszlo, 2007; Wheeler, 1984; 1987; Mandel, 1991; Dürr). I was excited, but not so much by the existence of the phenomena (because from my mystical point of view I would *expect* to find the sorts of coherences that Laszlo found) but because I understood what was going on. As a mystic I had the theory, so to speak, that explained the anomalies.

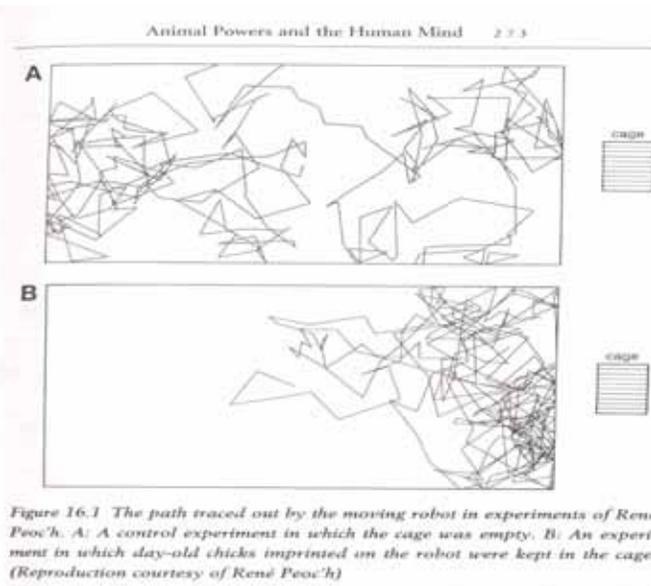
Of course, I did not stop here. I continued to search for Noetic forms of research and found a veritable cornucopia of anomalous instances. For example, I found that some scientists had become interested in the paranormal perceptual abilities of animals! Animals, it seemed, knew a lot more than could be expected of them if they operated within the confines of narrow materialism. In fact, way back in 1982 Tributsch (1982) had made an exhaustive study of the remarkable ability of animals to know when earthquakes were going to hit. He became turned on to this phenomenon after *Chinese officials* were able to successfully use the behaviour of animals to predict the 1975 Haichung earthquake. In his book *When the Snakes Awake*, he provides impressive documentation (historical and current) on the ability of animals to predict disaster. From Pliny the Elder in ancient Rome to Emmanuel Kant, from China through Japan and into the new world it seems animals just seem to “know” when an earthquake was going to hit. Once again, I found this quite exciting and although Tributsch stayed well within established materialist and epistemological bounds by proposing plausible physical mechanism for the phenomena (e.g., he explains it in terms of animal sensitivity to electrostatic discharge), as a mystic I was excited to see yet another empirical confirmation of a theory that I already knew to be true.

Now at this point the reader may question my confidence. Why, when an admittedly

plausible physical mechanism for an otherwise anomalous phenomena is proposed, do I choose to violate Occam's razor and instead leave in place an explanation that requires a complete violation of the ontological canon of science? Well, it is not because I ignore the empirical evidence or am wedded to truths that come from my mystical meanderings. In fact, it is quite the opposite. My confidence both as a mystic and as a scientist comes from the fact that I am paying attention to the evidence. There might be a physical explanation for animals' ability to predict earthquakes, but there is surely no physical explanation for Sheldrake's (1992) research or Marais' (1972) research. What possible physical mechanism is there for the ability of a dog to *know* when its owner is coming home even when that owner is miles away from residence? The answer is there is no physical mechanism. However, there is a spiritual one and, as a mystic, I knew what that was.

Now, it is not just animal research or "coherence" research where I find confirmation. When I cast a wider empirical net, the evidence becomes even more challenging to traditional scientific canon and classical Newtonian worldviews. Indeed, the plausibility of a materialist explanation fades into oblivion as the anomalous phenomena get weirder. Targ and Puthoff (1974; 2005), for example, report of their decades long (and wildly successful) US Department of Defense sponsored, Stanford Research Institute investigation of Remote Mental Viewing. According to Targ and Puthoff (1974; 2005), humans have the experimentally verified ability to "see" things that are miles away from them. From docks to docketts it seems consciousness is able to move outside the human body to see things at great distances from the observer. Fascinating! Under these circumstances, the only way to preserve our materialism is to totally ignore the evidence. However, this seems a bit ludicrous considering that institutions as conservative and cautious as the US DoD and the Princeton Engineering department (Jahn, 1982; 1995) have seen fit to verify this phenomena in a manner which absolutely defies materialist explanation.

And if all this is not enough to shake the ontological foundations of the classical



Newtonian world view, consider the work of Peoc'h (1988; 1988a) who conducted controlled experiments with little baby chicks and discovered that chicks who psychologically imprinted a randomly moving robot were able to **influence the movement of that robot**. Apparently, newborn chicks are able to “probabilistically determine” the path of the robot keeping it close when imprinted but not caring when no psychological connection is made. It is a fascinating image. The path of robot was recorded and, when imprinted chicks were used in the cage, the paths traversed by the robot were decidedly un-random (see figure above). It is magic, pure and simple. I could go on but will not. If you are not convinced and want a longer list of anomalous research findings, I suggest delving into the work of Radin, Laszlo, or the advanced and brilliant work of William Tiller (see end references).

Existing theories

While it is true that initially I was quite excited by the way the boundaries were being pushed by Noetic researchers, at a certain point I stopped being so excited by all the things I was finding. My enthusiasm ran out when I began to look at the way scientists were theorizing anomalous phenomena. To my disappointment they (and by they I mean we) were (more or less) sticking within the boundaries of established materialist worldviews. True, there were some promising theoretical excursions in the

quantum area, and so called integral theories were “getting close” (but seemed plagued with pompous language and ostentatious pronouncements) but even these seemed limited to my mystical sensibility.

As a mystic I of course had immediate difficulty with reductionist attempts to explain Noetic phenomena. As a mystic, I knew that the “little emergent consciousness” that reductionist scientists proposed was inadequate to explain the vastness of consciousness that I knew existed just beneath the surface of our everyday awareness. However even with a scientist’s cap on, I knew that reductionist theories which tried to locate consciousness either as epiphenomena of brain activity or an emergent property of matter were no good. The problem was that reductionist theories (no matter how sophisticated they tried to be) could not even come close to providing a plausible account for all anomalous phenomena being observed. In particular, reductionist theories totally broke down when considering the “weird” happenings of Noetic researchers.

Of course, reductionism is not the only game in town. In my perusal of the Noetic literature I also came across *signal transfer theories* as a possible explanation for anomalous phenomena. In these theories, signals are presumably transferred along some type of *carrier wave* just like radio waves are sent from transmitter to receiver using EMF fields. As a scientist this seemed to me to be a plausible explanation but only for some of the observable phenomena. For example, there is the problematic fact that the strengths of fields tend to drop off with distance whereas with many Noetic phenomena distance appears irrelevant (Radin, 2006). There is also a sort of “transmitter problem” which arises because of the fact that with some Noetic phenomena, like remote viewing for example, there is no obvious “transmitter” to send signals. In the case of remote viewing, consciousness seems to go out of the body and perceive independently of any initiated information transfer. The difficulties abound but the biggest difficulty signal transfer theories have is with Noetic phenomena that ignore the boundaries of time. It is hard to account for such time anomalous phenomena as retroactive PK (Bierman, 1998) within the materialist mechanism of fields, filters, and information exchange (Jahn and Dunne, 2004).

From signal theories I came to field theories of the type put forward by Sheldrake (1999; 1995; 2002). To be honest I was ambivalent about Sheldrake’s efforts almost

from the start as they seemed to be no more than a more sophisticated version of a field theory. As a scientist I could appreciate his courageous research efforts, the painstaking documentation, and the creative and forward-looking theoretical considerations. Had I not been a mystic, I would have likely found theoretical value in his ideas of morphic fields. Unfortunately as a mystic I felt that Sheldrake was not running the ball far enough. As a mystic, even a holistic concept of creation evolving and advancing as the result of “self organizing” (i.e, morphic) fields impelled forward by field memory left out, rather conspicuously I might add, the all important variable of consciousness. For me, any adequate theory of Noetic phenomena (or any adequate Theory of Everything (TOE)) was going to have to include the variable “I” at the center of theoretical consideration. As a mystic I knew that consciousness was all important. As heretical as it might sound to materialist and reductionist ears, we needed to insert statements and variables that unequivocally pointed to and represented an active and intelligent “I” behind it all.

Following Sheldrake I glanced over the mystical quantum theorists. After more than a decade away from a consideration of these theories, I was back and hopeful that after such an extended period of time physicists would have finally pierced The Veil of classical science and moved forward into a new, consciously sophisticated era of research. It seemed promising. I found an awareness of conscious intent (Princeton’s GCP project), saw researchers calling for an active role for consciousness and an “observational theory” that explicitly took into account the observer (Houtkooper, 2002). At first glance it seemed to me that scientists actually got it (Bohm, 2002) and of course, for Michael the scientist, that was exciting. A bridge had been built it seemed. However as a mystic I could still detect a certain degree of reticence in the theorizing. Except for the radicals like Bohm, most quantum theorists seemed to stay away from taking a strong position on the role of consciousness in theory. Even though these quantum scientists could clearly see the centrality of consciousness, they could not give up their materialist lineage. Instead of moving forward into what we might want to call a *Strong Theory of Consciousness*, they kept consciousness at arm’s length and refused to consider a more fundamental role for consciousness as the source and center of all things as encapsulated, for example, in ancient (and modern) wisdom by statements like “I am that I am” (bible), “I am that” (Sri Nisargadatta), “I AM” (New Age), or the more prosaic “I am what I am and that’s all

what I am” (Popeye the Sailor Man). Quantum theories were a step in the right direction for sure, but they did not go far enough. In my opinion as a mystic, we would be unable to explain Noetic phenomena or understand the nature of consciousness or creation unless we took the plunge into a strong theory of consciousness. Until we did that, we would be stuck complaining about how enigmatic consciousness was (Dossey quoted in Braud, 2003), exclaiming how poorly we understood it (Jahn, 2004), and even wondering if we were in fact studying it at all (Faw, 2006). As Jahn (2002: 456) seems fond of saying:

“...we do not really know how to define it [consciousness], how to characterize it, how to model it, or how to measure its properties. We do not understand its relationships with the physical world, including those with its own physiological mechanisms (Jahn, 2002: 456).

A Mystic’s Strong Theory of Consciousness

Consciousness is the root of all things

So, what would a strong theory of consciousness amount to? As noted above, a strong theory of consciousness would locate consciousness as the source and centre of reality. A strong theory would locate consciousness as the prime mobile of all creation. It would unabashedly and without shame put the variable “I” into creation’s equations.

This is a big step. In order to develop such a strong theory we have to go way beyond Chalmers (1995) insistence that consciousness be considered a fundamental and irreducible feature of reality “like” the material world (which is the proposal of weak theories of consciousness) to a more radical and profoundly solipsistic perspective that sees consciousness as the root of all things (and by all things I mean all things). A strong theory of consciousness would subsume material reality, the so-called “laws” of the physical universe, and the “not so constant” universal constants (Sheldrake, 2002) within its explanatory rubric. It would be a big shift, indeed.

As a scientist, I have no illusions about the difficulty of putting forth such a strong theory of consciousness or about how strong the reactions might be. After all, I am talking here about a radical paradigm shift that does away with several centuries of

materialist thinking and that puts consciousness unequivocally and *clearly* at the centre of creation. To even consider such a theory is anathema for the most conservative. However, even the open minded could not be faulted for experiencing profound doubt and indigestion.

I suppose that the difficulty we have with strong theories of consciousness will depend a lot on the distance we perceive between the strong theory and the standard Newtonian world views. This distance will be different for different people. For some who have never considered Noetic research, the distance is vast and probably not immediately traversable. However for others clearly sympathetic to a strong theory (e.g., Laszo, 2004; 2006), the distance is not so great. For me, having wrestled with my own internal conflict between my mystical sensibility and my scientific sensibility, and having seen what I feel is a growing sympathy for a strong theory of consciousness among many scientists, the distance is hardly significant at all. In fact, given the extent of anomalous phenomena observed by Noetic researchers, and the repeatedly admitted failure to adequately theorize consciousness or the mechanisms behind the phenomena, I think we (as scientists) have a duty to at least consider a strong theory. Indeed, I would even go so far as to say that I think it is time we re-examine the fundamental ontological and epistemological assumptions of our classical world view and embrace the paradigm shift many of us know is coming. Now is the time for asking the radical/heretical questions, says I, and towards that end, and in the rest of this article, I want to outline a strong theory of consciousness that is based on my own mystical meanderings in the hall-ways of consciousness. Rest assured that by proposing such a strong theory of consciousness I am not recommending the jettison of established methods and logic. I am not anti-science or anti-truth. I am also not advocating that, as scientists, we all start “breaking open our heads.” Although I do not think that can hurt us (and in fact I believe it would be scientifically and personally fruitful). I also do not think it is a requirement for the theoretical and empirical work that lies ahead of us. Ten years ago, twenty years ago, two hundred years ago, maybe that would have been necessary; however, back then we did not have the technology and instrumentation that we do now. Nowadays we need not be satisfied with a disjuncture between scientific truths and mystical truths. I believe that we now have (or will shortly have after a little bit of consideration) the ability to test a strong theory of consciousness and as a scientist that is what I hope

we do. I am not interested in preserving erroneous mystical theories or misplaced animisms if they are wrong. However I am curious to see if the theory is right and I think science is in a good position to evaluate.

Before outlining the strong theory, allow me to warn you that a lot of the elements that I am going to include in this *Strong Theory of Consciousness* will seem outrageous, blatantly out of place and even blasphemous especially if you are fresh out of a materialist worldview or you have purged “consciousness” from consideration and shoved it, like the behaviourists of a half century ago, into an impenetrable black box never to be considered again. If things get a little too outrageous, remember the documented anomalies mentioned at the outset. Also remember we are travelling this road in the hopes that even a slight consideration of these radical ideas might prove fruitful in our own disciplinary theorizations and investigations. In the end you may decide there is nothing here, but at least consider. As all scientists know, as they teach in the introductory text books, the history of science and technology is the history of the transformation of the outrageous of our fantasy (e.g., flight, light, electricity, and atomic energy) into the actual of our everyday.

I would also like to note at the outset that I absolutely do not share the common assumption among Noetic researchers that consciousness, Source, “Unus Mundi,” “terra incognita,” “the implicate order,” the “subliminal seed regime,” or whatever it is you want to call it, is ineffable. I absolutely do not agree with Jahn and Dunne (2004: 55) that “the Source exists as a sea of ineffable, complexly intertwined potentialities that are rooted in irreducible uncertainty that defies objective specification.” Instead, I would suggest that, especially when we start from beginning as I will do with my peculiar explication of a mystics TOE, it is easy to attain an understanding of “all that is” because of the essential simplicity and know-ability of the underlying reality. In fact, there is no *impedance mismatch*. Consciousness, the universe, and everything are explicable, logical, and sensible. I would also have to disagree with Jahn and Dunne (2004) that the methodology for “tuning the filters” (i.e., breaking open the head to “higher” realities) is difficult, incomprehensible, and closed to explication and replication. As far as I know from my own internal research, the methodology for opening specifiable and repeatable views into a wider mystical reality is simple to specify and open to replication (though heavily influenced by idiosyncratic personality characteristics). However, the methodology of mysticism is not something I want to

deal with here and will instead explore it in a future paper.

Finally, I also want to say that despite the fact that I say this is “my” theory, it is not really “my” theory. Although I derived this theory of consciousness independently of other mystics via a solitary jaunt through cosmological hallways of consciousness (as all good mystics must do), I’m certainly not the first one to talk about this theory either in the mystical world (though I am perhaps the first scientist to stand up and definitely say, this is the way forward). This “strong theory” has been part of ancient wisdom for centuries and is especially prevalent in eastern spiritual traditions. A lot of people through the ages, some famous, some not so much, have espoused the theory. Technically, this is not “my” theory. Rather, it belongs to the creative pool of the expanding fabric of consciousness. However, since I have derived this theory without reference to external sources of truth (as all good mystics must do), I do feel that, in a sense, it is “my” theory and so I will, for better or worse, talk about it as such. Let us begin.

The Strong Theory³

And God said,
“Let there be light” and there was

³ For the purposes of this booklet I am going to leave out a discussion of the methodology of discovery that I used as I “broke open my head” and wandered the halls of consciousness. I think such a paper is required and important because the methodology for breaking open the head is so poorly understood. It is not complicated; however, a proper orientation is necessary before an individual can sensibly navigate the hallways of our massively unlimited consciousness. To just “step into” the hallways without orientation or preparation, or while under the influence of questionable shamanic spin-doctors who may (intentionally or unintentionally) confuse and mislead, can leave one disoriented and bewildered. It does not have to be like that. I believe that precision, clarity, and logic are possible if we remain grounded and oriented. However I also believe that there is an absolute dearth of good “how to” information out there at this time. There are a couple reasons for this but one of the important ones is that mystics, like many of the other professions, can be secretive about their arts. Thus, even when there is precision, clarity, and logic, the will to express such to the “uninitiated” may not be there. I hope to contribute to the *demystification* of mysticism in subsequent booklets.

In this elaboration of a strong theory of consciousness it is necessary to start “at the beginning” and by that I mean two things. I mean, on the one hand, that we need to start at the conceptual beginning and discuss the foundational concepts first. On the other hand I mean we need to start at the literal beginning of all things, i.e., at the start of creation. Why is that? Well, to make a longer explanation dangerously short, starting at the beginning is necessary to ensure clarity. Starting at the beginning allows us to start with a clear conceptual slate and, hopefully, avoid all the dogma and emotion that have been attached to non-materialist explanations of creation over the centuries. Whether we realize it or not, there is a lot of dogma and emotion attached to our pre (and sometimes post) big-bang theorizing. Many of us reject notions of a pre-existing anything outright (which is not so rational a position as one might think) and others attach all sorts of weird, sexist, and anthropomorphic characteristics to explanations about what might have come before (i.e., God the Father). We may even import dogma without being aware as Laszlo seems to do when he speaks of “humanity’s fall and separation from the original state of oneness with nature and cosmos” (Laszlo, 2004: 12). Can we not recognize the Catholic bed time story of our ejection from the Garden of Eden in this prose?

As a result of the obvious, and sometimes not so obvious, dogma, this is not an easy area to discuss with neutrality. However I hope that by starting “in the beginning” when things were simple and the logic of unfolding easy to understand we will be able to capture a certain degree of neutrality, logical, and sensibility in our discussions and avoid even the subtle entrance of dogma into our theory.

And just where is “the beginning” of all things? That depends. *For scientists*, the beginning is the Big Bang (BB). For scientists the BB is the point when this universe (usually assumed to be the only universe) suddenly and inexplicably comes into existence. Before that point, nothing existed. One big miraculous singularity started it all! Interestingly enough, science’s explanation for why the BB happened is empty. They can answer the question “why this universe” but not “why the BB.” They have no explanation for that at all.

For religious types, the beginning is when a creator God (who much like the scientist’s and their BB “just exists”) created the universe. I would dare to say that most religious people (excluding fundamentalists) these days would agree that the

point of the creation of the physical universe by God is also the point of the Big Bang. God issued the now famous decree “Let There Be Light...” and there was the light of the singularity. Interestingly, they both see “the beginning” in largely the same way. The differences, I suppose, is in the aetiology. For scientists the universe “just happens” and then unfolds randomly in a blind and ultra complex evolutionary process. For religious types, the universe is created by God (who also “just happens” to be there) and then unfolds according to some preconceived and “ineffable” (for anyone but God that is) grand design or Great Work. For both, the beginning of physical creation is the BB and for both creation “just happens.” Only the details are different.

As a mystic I have very different concept of the beginning of all things. For me, the formal beginning of everything occurs long before God issues the infamous “Let There Be Light” decree subsequently realized in the BB. For me, the beginning is a point way, way, way, way back when the only thing that existed and when the only reality to experience was the reality of **consciousness**. Waxing prosaic I could say *In the beginning, there was only consciousness*. We can create a metaphor for shorthand purposes here and call the original consciousness *the original light* and then call “the start of it all” the point when a little point of light (i.e., consciousness) emerged out of the darkness (Nuit/night, etc.). At this point there was no material universe, no expanding galaxies, no spark, and no nothing. In the beginning, dimensions did not even exist. There was no time, no space, no height, and no depth. At this “point” the only thing that existed was a single little un-dimensional dot of consciousness lying in a vast and un-empty, un-dimensional nothingness.

Now at this point reductionists might raise the objection that physical matter is the “ground” of existence and that consciousness can only emerge out of the activity of a brain inside a physical body. They might say that consciousness is *dependent* on the complex neural and quantum activity of a sophisticated human brain and to suggest otherwise is lunacy. If it were not for the work of Bruce Lipton (2005), which suggests to me that even single cell organisms may be *expressers* of consciousness, I might agree. But since there is Lipton’s work, the location of consciousness in the brain seems untenable.

As far as how the dot got there, you could say that it was always there or you could

say that one day *awareness simply emerged out of the great cosmic Nuit*. Either one will suffice at this point (and neither one should be any less difficult to accept than the “just happened” nature of scientific and religious theories). The important point for the Strong Theory is we understand it all started with a single, non-dimensional monadic spark of awareness. Call this spark “god” or “The Seed” or “The Spirit” or the “I AM,” the original ego, or simply “my, myself, and I” if you want. Just remember, in the beginning, only “I” existed.

As we can see, contrary to the rather prodigious exclamations of the ineffable nature of the source of all things, in the beginning when only “I” existed, there was nothing complex, deep, or mysterious going on. In the beginning, consciousness was simple awareness. Awareness of what you might ask (Jahn, 2001)? Well, awareness of self obviously and logically. Consider this. In the beginning when the only thing that existed was “I,” the only thing to be aware of was “I.” What else? When awareness first “dawned,” when original ego first emerged out of the great cosmic no-thing, “I” did not see the bright lights of a physical operating room or the green grass of pasture or the light of a distant galaxy. When “I” first became aware, “I” could only be aware of “I” because only “I” existed. Basically it all began when “I” realized that “I AM.” It was a profound, powerful, if simplistic realization but nevertheless, it was the starting point.

It is important to note that it would be unwise to add unnecessary complexity or motive at this point (or any point for that matter). In the beginning it was simply self aware “I” and nothing more. We want to keep this theory as simple and logical as possible and a starting point of solitary awareness of self is about as simple and logical (I would argue) as it gets. Also, I think we can keep our understanding pure and simple if we adopt a loose rule of logic here stipulating that everything from this original point of self awareness must follow in a logical, sensible, and (as) simple (as possible) sequence.

And there you have it. *The beginning*. A simple, solitary dot of self awareness existing long before the BB but without all the anthropomorphisms and other silliness of standard spiritual dialogue. Awareness, pure and simple.

So what happened next?

What happened after “I” became aware of “I.”

As would perhaps be logically expected, as “I” became aware of self, “I” inevitably (and very quickly) grew bored.

“Bored,” you say raising your eyebrows?

“Well yes” I say, “bored.” What else could have happened at that point? Certainly, the instant creation of a complex universe with complex laws and principles of operation was out of the question. It makes a great story I’m sure, but it does not make any logical sense. In the beginning, there was simply *no foundation* for that. In the beginning, “I” was awareness of “I” and “I” had no other experience, no knowledge, no idea of anything. “I” was, for the first and only time ever in the history of creation, *tabula rasa*. Thus instant, wondrous creation was out of the question.

So if not instant (and implausible) creation of a complex universe then what? Well, as noted above, boredom. At this early stage of the game there was simply nothing to do and nothing to contemplate other than the lint-less navel of “I” and so, being as that navel gazing is not that stimulating, “I” got bored, and fast. Of course esoteric doctrine might speak of some kind of original bliss or nirvana “in the beginning” and there is some truth in that. In the beginning, when “I” became aware of “I,” there was a certain degree of self-satisfied bliss. “I AM,” I thought, and that was good. However bliss (which could be considered the opposite of boredom) did not last long. Navel gazing gets you only so far. Bliss declines as boredom sets in and after a certain point (i.e., when the decline of bliss becomes intolerable) “I” starts to look around for something to do. Instead of continuing on in the solipsistic boredom of eternity, “I” begins what can only be called a quest for experience. Of course, this quest for experience does not get very far before “I AM” presented with a problem. Since “I” is the only thing that exists in the beginning, what exactly is there to search for? What exactly is there to do? What is there to experience? The answer is, of course, nothing. Since nothing external to “I” existed, and since “I” was only aware of itself (and now this problem), there was nothing to search for except the solution the problem of boredom. Consideration of this “problem” (we might even call it “The Problem”) solved the problem of boredom instantly. Now there was something to work on. Now there was something to do. Of course, the question at this point was “how was ‘I’ going to alleviate boredom with only ‘I’ existed in the great “equation of creation”? What was “I” going to do? Play with itself?

Well, as outrageous as that might sound to some of you, this is exactly what “I” did. As ennui crept in, as boredom’s black tendrils began to snake through the light of consciousness, the original monadic consciousness began a solitary exercise of its imagination. It considered The Problem and concluded that it would play with itself. It would think and explore internally much like what would happen if you closed your eyes and “went within.” If you did that, you would be dreaming and that is pretty much what happened with “I.” This initial exercise of “I” resulted in a kind of dream (an imagining) inside the mind of “I.” It seems sensible and simple to me. Start with self awareness and then, when self grows uninteresting, explore the internal potentials of consciousness via a divinely sanctioned God dream.

Now initially when that happened, The Dream (let us call it *The Dream*) was dim, ephemeral, inchoate, blank, and virtually empty. We have to remember, in the beginning “I” only knew “I” and (given the simplicity of “I”) that wasn’t a particularly inspiring place to start. But that changed. As “I” went through the process of imagining, as “I” practiced, the ability of consciousness to clearly and vividly *visualize* increased. Indeed, with a little bit of practice, The Dream of “I” became increasingly defined, clear, and brilliant. In fact, it did not take long for The Dream (the imagining) to attain a certain vivid “reality” inside the mind of “I.” Of course, the new reality did not have an independent existence of “I” (because that is not ever possible), but the vivid dream certainly gave the *illusion* (maya) of being real and that was more than adequate for the purposes of “I.” Indeed, given the absolute power of consciousness a dreamt/imagined reality is no limitation at all.⁴

Initially, The Dream was also quite simple. Staring from the conceptual vacuum that is the original state of self-awareness, The Dream could only consist of simple things. In the beginning it was a very Platonian world of simple shapes and forms. What else? With no prior experience, “I” was confined to thinking in terms of simple

⁴ As I explain in some detail in *The Book of Light*, the dream is real because it participates in the awesome power and reality of the original monadic spark.

geometry—dots and dashes, lines and boxes, tesseracts and that kind of thing. There was no creative fuel for the spiritual fire so to speak and as a result, creation at this stage was simple.

Now, this pretty much sums up the first few moments of creation. The only thing that I have to add here is a note on the fundamental nature of “The Dream.” It is important to remember at all times that The Dream is merely an imagining in the mind of the original monadic consciousness. As such, this original imagining shares forever and for all time a fundamental unity and identity with the original “I.” This identity holds no matter how complex *The Unfolding* (more on this below) becomes. This identity is important for a few reasons but the most important reason is that because The Dream is really just another aspect of “I.” The Dream is, in the beginning, always, and forever more, a perfect reflection of the intent of “I.” That is, the Dream of “I” is an emergent, malleable, pliable, compliant extension of “I.” In volume one of my *Book of Light*, I whimsically call The Dream in the mind of “I” the “plastercine of paradise” or “mind mush of creation” (Sharp, 2006). Keeping this in mind allows us to understand my mystical stipulation *consciousness is the root of all things*.

It will be useful at this point to pause and summarize. At this stage of creation we have consciousness, self awareness, boredom, and a vivid dream being played out in the mind of “I.” This all started off with consciousness; then, consciousness became aware of self; then, (self satisfied, self-loving) self got bored and began its internal quest for experience. This quest leads it to the rapid realization that only “I” exists and from that realization the awareness of “I” moves immediately inwards and a dream (which becomes more vivid and real with practice) forms. This path can be summarized thus.

Consciousness=>awareness of Self
Awareness of Self (=>) boredom with Self
Boredom with Self (=>) dreaming
Dreaming (=>) Reality

If we were to label the left side of the equations above the *state of consciousness* and the right side the “characteristics of consciousness” (i.e., awareness of self, boredom, imagination/intent, dream, reality), then we can clearly see how each characteristic *emerges* and flows logically from the previous state of consciousness. This is

relatively important. The characteristics of consciousness (and reality) always emerge from the extant “state” of consciousness. Nothing is random, everything makes sense. *This never changes.* Each step in The Unfolding of consciousness and creation follows logically from the previous. No matter how complex it gets, the logic of it is always explicable.

As an aside, the “dream inside the mind of I” that I am talking about here *directly corresponds* to what Jahn and Dunne (2004) hypothesize to be The Source, Unus Mundi, “terra incognita,” the implicate order, the “subliminal seed regime, ” the Tao, Qi, prana, the zero-point vacuum, and the void of potential. Through a physically understandable process of emergence, out of The Dream/Source emerges the “reality” you see. However, I think it is misleading to call The Dream *The Source* because although from The Dream/Source will eventually emerge the entire EMF spectrum and the reality we see around us, nevertheless The Dream is not “the” source. Rather, The Dream is derived or emergent from a more fundamental source which is the original self-aware monadic consciousness. It is a subtle but important point to keep in mind. I think we can clear it conceptually by referring to the Qi, prana, the zero-point vacuum, or whatever you want to call the “dream stuff” from which “reality” emerges “source” with a little “s” and the original self-aware consciousness as “Source” with a capital “S.” Thinking about it thus may impact our theories and conceptualisations in a productive and positive manner and help us avoid conceptual slippage between the two ideas or slides back into the canonical dualisms of church and materialist science. But, I digress. Let us return to the point in creation where the only thing that existed was “I” solipsistically dreaming a (initially simple but gradually more complex and vivid) dream of reality. The question at this point becomes, what happens next? As always, simple and logical is the rule. Basically what happened was “I” played with form for a while but eventually, “I” got bored. After all, like navel gazing, playing with simple form is only interesting for so long. There are only so many permutations and combinations that can be explored and since the existence of “I” is eternal, “I” will inevitably exhaust the potential of a single “I” dreaming a Platonian universe. When “I” becomes bored, “I” once again begins searching around for another experience to offset the boredom and regain a semblance of the original bliss.

Now, at the serious risk of being crucified by my colleagues I, as a mystic, would say

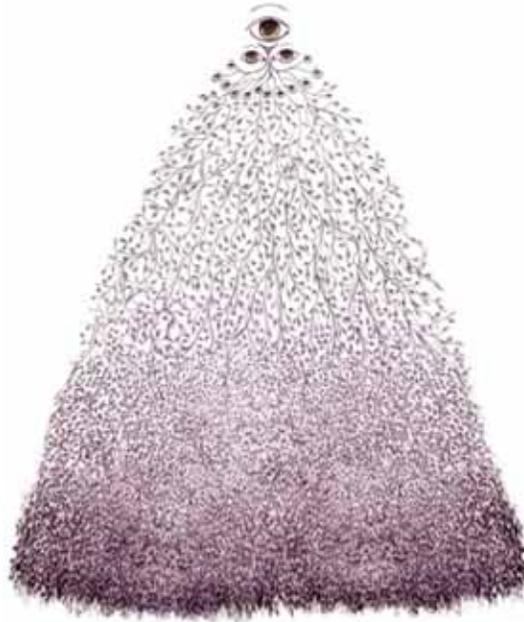
that basically what happens next is the original “I” decides it needs some playmates. Having grown bored of playing with itself, “I” figured out it needed another set of “I’s” (or eyes if you like). In other words, if the original “I” could be called the original ego, then what was needed was a new ego or two, a new point of consciousness or, as I like to say, a new *intensification in the fabric of awareness*. Of course, this could not be just any new “I.” This would not be like the eyes in your head connected as they are to a single brain (i.e., ego reflector) which can handle (without cracking) only a single point of consciousness. A bunch of subservient “eye’s” under one master “I” made no sense and for a number of reasons (outlined in more detail in *The Book of Light*). Primarily though it would be boring because it would not really change the previous “state of consciousness.” Adding another “eye” connected to the same ego would be like adding a third physical eye to your head. You would have a new look on things, but it wouldn’t change the functional dynamic of creation which would remain a single “I” (ego) intending its single minded dream. Far better would be the creation of new, independent, and equal, playmates in creation.

How many new playmates would “I” create? Initially “I” created two playful little “intensifications of awareness.” When these intensifications, these “children of God” if you like, came into existence, they were anxious to get on with the show. They started with simple forms as before only this time there was new interest in the variety caused by the interaction of independent perspectives and intent. However, as you might expect, the potentials of simple form were exhausted quickly even though there was new variety and so, in solution to the ongoing problem of emergent boredom, the “monads” moved on to explore other more complex avenues of creation until all the possible permutations and combination of form and content that were possible with three independent monadic “sparks” were exhausted. Eventually, inevitably, they grew bored of their play and when that happened they did “it” again. They created new egos (new “I’s) thereby adding more *variables* to the equation of creation. To make a long story short, this addition of new monads continues on for a considerable amount of “time” (and through multiple “levels”) in what I have called *The Unfolding of Consciousness* (or just *The Unfolding*) for short. The Unfolding amounts to an exponentially explosive expansion of fractal complexity. This whole unfolding is captured in the cover image of my *Book of Light: The Nature of God, the Structure of Consciousness, and the Universe Within You*. I call the cover image, which

is reproduced below, the “Christmas Tree of Consciousness.”

In my *Book of Light* I explain in a lot more detail the process of unfolding and the “properties of consciousness” (like time, chance, space, subjective perspective, etc.) that emerge as function of *The Unfolding* so I won’t rehearse those here. What is important at this point is that *The Unfolding of Consciousness* does not go on forever. At some point the mere quantitative addition of perspective (i.e., new egos) no longer provides for interesting creative play. In the run of eternity it eventually becomes the same-old, same-old. When that happens, a new experience is sought (and found) that is a bit of watershed in *The Unfolding of Consciousness* and creation. Interestingly, every reader reading this is going to recognize this event. What happens basically is that consciousness *enters into* The Dream. That is, consciousness *enters into* The Void. In other words, where before consciousness played with “reality” as a potter might play with a lump of clay (i.e., operating upon it as an object), now consciousness would literally enter into “The Waters” (i.e., The Dream) to see what it would be like to experience The Dream from the inside. It was an interesting event, a real watershed. If eyes and ears had existed at that point (which of course they did not) these eyes and ears would have seen and heard what could easily be described, if you were looking *from the inside* of The Dream, as a big bang of energy, light, and movement (an emergent singularity). As monadic consciousness entered The Dream (first one at a time and then as a veritable flood of “Is”), The Dream literally exploded from within with the blinding power of consciousness.

The Tree of Consciousness



This pretty much sums up an initial explication of a Strong Theory of Consciousness. The basic supposition of this theory is that consciousness *is the root of all things*. Consciousness is the bedrock, the ground, upon which all things (including the material universe) unfold. Of course, there is a lot more detail and if you are interested I recommend my *Book of Light Volume One*. I warn you though that book is written for a lay reader so you may be made uncomfortable by the simplicity. Still, for our purposes here we have enough to go on. We have basically the *holy trinity* of creation here. We have the original Source consciousness in all its “folded” glory, the emergent dream/reality of creation which takes on an incredible multi-dimensional, multi-universal complexity, and monads *within* The Dream/reality unfolding a creation from inside that becomes more complex and varied as The Unfolding of creation continues through multiple levels to a point where existence, as we see it, is finally created.

So, where do we go from here? To be honest, I am not past this point in my own mystical meanderings. The watershed point where consciousness “enters into” consciousness remains an uncompleted part of this mystic’s project which I plan on completing with the publication of Volume Two of *The Book of Light*. However we do not need that extra detail to see the potential benefits of this Strong Theory. Besides,

science knows the story on “this side” (i.e., the inside) of The Void very well and as a mystic all I could do would be to provide a little spiritual depth to already competent explanations. What I would like to do now in closing this paper is speculate briefly about the “fruitfulness” of a strong theory of consciousness. I do think there are potential benefits of this theory and I think one of the main benefits of considering this Strong Theory will be the potential to use this theory to take our thinking about our sciences in radical new directions. At the risk of beating a dead horse, given “the failure of contemporary scientific theory to correlate and explicate anomalous consciousness-related phenomena” (Jahn and Dunne, 2004), it seems like a reasonable hope and expectation and one that appears justified by the explanatory power of this model. As non-materialist as this theory may be, nevertheless it does make explicable the entire range anomalous phenomena observed in the “inner realm” of the material universe.

Benefits

So what good is this Strong Theory of Consciousness? To start off with, it is a familiar theory. Anyone even peripherally familiar with Eastern philosophies will see the affinity. It potentially encompasses a wide variety of mystical and religious teachings. However the potential benefits go beyond this as consideration of the theory makes explicable anomalous phenomena observed in the Noetic sciences.

For example, the Strong Theory explains the power of the observer in physics (i.e., double slit experiments) and in medicine (i.e., placebo effects) by asserting the primacy of consciousness as over/above/encapsulating matter. With this theory we would expect to find the kind of consciousness effects observed by scientists. If there is a problem here it is not explaining the effect as such but instead explaining why consciousness seems to have only a low probability impact on reality. That is why, if “consciousness is the root of all things,” isn’t the connection between consciousness and matter more obvious and explicit with a higher direct influence? There are reasons for this (Sharp, 2006) but it basically boils down to the fact that creation is a collective endeavour and as such, the intent of one monadic consciousness gets averaged out as a result of the interaction of multiple interested monads. “Reality” is always the result of a consensus of interested consciousnesses and as such the

connection between consciousness and reality is direct but mediated and therefore weak from the perspective of any individual “spark” of consciousness.

The Strong Theory also explains PK experiments, retroactive PK and the “magical” ability of chicks to influence inert metal. What’s more, the “mechanism” for the operation of these effects is given by the fact that the underlying reality of the material world is consciousness. The paper you are looking at right now may not look or feel like consciousness being that the standing wave patterns that make it are relatively fixed by the expectations of consciousness in this local space-time, but it is consciousness of a “frozen” variety nonetheless and those open to a certain influence just like the images in a dream may be influenced (i.e., vivid dreaming) under the right conditions. That a stronger influence cannot be achieved in general may possibly be explained by the need to “condition” the spaces (Tiller, 2004) to allow a stronger link between consciousness and “reality.” Once again though the question is not “why PK” but “why not, given the fundamental connection between Source and source, a stronger PK.” It is an interesting shift that, while it leaves us looking at the same phenomena, encourages us to ask different questions which may or may not (but I think will) lead in scientifically fruitful directions.

Beyond PK, remote viewing phenomena could also be easily subsumed under the strong theory either by hypothesizing the ability of a single monadic consciousness to leave the body and travel elsewhere or by the possibility that, because we are all embedded in a fabric of consciousness, we are able to “tap into” various locations within that fabric simply through our intent. Once again, an interesting shift of perspective that leads us to ask different question and consider different options. If these two options were translated into hypothesis, I’m not sure how we could test and rule out one or the other (or both), but I am sure that someone with a more experimental and technological sensibility could find a way.

Interestingly enough, the Strong Theory also offers an explanation for why it is so difficult to replicate experiments. **The intent of others interferes.** That is, Noetic experiments may be simply less likely to work when “non-believers” are observing. The reality of this phenomenon, if it is verified, may lead us to propose a “believer effect.” Because of the nature of reality as a manifestation of consciousness non-believers, because they have an equal influence on reality could, simply by

observation, reduce the probabilistic outcome of anomalous events. Contrariwise, believers would (simply because of their intent and observation) increase the probability. If such an effect could be verified it would, of course make “blinding” an impossible to attain methodological goal because somebody would always know what the experiment was about and their knowledge would impact the results. Sounds bizarre I know but it would be easy to test for the existence of such a “believer effect.” All we would have to do is develop a short scale measuring “belief” in the power of consciousness. A Likert based “*As Above, So Below Scale*” could be developed and might look something like this.

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = **don’t believe at all** and 5 = **believe without a doubt**, rate your belief in the following statements.

Consciousness is the root of all things.

I can make myself sick by thinking negative thoughts

I am responsible for the creation of my world

Where thought goes, energy flows.

My state of mind determines my experience of reality.

Such a scale could be short (maybe 10 questions) and would be easy to validate both internally and externally. It would be worth developing and might bring a significant methodological refinement to Noetic work making it easier to predict the whole round of Noetic phenomena. For example, consider two experiments in PK. The first experiment is conducted by researchers who would rate high on the “As Above, So Below” scale of belief if they were tested. They are not consciously aware of the impact of their belief. However unconsciously they are and as a result they pre-select research subjects who are also believers. Putting all these believers together increases the odds of attaining positive results. There is nothing manipulative about this. They simply have not considered belief as a variable in their experiments. Now consider the second experiment which is done as a *replicative* study by “independent” researchers. Are these researchers “believers?” Probably not because believers wouldn’t think it necessary to replicate a successful experiment. Thus chances are good that these replicators are sceptics and would thus score low on the As Above, So Below scale. As the believers did, they bias the selection of participants in the

opposite direction thereby reducing the probabilistic odds of observing Noetic phenomena. It wouldn't be hard to detect evidence of this. Just use the scale, partition into groups, and test. If the sampling means are different for the two groups by a significant degree, you have confirmation of the importance of belief. Interestingly enough, we find the proposal of a *Believer Effect* similar to the so called *Garage Builder Effect* noted by Tiller (2003).

There is more. The Strong Theory of Consciousness presented here provides an elegant solution to the problem of transmission mechanisms. With the Strong Theory, we no longer need to seek complicated mechanisms of transmission and might in fact say something like, "because of the fundamental and original unity of the fabric of consciousness, within the fabric of consciousness "information" (whatever that really means) flows freely in the system." It is like we are all part of one big wave function. Of course, objections could be raised at this point like "if that is the case, if information flows freely, why do we experience ego isolation and individuation? Why are we not awash in a flow of information?" These are good questions to which I can hypothesise that perhaps, because of the limited processing power of the human brain we intentionally create barriers to prevent a seriously bad case of information overload. Further, perhaps we do see the uncontrolled breakdown of these barriers in forms of madness (i.e., Schizophrenia). Perhaps also the barriers are permeable and open to modification/movement according to certain factors like, for example, the intent of the individual. Perhaps the barrier can even, with appropriate methodologies, be broken down in order to experience direct information flow. Perhaps this is what mystics, channelers, and shamans are all about. As we can, in this context the Strong Theory makes explicable shamanic and other "breaking open of the head" type phenomena as attempts to access the Fabric of Consciousness. We could even use the theory to hypothesise not only why there are commonalities between shamanic experiences but also why there are differences. For example, different groups with different "ideas" about the fabric might tap into different areas of The Fabric thereby bringing with them idiosyncratic experiences. In addition different groups, owing to various forms of cultural indoctrination, might influence/corrupt/filter the experience or interfere with adequate transmission making pure contact difficult. Questions also arise here about the possibility of managing and controlling such "higher" contact with the Fabric of Consciousness.

Considering these questions may fruitfully lead to new ways to treat individuals with uncontrolled boundaries or cure those who experience “boundary breakdown.” Personally, I believe that starting from the foundation of the strong theory, much of the confusion surrounding shamanic phenomena, how it functions, and how we might control it could be dispelled.

The Strong Theory also explains the so called “hard problem,” that is “the question of how physical processes in the brain give rise to subjective experience (Chalmers, 1995), by ejecting it from consideration altogether as misinformed and naïve. The question, like much of contemporary materialism, is turned on its head by the theory. The question becomes not why does consciousness emerge from reality but what are the physical mechanisms which allow consciousness to “express” and perceive in reality? A plethora of new questions could be asked such as “can these mechanisms be influenced in some way,” “do our current child rearing practices allow for a fullest expression of spiritual consciousness through the CNS (Central Nervous System) of the body,” or “are we limiting (or even damaging) that expression with our negative childrearing practices.”

The Strong theory also calls into question the relevance of gender. Recall that the only characteristic of the original monadic spark is self awareness. Gender is not something inherent and only emerges (if you want to trust my mystical meanderings) much later. Questions like “when does gender emerge” and “why” become relevant. I suspect the standard esoteric answers to these questions will fall down here as we realize the anthropomorphic corruptions and subsequently find that gender is not as relevant as we think. Feminists have certainly been arguing this for years as they decry the way psychologists and others seem to fetishize over what can be considered minor differences in bodily expression.

There are other benefits here as well. Consideration of The Strong Theory would also encourage traditional science to take more seriously the possibility of experimenter effects. I was rather shocked when Sheldrake (1998) reported that in the hard sciences, most experimenters do not bother with blind or double blind designs. He found that **the highest proportion of blind experiments** was in medical sciences where a mere six out of one hundred and two, or 5.9% of experiments, used blinding techniques. Given the empirically verified importance of observer effects (even

without a consideration of theories of consciousness) this hardly seems appropriate especially when, for example, dealing with pharmaceutical funded drug research. Accepting, even provisionally, the postulate of The Strong Theory (i.e., that consciousness is the root of all things) allows us to ask some critical questions of much medical research. We already know the power of the mind when it comes to placebo effects, but perhaps we need to consider further. For example, would experiments that allow *critics* to observe drug trials impact the observed efficacy of drugs? That is, can positive results actually be attributed to drug effects or is there some kind of corporate placebo effect in operation? In other words, are drug trials impacted by the conscious intent of the interested observers of a sponsoring drug company and should *sceptics* (perhaps those trained in eastern wholistic medicine) be allowed to observe to balance the effect?

There is more. Consider the not-too-friendly relationship between western medical practitioners and eastern, holistic practitioners. Many western doctors arrogantly dismiss non-western medicine, but could this dismissal amount to a sort of *believer bias* that *conditions*, after Tiller (2004), the efficacy of eastern medicine in western spaces? Has the arrogant dismissal of non-western medicine been partly responsible for the low probably experimental effects? I'm not a medical doctor but for me these seem to be fascinating and timely questions especially considering the ongoing explosion of "side-effect rich" pharmaceutical based treatments.

Seriously considering the Strong Theory would also allow new avenues of research into consideration not possible to enter into under a strict materialist regime. For example, psychologists might have questions about whether boredom may be considered a fundamental feature (or an emergent feature) of consciousness. Curiously, boredom has been a taboo topic in psychology up until quite recently (de la Pena, 2007). This lack of attention to the impact of boredom hardly seems right since any parent can see the caustic effect of boredom on their children. De la Pena, however, has no doubts about the importance of the experience of boredom and its negative repercussions on the mind and body of its victims. As he says:

Individuals, particularly adult humans, apparently can and do bore ourselves to tears, distraction, psychosis, destructiveness, hyperactivity, various sleep and eating disorders, and even to death (de la Pena, 2007).

After considering the implications of a Strong Theory, psychologists may also choose to look elsewhere for theories about language development than where they have traditionally looked. Perhaps language acquisition is not about “sensitive periods” as Chomsky theorized but more simply understood as a process of our soul (our pre-embodied consciousness) learning to map its already existing concepts to the concepts present in the native tongue of the body it was born into. That is, maybe we are all born with an innate understanding of what a square is and all we have to do is learn the word for “square” in the language of our birth body. It perhaps isn’t as far fetched as it sounds. I have observed in my own children how amazing language development is and frankly, I have a hard time believing the “sensitive period” hypothesis because it seems to me that the mechanisms proposed do not adequately capture the amazing way words and meanings seem to magically pop out of the mouths of babes.

There is also room for the Strong Theory in biology where biologists are now learning to see the implicit intelligence in nature. Bruce Lipton (2005) for example describes so called smart cells that (in total defiance of the most holy and sacrosanct materialist cannon that the brain is the source of consciousness) appear to display intent, purpose, and the ability to cooperate. Given the stark biological simplicity of such cells, the only way to explain these phenomena is through a strong theory of consciousness and a hypothesis that consciousness can involve itself at all levels of creation. There is even room here for a more radical form of evolutionary theory that sees evolution as a consciously directed, goal centred process. Here the early “goal” of evolution (or what I would rather call the spiritual efforts to manifest liveable material structures – i.e., bodies) would be to create ever more sophisticated (and varied) vehicles for inhabitation by spirit. We all know that evolutionary theories break down over the timelines proposed (i.e., there isn’t enough time available to account for the evolution of life within the currently proposed “a-conscious” mechanisms). Who knows, down the road we might even put aside our human-centric ways and see value in all the myriad options available for the bodily expression of spiritual consciousness.

There are also implications of the Strong Theory for sociologists. For example, sociologists may want to re-examine and re-theorize such things as social structure, institutions, group phenomena, socialization, gender roles, etc. There may be an

explanation in here for why institutions, which emerge out of individual interactions, come to take on such a powerful life of their own. In addition, in terms of socialization, perhaps we do not start with a blank slate after all but instead bring forward *imprints* from past lives. If we assume for the moment that the experiences we have as pure consciousness *personalize* us, and that we have existed for a long time before incarnation into this body and have had multiple (perhaps thousands) of previous incarnations, then can we not see ourselves as bringing forward our experiences (a.k.a. imprints) from previous lifetimes? This makes theories of socialization decidedly more complex being as we'd have to take into account the possibility that, for example, gender, racial, and even cultural experiences are imprinted on consciousness and transmitted across lifetimes (i.e., do people actually choose to be born Hungarian because they have previous, positive experience with the culture?). Does all this make sexual preferences more explicable? Do we prefer a certain body and a certain mode of expression? What happens when we decide to change our mode of expression from female in a previous lifetime to male in this lifetime? Is there a transition period then or do some people simply prefer ambiguous expressions of gender? These are just off the cuff questions and I'm sure someone with experiencing theorizing gender could take the implications much farther.

Of course, no theory would be complete without predictions and as already noted, the Strong Theory does provide us with predictions. For example, the Strong Theory predicts that all physical matter (including DNA) can be affected, as I have suggested in *The Dossier of the Ascension* (Sharp, 2005), by consciousness. I'll leave it up to the biologists to devise tests for this. The theory would also predict that the so called laws and constants of nature would be neither lawful nor constant. If the strong theory is correct, we would expect a malleable and fluid physical universe whose laws are constructed either intentionally by consciousness or unintentionally as emergent properties of an exploding Fabric of Consciousness. It is not that strange a proposal especially when we consider the age of the universe and how small our collective scientific observational samples are. In a universe billions of years old we have, notwithstanding the limited telescopic observation of the early universe, a mere few hundred years of data collection. Besides, Shel Drake (2002) has already suggested that the so called universal constants may not, in fact, be very universal at all. Perhaps all we need to do to affect the speed of light in a small local of space time is

get a bunch of people together thinking about slowing it down. I am aware this sounds outrageous, but it seems to be, from my naïve perspective, a testable hypothesis.

There are other less tangible benefits of a Strong Theory of Consciousness. For example, one of the things that always strikes me as odd is how quickly investigators are willing to jump to the conclusion that the “ground of existence,” The Tao, or whatever you want to call it, is ineffable and beyond “human” comprehension. An equally odd, but related, assumption to make is that enlightenment (i.e., an understanding of the “ground of existence”) is difficult or impossible to attain. To be honest, neither assumption “feels right” to me as a scientist or a mystic. Why should The Void be ineffable? Just because church dogma tells us so or ancient writings say it is thus does not make it so? Surely there is no empirical reason for such an assumption. Just because we have not understood something in the past does not make the thing necessarily incommensurable or ineffable. Two hundred years ago nobody would have understood the principles of electricity or flight but that didn’t make these principles impossible to understand. It is a bit self defeatist as well as an odd position for a scientist to take. Perhaps a strong theory of consciousness is an antidote to the groundless and defeatist proclamations about the “ineffable” nature of the mystical elements of reality. Indeed, instead of *conditioning* our spaces towards such a negative outcome (i.e., incommensurability), perhaps we should be making positive statements saying that we can understand the ground of existence, we can attain controllable boundary shifts, and we should make efforts to do so.

A final benefit and strength of a Strong Theory can be offered. Whereas before The Strong Theory our operational assumption as scientists was that spirituality and science could not cross and were mutually incommensurable, perhaps a Strong Theory provides us with an opportunity to open a potentially amazing and revolutionary dialogue between science, religion, and spirituality that could transform our deepest understanding of all that is. The potential for smashing through centuries of cannon and stepping out of our millennial, dogmatic roots should be apparent. The strong theory sidesteps the illogic and inconsistency in Christian and western esoteric and exoteric dogma at the same time that it holds the basic belief in Spirit and a creator intact (though in this case the creator becomes you and I and everyone else). The Strong Theory does not *deify* consciousness/spirit or presume the

tenuous position of an all-seeing patriarch creator. The theory, as explicated in *The Book of Light*, is profoundly democratic, anti-hierarchy, and anti-authoritarian. It is my hope that as our understanding of consciousness, its roots, and how “everything” came to emerge out of consciousness expands, we will finally put to bed our ancient Christian dogma and move beyond a distasteful reliance on God as primogenitor, master masonic planner, and final judge in some millennial spiritual/evolutionary training mission/attempt at salvation. In the Strong Theory, there is no place for notions of “the fall” or the “separation from the original state of oneness” (Laszlo, 2004: 12). There is simply the logical unfolding of consciousness and creation (in which we all participate) and the profound unity of all things in consciousness.

Conclusions

As Above in Consciousness,

So below in Matter

Michael Sharp

In concluding this paper I want to simply point out that shifting our perspective, rejecting the gospel of objectivity, overturning the dogma of materialism, and embracing a paradigm shift that puts consciousness at the centre of our scientific inquiry is not as big a deal as we might first think. Of course it is revolutionary in the fullest sense of the word; however, at the cutting edge scientists have been working towards it for years. Many will admit and even profess that we have worked our way towards the precipice and are now standing, peering over the edge, our gaze fixed firmly on the chasm in front of us. What will we do? As many Noetic researchers have pointed out, we are in desperate need of a new theory of consciousness and as I have suggested in this paper, what we need is a Strong Theory of Consciousness that moves us beyond naïve materialism and objectivism into a rational but profoundly spiritual world. Perhaps the only thing holding us back now is a collective idea, rooted in our shared scientific indoctrination, that what sets us apart from our dogmatic forefathers is our commitment to objectively apprehend reality through powerful applications of rationality and methodology. Now, while I would not want to argue that objectivity or rationality are not important, I would suggest, as a way of overcoming our conservatism, that objectivity is not as big a deal as we think it is.

Subjectivity, bias, and all the dirty little secrets of our science that we work so hard to hide have always been a part of our endeavours. We cannot deny them any longer and why should we? Curiously, perhaps counter intuitively for some, the pesky imposition of our own “I” into the scientific process has not stopped our rapid theoretical and technical progress. So what are we defending anyway? An illusion I say.

However, if a Newtonian ontology and empirical methodology of objectivity is not the cornerstone of our scientific enterprise, then what is? I would submit that what separated Galileo, Copernicus, and others from the dogma of the church was the simple fact that they, through a process of observation and logical deduction, came to recognize that what had once been offered as truth had, by their time, lost its efficacy as an explanation of “things” and instead had been transformed into dogma. That is, what separates Galileo from the priests who oppressed him was not that he was necessarily more objective or rational than they but that he clued into the fact earlier than they (perhaps because he was not as reliant on the “gifts” of the church) that the truths of the church had lost their veracity and become the dogmatic impositions of a few powerful people. As you would expect if this were true, he paid for his attempt to break free of the dogma. His crime was to show “disrespect” for the priests who, by way of punishment for that disrespect, viciously enforced dogmatic boundaries, ejecting Galileo from the inner circles. Be that as it may, we all know how that story ends. Others came to stand by Galileo and challenge the paradigm and it eventually fell. The authority of the priests was undermined and religion became a “special case” clung to by all those who, some might say, could not face the implications of the new scientific worldview.

Personally, I think we are in exactly the same position as Galileo was. Like our founding forefathers, we observe the anomalies and see they do fit within our current theoretical understanding. We can recognize the dogmatic impositions of an authoritarian system and, up until now, have gradually and oh so carefully navigated the precipice towards a paradigmatic shift of revolutionary proportions. But enough with the pussy footing around already! Now is the time to assert, with confidence, a new paradigm and worldview. The anomalies have built up, theoretical alternatives are available, and all that is left is to leap into the precipice, “make the shift,” and begin asking the new questions made possible by the shift. What’s the worst that can

happen? Assuming our materialist colleagues don't excommunicate us for having the nerve to challenge cannon, the worst thing that can happen is we will be proven wrong and what's so bad about that? This is the process of science after all! We should welcome the opportunity for scrutiny of this Strong Theory without worrying about ridicule or intolerant reaction. This is not the Middle Ages and there are no wooden stakes and burning piles being assembled here. Anyway, it is my prediction that by openly and confidently considering a Strong Theory we will not be moving back towards an irrational, subjective past but forward to a profoundly insightful apprehension of the true nature of creation that will allow us to not only make quantum technological leaps, but also integrate our sciences and our spirituality, our technique and our art, our ancient and our modern knowledge, our politics and our spirituality in a way that will usher in a new age of enlightenment and knowledge that will make our previous period of enlightenment look like the stumbling, uncoordinated offerings of a bunch of finger painting children.

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