

► TOWARDS A NEW RENAISSANCE

The Newsletter of the Scientific and Medical Network

► EDITORIAL

Raising the Bar

BY DAVID LORIMER



Some of you will have attended the recent webinar with Professor Jeffrey Kripal talking about his new book *The Flip*. He defines a 'flip' as an experience that transforms the outlook of the experiencer in the direction of holding consciousness rather than matter to be primary.

Such a 'crucial experience' turns out to be much more powerfully transformative than any 'crucial experiment'. As John Kenneth Galbraith wittily remarked: 'faced with the choice between changing one's mind and proving that there is no need to do so, almost everyone gets busy on the proof.'

When referring to the epistemological status of anomalies, Jeff used the analogy of a high jump competition, where the bar is gradually raised. The first bar is: do they happen at all? Materialists regard all psychic experiences as impossible in principle, and often base their arguments on this brazen statement of metaphysics. The second bar is: are they significant for consciousness and mind? They might be classified as pathological and dismissed on that account. The third bar is: do they have implications for our understanding of the nature of reality?

My own study of, for instance, near-death experiences has led me to the third view, which I imagine is shared by many SMN members. It is also worth noting that all the founders of the SMN had personal mystical experiences.

Jeff goes further, by arguing that mystical and synchronistic experiences are, as it were, shouting out to be noticed for their implications in terms of our understanding of consciousness. He sees them as intentional signs of the

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Jeffrey
Kripal

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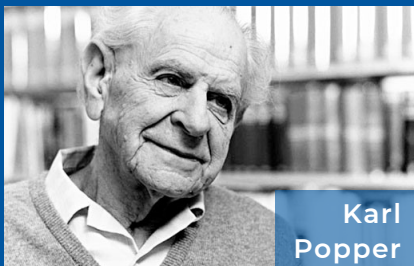
▶ FEATURED ESSAY



Dr Jim Baggott: Post-Empirical Science is an Oxymoron

This stimulating and wide-ranging article on the [Aeon](#) platform highlights the dangers of 'post-empirical science' drawing on Sir Karl Popper's falsifiability criterion and addressing the epistemological status of the multiverse.

'In the so-called Many-Worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics, there are universes containing our parallel selves, identical to us but for their different experiences of quantum physics. These theories are attractive to some few theoretical physicists and philosophers, but there is absolutely no empirical evidence for them.'



Karl Popper

Read the full essay [here](#).

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fundamental inadequacy of our present Western worldview. Far from letting such exceptional experiences pass unnoticed, though, the scientific and academic establishment goes out of its way to ignore and suppress findings inconsistent with its basic materialist philosophy. This can be seen in its most extreme form with highly organised sceptical movements that control Wikipedia entries on parapsychology and complementary medicine to reflect their strongly held view that such 'pseudo-scientific and 'woo-woo' activities are an affront to 'reason and science' – as if there can be a monopoly on such words.

For Kripal, this materialistic framework is not wrong, but only half right, applying as it does to the outside of things and adopting a third person perspective. As Alfred Russel Wallace and Lawrence LeShan have argued, there is no such thing as an impossible fact: if your theory is inconsistent with the facts, then your theory must be modified rather than the fact set aside. It is just not good enough to say that 'such things that happen all the time cannot happen at all.'

The stakes are high, though, relating as they do to what is considered real or unreal in terms of ultimate ontology and epistemology. In his book *Communication Power*, Manuel Castells defines this as the capacity to impose a specific frame that shapes human reasoning and manipulates

“For Kripal, this materialistic framework is not wrong, but only half right...”

emotions in the interpretation of media messages. He reminds us that people select information according to their cognitive frames, and that the fear frame is extremely potent, as we have all experienced in recent times.

In defending a conventional academic framing of synchronistic experiences, peer pressure and professional shaming tactics are widely prevalent and correspondingly intimidating to young researchers. This is where the Network can help as a safe forum for open exchange and, as a 1980s SMN document states: 'The existence of the Network lets it be widely known that there is a strong minority amongst professional people who wish to take fully into account in spiritual capabilities that we all possess.' 

► VIDEOS OF NOTE

Dr Rupert Sheldrake and Dr Mark Vernon David Bohm – his life and ideas

Rupert first met Bohm in 1982 soon after the publication of his book *A New Science of Life* precipitated a negative reaction from the militant materialists; the editor of the



leading scientific journal *Nature* tried to excommunicate him. Bohm had a similar experience forty years earlier with the quantum physics community. In this dialogue on Rupert's YouTube channel, Rupert (pictured left) and Mark talk about what Bohm drew from Krishnamurti, and how the formalisms of quantum theory are influenced by psychological and spiritual perceptions. Watch it [here](#).

Dr Anne Baring: Illustrated talk on Mary Magdalene

For too many centuries Mary Magdalene has been presented in literature and art as a sinner and a 'Penitent Whore'. After reading the work of Laurence Gardner and researching many other sources, Anne realised that naming her a 'sinner guilty of all vices', as Pope Gregory the Great did in AD 591 was a malicious calumny or slanderous projection onto her that has survived until the



present day when it can be revealed as a deliberate attempt to vilify her. Here and in a [corresponding article](#) Anne shares her research about the 'Apostle to the Apostles' and her role as the beloved companion of Jesus. Watch the talk [here](#).

► FEATURED BLOG



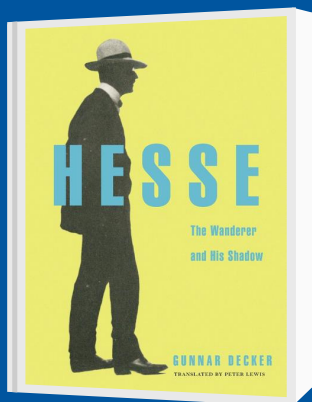
Phil Roberts: 'Confidence Comes from Crossing Thresholds' – Kamal Ravikant

This piece, from Phil's blog on leadership, takes Ravikant's quote as a leaping-off point to develop his ideas around whole-person coaching.

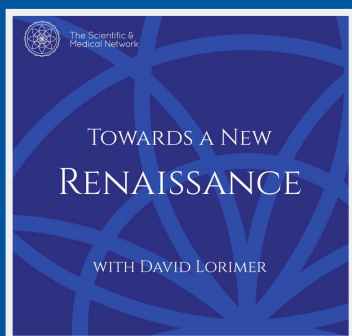
'One could say that all leadership development is soul work, involved with the fundamental question of just who it is that a leader's followers are following, and why. The choice is how far to go with the question; how deeply to increase our self and other-awareness so that we can figure out together how to get stuff done, be it in business, in public service or even politically. Where do rites of passage and the crossing of thresholds fit with modern leadership development and the complexity and scale of the challenges facing us all?'

Read the full blog [here](#).

► THE BOOKCAST



This episode features a review of **Hermann Hesse - The Wanderer and His Shadow**, a magisterial biography by Gunnar Decker. David writes: 'I will discuss Hesse's influence on my own life and my communication of his message to my pupils at Winchester College in the 1980s. Themes include beginnings and endings, nationalism and internationalism, and the spiritual quest as an inner journey home. Then I read a wonderful essay on the wisdom of trees in terms of stillness and endurance.' Listen to the episode [here](#).



Find the full bookcast on [RedCircle](#), [Apple podcasts](#), [Spotify](#) and [Stitcher](#).

► ARTICLES OF NOTE

Umair Haque: **Our Civilization needs a Great Transformation**

Umair Haque's work as a social and political commentator is widely featured in the Medium Daily Digests. Here he argues that we need three decades of unprecedented revolutions but wonders whether we are up to the task. These would need to address moral identity, economics, ecosystems, and the legal and political systems. It's a tall order but it may be forced on us. Read the full article [here](#).



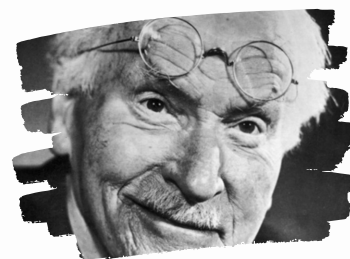
Arjun Walia: **Bees Harmed by EM Radiation**



Electromagnetic fields from powerlines, cell phones, cell towers and wireless have been shown in multiple peer-reviewed studies to exert a negative impact on birds, bees, wildlife and our environment. Specifically, electromagnetic radiation has been found to alter bee behaviour, produce biochemical changes and impact bee reproduction. [See also the review of *The Invisible Rainbow* in *Paradigm Explorer*, issue 133.] Read the full article [here](#).

Quote

"I shall not commit the fashionable stupidity of regarding everything I cannot explain as a fraud."
— Carl G. Jung



The lightened view

Why didn't the wave-particle cross the road? Because it was already on both sides.

► UPCOMING EVENTS ONLINE

'Create a Better Tomorrow' and more...

- Wednesday, 28 October, 7.30-9.30pm.

Vasileios Basios:

[Lessons Learned from Complexity Theory – Are we at a Tipping Point in Consciousness Studies?](#)

- Saturday, 31 October, 2.00-6.30pm.

Changemakers Books: [Resetting Our Future – The Power to Create a Better Tomorrow?](#)

- Saturday, 28 November, 10.00am-4.00pm.

Beyond Flatland (one-day conference):

[A day on transformative ways of knowing](#)

Find more details at www.mysticsandscientists.org.

Recent webinars - recordings now available!

These are all now available to view for Network members.

- Craig Weiler: **Psi Wars**. Chaired by Dr Rupert Sheldrake
- Sir Jonathon Porritt: **Hope in Hell**
- Dr Merlin Sheldrake on his new book: **Entangled Life – How Fungi Make our Worlds**
- Prof April DeConick: **The Gnostic New Age**

Log in to scimednet.org and click on the 'Explore' menu.

► FEATURED PODCAST

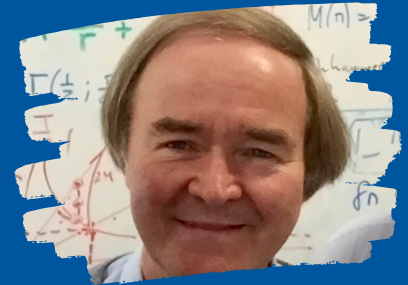
Fearne Cotton: [Happy Place](#)

BY CHARLOTTE LORIMER

Happy Place with Fearne Cotton is an uplifting, insightful podcast about life, love, loss, and everything in-between. In her interview with Wim Hof, known as The Ice Man, they explore how extreme cold can boost your immune system, and your physical and mental health. When talking about the three key tools of the Wim Hof Method – breathing, extreme cold and mindset – he says: 'People say, "oh, but can it be so simple?" I'm sorry, it is so simple. Just do it.' Listen [here](#).



► SMN VIDEO CLIPS



Bernard Carr:

[Psychical Research and Parapsychology](#)

Jeffrey Mishlove interviews SMN President Prof Bernard Carr about his passion for psychical research, referring to several of his own experiments. Bernard also reviews the history of these disciplines from his unique perspective as a physicist. Watch the full talk [here](#).

► TOWARDS A NEW RENAISSANCE

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Disclaimer: The selections in this newsletter are personal – the Network has no consensus view on the material covered. Readers need to draw their own conclusions on the basis of evidence and reason.

**For all enquiries click [here](#).
Site: explore.scimednet.org**

▶ HELP US NURTURE
AND GROW TANR!



We are excited to bring you *Towards a New Renaissance* on a regular basis and the responses we have received have been brilliant.

If you have been enjoying this monthly digest of David Lorimer's editorials, featured blogs, suggested videos and articles – and of course, David's ongoing 'bookcast' of spoken reviews, then would you consider making a supportive donation?

Any amount would be a great help toward our costs of time and labour. And a regular donation – even as little as £2–£5 a month – can allow us to plan ahead with new ways to bring you great content.

Click here to choose a donation level via PayPal - and thank you!



▶ JOIN THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK...

...AND ENJOY ACCESS TO THE RECORDINGS OF
ALL OUR RECENT ONLINE EVENTS


The last nine months of restricted movement has produced a sharp increase in high-quality online presentations and events and the Scientific and Medical Network has been fully participating in this wave of activity. As a result we are delighted to be able to offer our members a growing number of excellent webinar recordings as a part of their full membership package. Just a few of these are below:

MYSTICS & SCIENTISTS EXTRA 2020
ONE MIND, ONE PLANET, ONE HEALTH

THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK
PRESENTS

**LSD
AND THE MIND
OF THE UNIVERSE**

DR CHRIS BACHE



A mind and heart-expanding insight into the extraordinary spiritual odyssey that brought him revelatory understandings of the Universal Cosmic Mind as our common Ground of Being


Can we all access the Cosmic Mind?

THURSDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2020 • 7:30-9:30 PM (BST)
WWW.MYSTICSANDSCIENTISTS.ORG

MYSTICS & SCIENTISTS EXTRA 2020
ONE MIND, ONE PLANET, ONE HEALTH

**Anne
Baring**

**AWAKENING TO
A NEW STORY:
THE EVOLUTIONARY
IMPERATIVE OF OUR TIME**



An illustrated talk by the visionary author reflecting on how Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism and Christianity have influenced our relationship with the Earth

Wednesday, 14 October, 2020 • 7:30-9:30 PM (BST)
www.mysticsandscientists.org


MYSTICS & SCIENTISTS EXTRA 2020
ONE MIND, ONE PLANET, ONE HEALTH

THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK
PRESENTS

AN EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY INTO
FUNGAL INTELLIGENCE

ENTANGLED LIVES
FUNGAL NETWORKS, ECOLOGY, AND US

Dr Merlin Sheldrake



How do fungi – and our relationships with them – change our understanding of life on Earth?

THURSDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2020 • 7:30-9:30 PM (BST)
WWW.MYSTICSANDSCIENTISTS.ORG

MYSTICS & SCIENTISTS EXTRA 2020
ONE MIND, ONE PLANET, ONE HEALTH

**April
DeConick**

**THE
GNOSTIC
NEW AGE**



What if we can access the Divine directly through gnosis?

Tuesday, 29 September, 2020 • 7:30-9:30 PM (BST)
www.mysticsandscientists.org

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