

► TOWARDS A NEW RENAISSANCE

The Newsletter of the Scientific and Medical Network

► EDITORIAL

A Metaphysical Revolution

BY DAVID LORIMER



In 1994, I spoke at the annual meeting in Chicago of the Institute of Noetic Sciences. Around the dinner table with the then President (also a Vice-President of the SMN), Willis Harman, we hatched the idea of collaborating on a 'Beyond the Brain' conference, named after the book of the same title by Stanislav Grof. This idea materialised for 300 people at St John's College, Cambridge, in 1995. Willis himself spoke, along with Stan Grof, Charley Tart and many well-known consciousness researchers. The Journal of Consciousness Studies, founded the year before, had a stand.

Willis devoted the last period of his life to an examination of new metaphysical foundations of modern science based on the classic work of Edwin Burtt from Yale, who had published his *Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science* in the 1920s. I myself found a copy in a second-hand bookshop in Plymouth



Willis Harman

in May 1976, and I had never read anything like it. As part of a Causality Project, Willis published *A Re-examination of the Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science* 30 years ago in 1991, and edited a volume entitled *New Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*. His analysis of the assumptions, corollaries and characteristics of what he called separateness science and wholeness science still forms a seminal point of

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This issue's theme:
Beyond The Brain 2021
special conference edition



For more info and tickets
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▶ FEATURED BLOG



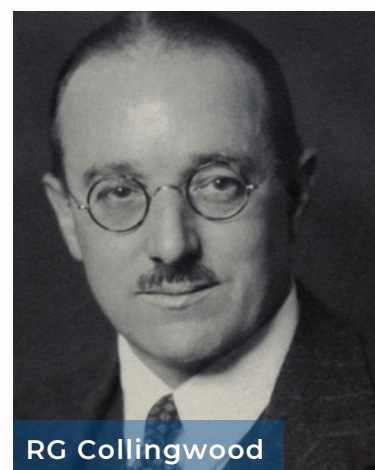
Markham Heid: What NDEs Teach us about the Brain

The NDE has always raised fundamental questions about the relationship between brain and consciousness, and in this article on Medium.com, science writer Markham Heid discusses Bruce Greyson and Pim van Lommel's work in this area, with reference to Greyson's recent book *After*.

'If NDEs are not the result of "normal brain function gone awry," what are they? Greyson says one theory is that the brain, rather than creating consciousness, is more like a filter for conscious experience — a filter that blocks out some information while letting other bits through. He says it's possible that, during an NDE, the brain's filtering ability may "break down" in a way that somehow allows consciousness to expand.'
Read the full post [here](#).

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departure. The importance of metaphysical presuppositions was discounted by the anti-metaphysical Vienna Circle and AJ Ayer in the 1930s, but reinstated by RG Collingwood in his neglected *Essay on Metaphysics* from 1940. Sadly, Collingwood died at a young age and was replaced as Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy by Gilbert Ryle – he of the 'ghost in the machine'.




RG Collingwood

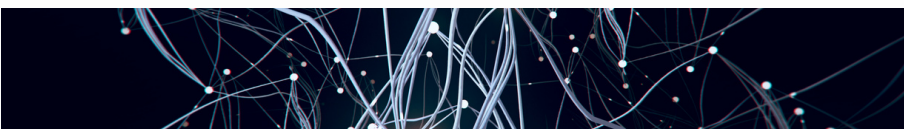
The Beyond the Brain Conference series challenges what I call the central dogma of neuroscience, namely that the brain generates consciousness, with its logical corollary that consciousness is extinguished at biological death. This position is overwhelmingly and uncritically accepted by mainstream science and academia.

Over the years, we've explicitly addressed this physicalist philosophical assumption as well as laying out the scientific evidence base for consciousness beyond the brain, where the explanatory power of scientific

"The Beyond the Brain conference series challenges what I call the central dogma of neuroscience..."

materialism manifestly falls short. In a spirit of openness and rigour rather than scorn and dismissal, we invite scientists and academics to 'look through the telescope'.

It is for this reason that we established the Galileo Commission and published the initial report by Prof Dr Harald Walach. Like the Beyond the Brain conferences, our summits this year have been a clarion call for a metaphysical revolution or paradigm shift – a new story of who we are – to expand the science of consciousness beyond its current limitations – come and join us at Beyond the Brain next week to hear more. 



▶ VIDEOS OF NOTE

Bruce Greyson: **After** - An In-Depth Interview

The publication of Bruce Greyson's book *After* (reviewed in *Paradigm Explorer* 135) is a landmark event that has even penetrated mainstream media where many commentators have taken his work very seriously. Greyson is Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences at the University of Virginia, and in this YouTube interview (on the Thanatos TV EN channel, and discussed as part of an article by John Ege on [medium.com](#)) he talks about the book and his ongoing insights in this important work. As Ege says in the article: *'There are two areas of interest that science has neglected over the years that could so fundamentally change our world to such a degree that we don't even have place holders for this paradigm shift. UFOs being aliens and an afterlife for human souls that may reincarnate onto this planet and onto others - both game changers for humanity.'* Find the article and the video [here](#) (scroll to the bottom for the embedded clip).



Dr Rupert Sheldrake: **The Science Delusion**



Rupert's book *The Science Delusion* (titled *Science Set Free* in the US) discusses twelve scientific propositions that have hardened into dogmas. Some of these include the idea that the brain generates consciousness, that all reality is material or

physical and that nature is purposeless, among others, and the book goes on to level arguments against these dogmas. This talk goes through these arguments and was banned by TED on the advice of its 'scientific committee' mainly consisting of pseudoskeptics - including Jerry Coyne - hostile to the whole field (see Cardena article on page 4 in this newsletter) and maintaining that psi phenomena contradict the laws of physics and are impossible in principle. Rupert calls for an open, expanded and less dogmatic science. Watch the video [here](#). See also his website www.skepticalaboutskeptics.org.

▶ FEATURED BLOG

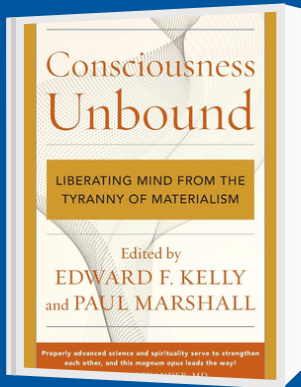


Diane Hennacy Powell: **The 'Closed-Minding' of America**

In this 2014 post on Diane's own site she discusses Arthur Koestler's 1972 book *The Roots of Coincidence: an Excursion into Parapsychology*, building on an interview question she received asking why American scientists do not believe in ESP...

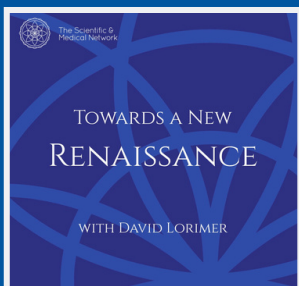
'The book was also disturbing because those from my generation, and younger, have never experienced the academic world described by Koestler... one in which ESP could be a respectable area of research. He wrote that "those who today ridicule research into such phenomena as ESP, precognition, psychokinesis, telepathy and clairvoyance are in the same position as those who 50 years ago scoffed at Einstein's physics. Why, asks Koestler, should a similar breakthrough not be possible in matters of the mind?' Read the post [here](#).

▶ THE BOOKCAST



Consciousness Unbound

This episode features two highly significant new volumes on a post-materialist science of consciousness - *Is Consciousness Primary?* and *Consciousness Unbound*. Both provide persuasive evidence and cogent arguments to challenge the dominant scientific materialism that cannot adequately account for such evidence, choosing instead to ignore or dismiss it – without realising its congruence with quantum physics. Listen to the episode [here](#).



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

▶ ARTICLES OF NOTE

Natalie L Trent (Dyer), Mario Beauregard, Gary E. Schwartz: Preliminary Development and Validation of a Scale to Measure Universal Love



Natalie Dyer

This article provides some theoretical background for Natalie's talk on the same theme at Beyond the Brain where universal love is defined as *'an experience of unity with others and the whole of existence, which is associated with behavioural, cognitive, emotional, and transcendental factors.'*

Here is a further excerpt from the abstract: *'With respect to convergent validity, universal love was positively correlated with compassionate love for humanity, self-compassion, spiritual experiences, forgiveness, empathy, and altruism, and negatively correlated with narcissism. Discriminant validity was demonstrated through no correlation between universal love and ethnicity or social desirability. With respect to criterion validity, universal love was positively correlated with universal spiritual beliefs and experiences and psychological well-being, including life meaning, satisfaction with life, and positive affect, and negatively correlated with negative affect and aggression. Further, the ULS demonstrated internal consistency reliability. These results indicate that the ULS is a valid and reliable scale to measure universal love.'* (Note: the article is not open source but behind a paywall.) Find it [here](#).

Etzel Cardeña: The experimental evidence for parapsychological phenomena: a review

This article from 2018 reviewed parapsychological research evidence in a prestigious journal. Unfortunately, the editors chose to publish a shoddy 'rebuttal' by Reber and Alcock stating that 'claims made by parapsychologists cannot be true' - with no right of reply. (Please note: the article is not open source but behind a paywall.) Read the abstract [here](#).

Quote

It is not obvious to me why extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. Extraordinary conservatism keeps us extraordinarily ignorant.

- Avi Loeb, Harvard astrophysicist



► UPCOMING EVENTS ONLINE

Federico Faggin, Beyond the Brain and more...

• **Wednesday, 3 November, 7.30-9.30pm.**

Dr Joan Borysenko: The Mystic Heart: The Neuroscience and Experience of the 'Ecstatic Spectrum'

Book Joan at www.scientificandmedical.net/webinars

• **Thursday, 4 November, 7.30-8.45pm**

Federico Faggin film and panel:

The Four Lives of Federico Faggin

• **Friday-Sunday, 5-7 November**

Beyond The Brain 2021 online:

Further Reaches of Consciousness Research

Book Federico Faggin and BtB at 2021.beyondthebrain.org

Recent webinars - recordings now available!

These are all now available to view for [Network members](#).

- **Doug Matzke: Transcendent States from the Deep Reality of Quantum Bit Physics**
- **Lars Muhl: The Wisdom of the Broken Heart**
- **Book Review Briefing with Hilary Miflin: The Green Fuse**
- **Prof Chris Bache: Energetic Resonance and Fields of Consciousness**

Free access to our webinar library is just one of our member benefits. To learn more click [here](#).

► FEATURED PODCAST

Advaya Talks

Founded in 2015 by sisters Ruby and Christabel Reed, Advaya is a community platform that hosts events and retreats based on the principles of 'ecology, wellbeing, and spirituality', and is described as a place for 'alternative education and transformative experiences'.

Advaya Talks is their podcast collection of some of these presentations and two of the episodes in this series feature Beyond The Brain 2021 speakers. The first is David Luke speaking on [consciousness and psychedelics](#) and the second is Rupert Sheldrake, whose talk is titled '[The Mind Beyond the Brain](#)'. Find both talks and more [here](#).



► FEATURED SMN VIDEO



Matter and Consciousness
Dr Iain McGilchrist

In this talk from Beyond The Brain 2020 Iain argues that consciousness itself is not the problem; rather it is our customary left hemisphere mode of thinking, which leads us to misunderstand the fundamental nature of the world, and as a result run into predictable problems in trying to make sense of it. Watch the recording [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](#).
scientificandmedical.net**

► WE'D LOVE TO
HEAR FROM YOU...



We are excited to bring you *Towards a New Renaissance* on a regular basis and the response has been brilliant. We would also love to get your feedback and ideas on how we can make the newsletter even better and more relevant to you. Send us comments/suggestions on our contact form [HERE](#)

If you have been enjoying this monthly digest, would you also 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!

[Donate](#)

If you've enjoyed this **Beyond The Brain** conference edition of our newsletter then we think you will love the full event. Click the poster below for info and tickets:

A promotional poster for the 'Beyond The Brain Online 2021' event. The background is a dark purple with a starry, nebula-like pattern. At the top left is a geometric logo. Text includes 'The Scientific and Medical Network presents: 5 - 7 November'. The main title 'BEYOND THE BRAIN ONLINE 2021' is in large, bold, white and yellow letters. Below it, 'FURTHER REACHES OF CONSCIOUSNESS RESEARCH' is written in white. A list of speakers follows: Rupert Sheldrake, Etzel Cardeña, Caroline Watt, Marilyn Schlitz, Peter Fenwick, Bruce Greyson, Graham Hancock, David Lorimer, Diane Hennacy Powell, David Luke, Bruce Parry, Athena Potari, Natalie Dyer, Oliver Robinson, and Jessica Utts. At the bottom, the website 'www.beyondthebrain.org' is displayed. There are also circular images of a hand holding a glowing orb and a woman's profile with a glowing brain.

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