

Research Essay

Consciousness: The Organizing Principle of the Universe (Part 1)

Lorna Green*

Abstract

Consciousness has appeared as a term, and a problem, in modern science. Most scientists believe that it can be accommodated, and explained, by existing scientific principles. But I say that it cannot, that Consciousness points completely beyond present-day science to a whole new view of the Universe, where Consciousness, and not matter, or matter/energy, is the true basis for the Universe, and the right fundamental term, for science, all other disciplines as well, and for civilization itself. And this new term Consciousness, opens directly into the basic term of all religions, Spirit, as simply Infinite Consciousness. And so, for the first time in their long and bitter and antagonistic history, science and religion now share a common base.

Part 1 of this two-part article includes: Introduction; 1. The prevailing Universe picture; 2. The problem of Consciousness; 3. The problem with modern science; 4. The near-death experience, and what it really means; 5. Modern theories of Consciousness refuted; 6. New Copernican Revolution; 7. Where Did Science Miss It and Why? 8. The Consciousness Universe, the Consciousness Paradigm.

Keywords: Consciousness, God, Universe, true basis, organizing principle.

Introduction

Consciousness has appeared as term, and a problem, in modern science. Most scientists believe that it can be accommodated, and explained, by existing scientific principles. But I say it cannot, as many others will also say. That it points completely beyond present-day science, to a new view of the Universe, where Consciousness, and not matter, or matter/energy, is the true basis of the Universe, and the organizing principle, for science, all disciplines, and civilization itself.

In a nutshell, the “hard problem of Consciousness,” the mind/ body problem, the near-death experience, and a host of other problems as well, are so hard, that they cannot be solved by any present day scientific principles, and therefore call all scientific principles into question. When your axioms cannot explain the data, it is time to drop them, and find new and better first principles. Consciousness is to modern science, exactly what light was for classical physics: All of our basic assumptions about reality have to change.

I propose to re-conceptualize the relationships between Consciousness and matter, starting with our concepts of matter, so very many centuries in the making, and with it, our concept of Consciousness. And then, with Consciousness, re-conceptualize the Earth, and the scientific image of nature. I am, in effect, proposing a new Copernican revolution among our most basic

*Correspondence: Lorna Green, PhD, Taos, New Mexico. [http:// www.lornagreen.ca](http://www.lornagreen.ca) Email: lornagreen2802@gmail.com

Note: This article was first published in *Scientific God Journal* 9(5): pp. 356-368

terms. But we are a scientific Age, to make a new Copernican revolution in science is to make such a revolution everywhere.

And so, I go on to spell out what it means. For the Universe, Consciousness throughout; for the Earth, living conscious spiritual beings like Ourselves; for Ourselves, immortal eternal spiritual beings, and for Spirit, for who what and where Spirit is. And with them, a new metaphysical base for civilization itself, bringing us into balance with the Earth. And so, I begin with a radical rewrite of many of the basic concepts of modern science, in terms of Consciousness and I go on to sketch out the new metaphysics that follows.

Now, Consciousness has appeared in modern science in connection with the brain, with neurons in the brain. But it is not something tucked away inside our heads, it has radical implications for everything else as well. That goes far beyond the concerns of present day science.

I am proposing a new Copernican revolution in science, and with it a new conceptual framework, and a whole new metaphysical base for civilization itself. A new worldview based not on physics or particle physics, not on cosmology, the places where new worldviews generally come from, but from the Life Sciences.

The old paradigms have run their course, they have brought us to the brink of our own extinction, and now they are disintegrating all around us, they call for something new. I am proposing a simple shift among our most basic terms, matter and Consciousness, but in fact, a paradigm shift of epic proportions, with staggering implications for the way we think about Everything.

There are many major players in the field of Consciousness studies, who are moving in the same direction - Koch, Tononio, Chalmers, Nagel, Dyson, Penrose, Hameroff, Matloff, Nixon, Van Lommel. They are edging in the direction of universal Consciousness.

And so, two questions: Why can't we come to the understanding that Consciousness is universal? And what would it mean if we could? And so, what is holding us all up? Our minds are filled with false theories, and false assumptions, that are getting in the way. Ok, let's go for it!

How can we explain Consciousness in the material world? We cannot, not on any current concepts of "the material world." And so, what I am proposing to do, is to radically rewrite our concept of the material world.

Consciousness has appeared as a term, and a problem, in modern science, most scientists believe that it can be accommodated, and explained, by existing scientific principles.

But I say that it cannot, that Consciousness points completely beyond present science, to a whole new view of the Universe, where Consciousness and not matter, or matter/energy, is the true bases of the Universe, and the right fundamental term, for science, and all other disciplines as well, and for civilization itself. And this new view of the Universe makes both possible, and real, life after death.

And this new view of the Universe I am proposing, has a place for everyone, and a whole new understanding of human identity, our place in the Universe, and what we are all really here for.

And so, I am going to rewrite our concept of “the material world” in a way that can explain Consciousness, and with it, a new theory of both Consciousness and matter, and what it means for the whole question of life after death.

Consciousness, the New Principle: Rewriting the Scientific Image of Nature

Science, Consciousness, and the Universe, The True Meaning of the Near-Death Experience: A New Copernican Revolution

Give me a place to stand and I will move the world. - Archimedes

1. The prevailing Universe picture

The question, how can you explain Consciousness in the material world? The answer: You cannot, not on any prevailing concepts of the material world.

The prevailing Universe/Earth picture: The Earth has been evolving for four and a half billion years, beginning as a dead planet, and then gradually evolving life, by slow processes of transmutation and natural selection, beginning with simple forms, emerging into more and more complex plant and animal beings, the whole vibrant living interconnected array that the planet has been, until we arrived here and began doing the planet in.

Human beings emerged from this process of evolution, at the end of evolution, we are an animal like any other, born into one short life with death at the end, and that’s it.

And so, the picture of nature in the Life Sciences: The planet consists of innumerable material beings, and matter is the discreet, separate and disconnected, interacting mechanistically, pushed and pulled about by the purely physical forces, that function “blind.”

And most people, and most disciplines, subscribe to some form of Physicalism, Physical Realism or Deterministic Materialism. Matter, whatever it is, the hard stuff, is what is Real, and everything is some aspect of matter, to be explained in terms of material processes. Most of our problems, in both science and the modern world, owe to Physicalism, and so, I now propose to rewrite it.

There is no proof whatsoever for Physicalism, and the facts are now in the literature that decisively disprove it.

2. The problem of Consciousness

And now comes Consciousness. Consciousness appears only in Ourselves, and some of the higher animals when “matter reaches a certain state of complexity”, it is produced by neurons in the brain. But Consciousness is nothing “really Real”, it is simply a byproduct of brain activity of neural activity, it is the brain that is doing the work. As William James summed up this position (not his) the mind is to the brain what a shadow is to the runner, it runs beside him but never influences his stride.

And so, the great question of neuroscience: How do neurons in the brain produce Consciousness? So far, no one has been able to show how, all we have, at best---even if that---is dualism, correlation, parallelism. Two processes are running in parallel, a train of neural events, a train of Consciousness events, which of these events is the really “really real”, which one is the true causality of the other.

The faith of neuroscientists is that neural events are what is real, and they take great delight in telling people that what matters to them most, a god, freedom, an afterlife, creativity, are not real, they are not real, just illusions, simply wish fulfillments, the neurons are what is real. But no one has yet shown how neurons produce consciousness, and it can all in fact just be the other way around.

The Tucson conference, “Towards a Science of Consciousness,” has been meeting biannually for the past 20 years, with as yet, no Science of Consciousness even in sight. Christof Koch has been making valiant efforts to solve this problem, saying that he cannot see how consciousness can emerge from non-conscious beings. He has been travelling the country the last few years, lamenting the “scandalous fact” that as yet, we have no theory of Consciousness. I dare say that his own theories are part of the problem. In a talk last week, Christof insisted that Consciousness cannot and does not exist outside of matter.

So: The problem of Consciousness. My entire life is orchestrated by my Consciousness, Consciousness not a true causality? Ideas, an aspect of Consciousness, we think about them, we try to get them clear, we talk about them, we fight wars about them, not a true causality? On the prevailing picture of neuroscience, they cannot be.

And then, another question: If Consciousness does not have any real function for the brain, what is it doing there at all? Entertainment? And the same questions hold for pansychism. What is Consciousness doing there at all? Just going along for the ride, or a true causality in its own right?

And so, “the hard problem” of neuroscience, in my own words: How can neurons in the brain, physics and chemistry, pushed and pulled around by the purely physical forces, produce an idea, let alone a whole train of ideas all related by meaning and content? And then, who what and where is the “I” who sees them? I would say, at this point, they cannot, and that it could all be the other way around, that neural events are, as the title of the book by Roger Penrose suggests: “Shadows of the Mind,” and the field is open.

I propose that the hard problem of Consciousness is so hard, that it cannot be accommodated or explained by any existing scientific principles, it calls all of them into question, and it calls into question our concept of matter, nature, the material world, physical reality.

Consciousness is for modern science, what the paradoxes of light were for classical physics: All of our understanding of the physical world must change.

3. The problem with modern science

There are three major problems with modern science.

First, the problems of Consciousness. David Chalmers: Consciousness fits uneasily into our concept of nature, either we have to revise our concept of nature or our understanding of Consciousness. I say, it is time to rewrite our concept of the material world.

Modern science is already in deep trouble. In 2004, Roger Penrose published, “The Road to Reality,” an account of the whole of physics, all of its laws, theories, ideas, and at the end of 1,000 pages Roger concludes that in fact, science has missed it, has “failed to find the road to reality,” “and does not even know what physical reality really is.” Pretty serious stuff coming from such an eminent mathematician and physicist as Roger Penrose.

Now, where did physics miss it, what is the source of our failure to understand physical reality? It goes back to the dawn of science itself, but more recently, it really comes from Descartes, and so, I return to Descartes. Just over 300 years ago, Descartes laid the entire thought foundations for both science and the modern world, and with them mind/brain dualism and the problem of Consciousness, in a couple of nights, when he was travelling with the army, and found himself stranded in a foreign town, in a bare room, lit by a candle, with nothing to do but think.

And now comes Consciousness, and a third reason for rethinking science: The prevailing scientific image of nature as something “devoid of Consciousness,” it is enabling the destruction of the Earth. And we all have a vested interest in keeping this image in place, when you intend to ravage the planet, and turn it into consumer goods, first pretend it has no Consciousness, that way you don’t need to have a conscious about it. This scientific image of nature, is driving the destruction of the Earth and driving us all insane, it has brought us to the brink of our own destruction, and it needs to change. And given Roger’s conclusion, that physics has missed it, there is the best of reasons to rethink it.

Deeply embedded in the modern world, and modern science, is Descartes dualism. Descartes classified the whole of Reality into two basic principles, Mind and Matter, God is pure Mind, human beings are composed of mind and matter, and the Earth is matter. According to Descartes, only human beings on Earth have Consciousness, everything else is matter, and matter is simply “the weighable, the measurable, the extended in space and time, utterly devoid of inner life, feeling, thought, emotion.”

There is something about us that does not like dualism, and ever since Descartes formulated mind/brain dualism, scientists have been trying to get rid of it, by somehow “reducing” mind to matter, by “reducing” consciousness to the brain, as a byproduct of brain activity. This has not worked.

Now we are in the position of Copernicus. Remember Copernicus? Copernicus was making his calculations on his belief that the earth was the center of the universe, until his calculations became so unwieldy, he decided to try it all the other way around, to put the sun at the center, and Lo! All of his data fell neatly into place.

For the last 20 years the Tucson conference has not been able to do this. The question of the Tucson conference is: How does matter give rise to ideas, emotions, and experience? My answer is simple: It doesn’t, it is all somehow the other way around, and to stand modern science on its head and to take a look at our basic premises.

The faith of neuroscience is based on three assumptions:

- a. That Consciousness arises only at the end of evolution, in our self and some of the higher animals, when matter, attains “a certain state of complexity,”
- b. That it is produced by neurons in the brain,
- c. The deepest assumption of all, that Consciousness is something produced by matter, that matter is “first in the universe, Consciousness is second.”

These are assumptions, and have been held so tightly, and for so long, that they seem like “facts.” John Searle, with utmost confidence and not a shred of evidence, at the 2006 Tucson conference: “The neurons produce Consciousness.” Hey, everyone knows that (everyone knows that god doesn’t like sex, everyone knows that).

The neurons produce Consciousness. This seems obvious, but is in fact an assumption, and these three assumptions underpin the whole of modern science and the modern world, and it is the failure to give them up, that we have as yet no true science of Consciousness. And this prevailing faith, is holding us back from the recognition of universal Consciousness. They are assumptions, they are in fact false theories, and in the modern world, they can be decisively tested and refuted.

And now, follow me if you dare.

4. The near-death experience, and what it really means

There is a time bomb ticking away in the heart of modern science that will explode the whole way we look at Reality. I am referring to the near-death experience. This experience and what it really means for our view of the Universe is well described in a book called *Earth Age: A New Vision of God the Human and the Earth*, published in 1994. And now, this experience is being most recently described in mainstream science by Pim van Lommel (Lancet 2001) and now his book, “*Consciousness Beyond Life: The Science of the Near-Death Experience*,” (2011).

Most scientists ignore his findings, or claim it can be “explained in other ways.” They need to read Chris Carter’s, “*Science and the Near-Death Experience*,” (2010), in which he examines all of the “other ways,” and shows that they are all untenable, and that the simplest explanation of the near-death experience and what is really real, is that the patient was really out of his body.

And now, in view of the monumental significance of the near-death experience for science itself, a massive study is now underway in the UK, Canada and America, to try to answer this question, was the patient really out of his body?

Pim van Lommel and Chris Carter are exploring the science of the near-death experience, I am exploring its metaphysics.

Experiments are places where theories confront facts. Neuroscience is a field in which decisive experiments are few and far between, but the near-death experience is one of them, as decisive for our times as Newton’s Light experiment was for his.

In Newton’s’ day there was a controversy about whether light was composed of colors. Newton made a simple demonstration, he held up a prism, and shone a beam of light through it, and it

broke up into all the colors of the rainbow. For all who saw it, this experiment was the proof they needed. But many scientists were not present at the demonstration, they had their egos all tied up with false theories of light, and did not want them disproved.

This is true of our own times, only much worse, many researchers will not look at the evidence, because grants and reputations are riding on false theories. When you want to understand why so many minds these days are so vigorously given over to the defense of indefensible false materialistic theories, check out their funding sources. The system has a vested interest in a dead Earth, and a dead world.

I claim that the near-death experience is the “experimentum crucis” for both science and the modern world.

Let me remind you of the facts, a core experience repeated many times on cardiac wards—a repeatable experiment if you will.

The body in the bed is brain dead, eeg flat, but the patient, pure Consciousness is alive and well, hovering near the ceiling, watching the doctors working over his body below.

He is able to read dials he could not have seen from the bed, sometimes seeing events in the corridor outside the room, and at some point, he is “revived,” and wakes up in the bed again. He is able to tell the doctors everything he saw, all observations subsequently confirmed by the doctors, evidence as good as it gets, that the patient was really out of his body. In one such episode the patient saw a ball point pen roll under the radiator that even the doctors had not seen.

Now, what is so remarkable about this fact of neuroscience?

a. The patient, Consciousness, is completely separable from the body, and therefore cannot simply be a byproduct of neural activity. And so, to answer Koch, Consciousness can, and does, exist outside the body. And the question is: What does this mean? And what follows?

b. The patient is at the ceiling, able to see without eyes, hear without ears, and think and remember without a brain.

c. And so, Consciousness is completely separable from the brain, and all our true powers and sense of self are in it, even those that are bound to the sense organs. They belong to Consciousness, and not to the body in the bed.

d. The near-death experience is a crucial experiment for neuroscience, and it is the key to disentangling the relationships between Consciousness and matter.

It tests and refutes most modern theories of Consciousness, and most theories of matter, past and present.

It is the death knell for every form of materialism, scientific or otherwise, and it refutes every form of physicalism. There is not just one thing in the Universe, matter, but there are two, Consciousness and matter.

e. There is not a single scientific principle that can explain the near-death experience. And so, the near-death experience tests and refutes not this or that theory in science, but the whole of science

itself, all of its explanatory principles, and our very understanding of causality. The near-death experience is really a threshold into deeper knowing, and true understanding of the nature of the Universe.

It therefore refutes every theory of Consciousness based on neurons. And so, just what are the neurons really up to?

f. And so, Consciousness is not something produced by matter, but something real in its own right, and now that we know this, we can have a science of Consciousness, as we could not have a science of shadows.

g. And then the relationship of Consciousness to the body, Consciousness would appear to be not just some helpless “ghost in the machine,” (Gilbert Ryle) but would appear to be the organizing principle of our bodies and is the source of all our true powers.

h. The near-death experience points the way to a whole new theory of the self, and of course, it opens the possibility of life after death, because it is a wedge between Consciousness and matter. It requires a rewrite of the material world, and our whole understanding of Reality.

5. Modern theories of Consciousness refuted

a. Christof Koch: For there to be Consciousness, there must be neurons firing, well not so.

b. Francis Crick: With his “astonishing hypothesis,” typical of many other identity theorists as well: The mind is the brain. Well, it isn’t, and there is a pretty good description of it in Descartes’ *“Meditations.”*

c. Steven Pinker: The mind is simply the computational organs of the brain. Well, it isn’t.

d. Edelman and Tononi: To explain the mind is simply to give its neural correlates. Well, not so.

e. John Searle: With utmost confidence and not a shred of evidence: The neurons produce Consciousness, the essential belief of most of the major players in this field, Bernard Baars, Anthony Freeman, David Chalmers and a host of other thinkers, well the neurons are not producing Consciousness.

f. Finally, the Penrose/Hammeroff model for explaining Consciousness, attracting great interest because of its quasi—quantum base. Rogers’s theory falls by his own axe, he claims that “physics has missed it, has failed to find not the road to reality, and does not even know what physical reality really is.”

But as radical as Roger Penrose is, he is unable to escape from some basic assumptions about the primacy of matter. When he gives his own theory of Consciousness, he begins with “Consciousness is out there, in physical reality, just like everything else.” But I say: If we do not know what physical reality really is, physical reality can just as well be “out there” in Consciousness, and virtually all models for explaining Consciousness, are already expressions of Consciousness.

And so, where lies the road to Reality? It lies through Consciousness.

A passage in scripture, Jesus: Straight is the gate, and narrow that leads to life, and few there are who find it. The near-death experience is that straight gate, between a world of Appearances and false theories based on them, and the deepest reality and the truth of the Universe. It is time to open up the flaps of our Cartesian box, and move into the greater, wider and bigger picture of things, and we Ourselves, are the keys to the truth of the Universe.

6. New Copernican Revolution

I propose in the spirit of Copernicus that we need to shift our unifying principle for everything from matter to consciousness, and to make Consciousness our most basic term and our fundamental principle. Only in this way can we solve mind brain dualism, and the problem of Consciousness. And so, I am proposing a new Copernican revolution among our basic terms. Science is trying to make science the judge of Consciousness, but in fact, Consciousness is the judge of science, and calls all of our explanatory principles into question. The near-death experience is really the key to the deeper mysteries of the Universe.

My thesis in a nutshell: Consciousness is “first and fundamental” in the universe. It is there from the very “Beginning,” everything has it, and all of the true causalities, are in it, they belong to Consciousness, and not matter.

And so, to answer the question of Roger Penrose: What then is matter, physical reality? All matter is an expression of Consciousness, even the least little bit of matter contains Consciousness, and is in fact an expression of Consciousness. All energy contains Consciousness, this idea alone will change our world forever. And so, to answer Roger’s question: What is physical reality? Physical reality is an expression of Consciousness.

And so: A New Universe: Awake, aware, creative, intelligent throughout, Enspirited throughout.

A New Earth: Not matter and mechanics, not board feet, not commodities and resources, awake, aware, living, vital conscious beings, like Ourselves full of Mystery and full of Magic.

The trees, the animals, as conscious as we are, not our Consciousness, but Consciousness nevertheless. And the stars? Not just burning lumps of matter, but magnificent spiritual beings in physical expression, the reason we all love them so much. And the more we can see our likeness to every other being the harder it will to be to do them all in.

And we Ourselves, also conscious beings in physical expression.

And so, pansychism. There are two forms of pansychism, in the weak, Consciousness is in everything, but just “going along for the ride,” not a true causality in its own right. In the strong form, Consciousness is in fact not just in everything, but the active principal everywhere. All the true causalities belong to Consciousness. But I would go even further than this, and claim that Consciousness precedes every form of matter. That it is the ultimate organizing principle of the Universe, and of all realities.

And so, here is a very different understanding of “the material world.” The material world is an expression of Consciousness. Every being on the planet has Consciousness, they are all living conscious spiritual beings, like our self. In fact, a continuum of many forms of Consciousness, of which our own is one, interconnected, interrelated, intersubjective, open and open-ended, Oneness and One, let the barriers we have placed between the Earth and ourselves go down.

And here is a new scientific image of nature. Nature consists of conscious living beings like ourselves, and in fact, consists of interacting systems of Consciousness, Consciousness within Consciousness within Consciousness, all the way down, at all levels and depths. And then what? Below matter is Consciousness.

And so, here is a single and simple term, this bold brave and beautiful new principle, Consciousness, a new unifying principle, an animating principle, Consciousness is the missing piece of the puzzle, and the true explanatory principle, and I predict that every intractable human problem, in science and in civilization will go down like a line of dominos before it. In a nutshell, the Universe, the Earth, and we Ourselves, are not simply mechanics, matter and mechanism, but Enspirited throughout.

Plato thought that the metaphysicians should be like a good butcher, and carve the bird of existence at the joints. The matter/Consciousness joint is surely one of them, and the major one. There is an Asymmetry in the modern world, matter and mechanism/Consciousness, and the whole world has come down on the wrong side of it. Matter and mechanism cannot explain Consciousness, but Consciousness can accommodate, contain and explain matter and mechanism, in a higher, wider and richer truth of things, a whole new synthesis.

Modern science is to the Truth of things, as Euclidean geometry is to non-Euclidean geometry, a partial version of things, a partial truth, being made into the whole truth.

Present day science has missed it, and has failed to find the road to reality, because it has taken “the hard stuff,” the dense matter all around us, to be what is “really Real,” and built a civilization on this deep conviction. But in truth, how could this hard stuff, passing in and out of existence, be anything Real?

Matter, in truth, is an Appearance of something much more Real, Consciousness. Consciousness is not some helpless, wispy, “ghost in the machine,” but the very organizing principle of matter, the basic organizing principle of all realities. By analogy it resembles a machine that human beings have made, every machine we make is an embodiment of an idea, every high rise that goes up embodies an idea.

Ideas are not some ephemeral little things, birds in the aviary, or tracks in a cloud chamber. Their realities underpin the whole of our existence. We live our lives in the shadows of ideas, and as William James but it: The mind stabilizes the unstable brain. Ideas are organizing principles of the whole, of our lives, of our world, and I daresay, of the Universe itself.

Simone Weil, standing in a forest of birch trees: Imagine feeling all this “for mere matter.” Well, because it isn’t mere matter, we are in the presence of living conscious spiritual beings like ourselves, that open into Magic, and Mystery, and beyond both, into what the Native people called the Great Mystery.

The shamans of ancient Mexico say that all that keeps us in “the rational illusion” is our incessant talk, and when not talking, the inner dialogue. And they say: Get your head into magic, and keep it there.

7. Where Did Science Miss It and Why?

Where did science miss it? Where did science fail to find the road to reality?

We missed it with Descartes, with Descartes concept of matter, as something devoid of mind, or Consciousness. What Descartes did, was to take our ordinary sense of Reality, that we are minds in bodies perceiving things, and elevate it to the status of a basic metaphysics, and world view: There are two kinds of things in the Universe, two basic “Substances,” Matter and Mind, human beings alone have Mind, everything else is Matter.

Science proceeds on the bases of the negligible, on what it can leave out of its theories. What Descartes did was to dismiss, as negligible, the very animating principle of the Universe, and of matter, no wonder science has missed it, has failed to find the road to reality. I am simply restoring to the Earth, nature, and matter, this animating principle, Consciousness, and with it replacing the hither to useful, but ultimately false, metaphysics of Descartes, with a new metaphysics. There are not two principles, there is only one, Consciousness.

And in fact, science has missed it from the very beginning, because it has misunderstood what the senses are giving us as “real.” Heraclitus: Eyes and ears are poor witnesses for those that do not understand their language. Jesus: Seeing, they see not; hearing, they hear not.

The senses give us “things,” the hard stuff. But the senses are “lovely liars.” The trees, the animals, automata (Hobbes)? Cleverly wired machines (Descartes)? They are conscious spiritual beings like Ourselves, and so with this new way of looking at things, we extend the domain of perception in new ways, and with it, a new Universe picture.

You cannot know me, by weighing and measuring my physical body, and every other being is constructed exactly as we are, a living conscious spiritual being like Ourselves, in physical expression. The belief that matter, the hard stuff, is what is “really real” is the greatest of all illusions, and the source of every other illusion as well.

There is no matter in Descartes sense of it, or Aristotle and Plato’s sense of it, something devoid of Consciousness, and therefore to be held in contempt. All matter, even the least little bit of matter, contains consciousness, and is an expression of Consciousness.

And so, we rewrite Plato’s theory of Forms, and the Form/Matter distinction of Aristotle, and St. Thomas Aquinas. And so, we lay the groundwork, for a new understanding of the Earth, that may enable us to honor and respect her reality, and to begin to get both the Earth and our self, right.

Science has missed it, because it has taken “the hard stuff,” the matter all around us, to be what is really real, whereas in fact, matter is an appearance of something more real, Consciousness, an expression of Consciousness. And so, a young physicist in a panel discussion at the Perimeter

Institute: We gather data and we make theories, but we have no assurance that we are seeing what is really there. Consciousness is what is really there, and it never shows up under the scalpel, and what is essential about every being is Consciousness.

The weighable and measurable aspects of Reality are actually its most surface and superficial aspects. Science has been taking these aspects to be essential, but they are actually an Appearance of something much more real, Consciousness. Matter is really a thin veneer over something more real, Consciousness. And this is the reason that from the very dawn of science, we have missed the truth of the Universe.

8. The Consciousness Universe, the Consciousness Paradigm

Here are two very different Universe pictures. The Cartesian Universe consists of things, interacting mechanistically, pushed and pulled about by the purely physical forces, automata, cleverly wired machines, that function blind.

I am proposing a new paradigm, and a new Universe picture, the Consciousness Universe. This Universe is organized into Selves, and you cannot get Selves from things, they have to be there from the start. The Universe consists of Selves, with a sense of self, and subjectivity, bedrock in the chain of causalities, in Ourselves, organized and focused about an “I,” what religion has always referred to as our spirit. We are aware, awake, intelligent throughout, creative and Enspirited throughout, who function according to intent, plan and purpose, and final causality (Aristotle).

And with Self, comes causalities not even in present day Science, self-development, self-expression, self-fulfillment.

Many physicists believe that within the Universe is one simple idea. I propose that it is the idea of self, let there be infinite selves of all kinds and descriptions, small and great, each intent on its own developments and self-fulfillment, in a way that is compatible with the same intent in everything else.

I am proposing that this Universe has a place for Ideas, Ideas are a causality, organizing principles of Consciousness, of our lives, of our world. Also, there in the Universe, organizing principles of any and all consciousness? Both Einstein and Gödel thought so, as did the great idealists, Plato, Aristotle, and Hegel.

Love is also a causality, the well spring of action, and that at which we aim, the very Source of All and Everything.

Subjectivity is the ultimate causality, bedrock in the chain of causality, the deepest mystery of the entire Universe, knowable only in Ourselves, through direct experience, but with something like it in every other being as well.

And in this new Universe picture, intent, plan and purpose, final causality, are everywhere.

And so, Tom Berry: The laws of the universe are subjectivity, differentiation, and communion.

The great idealists had the term Ideas, but without the field properties of Consciousness, science has the field properties of energy, but without the intelligence of ideas. This new view I am proposing is their reconciliation. And there are more than ideas or energy, because Consciousness is more.

And so, I replace the great mathematical vision of nature, a view open mainly to scientists, with a mystical view, open to all.

(Continued on Part 2)