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COMMENTS WELCOME

OPEN LETTER TO

DR. NORMAN DOIDGE

AUTHOR OF

THE BRAIN THAT CHANGES ITSELF

FROM PARK TETER (for bio see Appendix A)

Dear Dr. Doidge,

While reading *The Brain that Changes Itself*, I circled on page 232 the phrase “neuronal networks” then drew a line to the left margin where I wrote a question: “a symbol of mental and social networks?”

At that moment my grandson, K, aged 26 months, crossed the room to hand me part of the meat of a walnut. I did not know where he got the nut fragment but I could not help but recognize it as a symbol. A walnut’s contours neatly resembled the contours of the human brain. In fact, a walnut shares at least three features with the brain. Both are encased in a hard shell, both feature curvaceous lobes, and both have two hemispheres.

There was another similarity in this event. The paragraph in which I circled “neuronal networks” was about a “Mr. L” whose psyche linked the ideas of separation and death because of the loss of his mother at age 26 months – the same age as K when he placed in my hand the fragment of a nutty model of the human brain.

The timing of K’s brain-like gift to coincide with my question about “neuronal networks” constitutes a fifth coincidence.

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Jung called such coincidences “synchronicity.” He coined the term in an essay entitled “Synchronicity: an Acausal Connecting Principle.” But it makes no sense to call a natural phenomenon “without cause” if its cause can be identified.

Science historian (and novelist) Arthur Koestler, in *Janus*, predicted that an explanation of how meaningful coincidences are produced “must necessarily involve an even more radical break with our traditional categories of reasoning than the pronouncements of Einstein, Heisenberg, or Feynman.”ⁱ

That “radical break” is presented in three works I have published at TheNextCivilization.com.

In *The Revolution of the Species*, *The Personal Universe*, and *The Adventure* I demonstrate how meaningful coincidences are produced. How, for example, my 26-month-old grandson chose to hand me a brain-like walnut fragment at the very moment I asked if neuronal networks are symbols of mental and social networks.

In a universe of infinite phenomena there is no quantity of coincidences that can disprove or prove the chance hypothesis. But such characteristics of coincidences as their recurrence under recurring conditions, their responsiveness to induced mental states, the interconnections among coincidences, the overdetermination of meanings in coincidences, and – above all – the EXQUISITE APPROPRIATENESS of coincidences, make a mockery of the chance hypothesis.

A supernatural explanation of coincidences deserves the same response that Laplace gave to Napoleon’s question about God. “I don’t need that hypothesis.”

We can explain how meaningful coincidences are produced by borrowing principles of causality from dreams. In particular, we can borrow from dreams what Freud called “overdetermination.” Just as a single dream image can combine more than one idea, or a single idea can be expressed in more than one image, so a single physical fact can combine the ideas of more than one person. Thus the overdetermined walnut transfer combined in a single event the different experiences of K, Mr. L, me, and readers of these words.

The causality of coincidences requires more data and explanation than I can supply in this letter/essay. The most succinct explanation is provided in chapters 2 to 4 of *The Adventure*. This letter/essay summarizes these published ideas. It also reports some never published ideas that I am discovering as I write.

With this letter/essay I hope to interest you in a paradigm that solves some of the puzzles of current neurology. Among other questions raised in your powerful book is one noted in the following paragraph (p. 214):

“But now we can see that our “immaterial” thoughts too have a physical signature, and we cannot be sure that thought won’t someday be explained in physical terms. While we have yet to understand exactly *how* thoughts actually change brain structure, it is now clear that they do, and the firm line that Descartes drew between mind and brain is

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increasingly a dotted line.”

We can now understand “exactly *how*” thoughts change brains. Just as a dreamer projects thoughts into a dream world, so an observer projects facts into the physical world. Facts like walnuts and neurons.

In other words, we can henceforth recognize that physical phenomena can be explained in terms of thought. That is precisely the reverse of the expectation that thought can be explained in terms of matter, an expectation implicit in “someday,” and not “yet.”

Expectations may prove self-fulfilling. As, for example, a placebo expected to relieve a symptom may prove self-fulfilling.

Scientists’ expectations may influence the results of experiments. Expectations of the experimenter and his or her peers may tend to produce results that confirm an established paradigm. As Thomas Kuhn explains in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, “normal science” solves puzzles posed by established paradigms. Anomalies that do not fit the established paradigm may be ignored until they accumulate beyond expectation and produce a crisis whose outcome is a new paradigm. Thus, for example, accumulating anomalies in brain research have led beyond determinist localizationism to plasticity.

Meaningful coincidences are also anomalies that demand a new paradigm.

In the paradigm of the “projective universe,” the act of observation and the act of creation are the same act.

This identity of observation and creation is commonplace in dreams. A dreamer can observe a walnut only while he is creating the walnut.

In the projective universe, an observer can only observe a brain while he is creating the brain.

When an observer/creator stops creating/observing, whatever he created can be stored in memories. As a computer stores in a memory bank ideas removed from a computer screen, so societies store in memories physical facts removed from observability.

Some remembered thoughts are instantaneously accessible, so instantaneous that they do not yet seem to be memories. Thus I can remember these letters virtually as I type these letters. Thus the present is continuously becoming past, and it is therefore memorable. Data such as spelling and grammar are also remembered as my fingers tap this keyboard.

Thus the projective universe is a memory bank from which objects appear as they are recalled, and disappear as they are dismissed.

(For a similar world view in Hopi thought, see Whorf, Benjamin Lee, “An American Indian Model of the Universe,” in *Language Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*, The M.I.T Press (Cambridge, MA, 1956) pp. 57-64.)

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While occurring memories are instantly accessible, other memories are as inaccessible as the data filed in a black hole.

The black hole is a symbol of the unconscious of contemporary scientists. When that dreamlike symbol is interpreted, what is hidden in the unconscious of scientists will be accessible. Chapter 10 of *The Adventure* interprets black holes and the Big Bang as collective dreams.

Chapter 11 interprets AIDS and Alzheimer's epidemics as collective dreams. Here are two brief excerpts from Chapter 11 that hint at its findings.

"Our unconscious is sending us a nightmare [AIDS] epidemic that destroys the healthy defense mechanisms of our bodies in a desperate effort to destroy the unhealthy defense mechanisms of our minds."

"The progressive loss of mental capacities in the Alzheimer's epidemic is a manifestation of the progressive loss of mental capacities in modern civilization. Our demented civilization is progressively losing its mental capacity to recognize meaning. This progressive loss of meaning begins with scientific neglect of the data of meaning in physical facts and progresses to the general incoherence of a supposedly meaningless physical universe."

Next I must interpret as a collective dream Parkinson's disease. I was diagnosed as a Parkinson patient in September 2005.

Now I have an urgent motive to "understand exactly *how* thoughts actually change brain structure." I must discover what thoughts can change the brain structure wrought by Parkinson's Disease.

Whatever I discover may have benefits for others afflicted with the same Parkinson problem. It may lead beyond the illness to discovery of social and cultural problems symbolized by aspects of Parkinson's. I have my work cut out for me. Indeed, PARKinson's has my name on it.

By an odd coincidence the illness shares its name with a principle of economics. A British economist named Parkinson discovered Parkinson's Law: "Work expands to fill the time available."

My work keeps expanding. How much time is available?

By making myself a guinea pig I hope to discover the kind of healing described in your paragraph about L which I was marking when K handed me a piece of walnut. When L became conscious of the source – his mother's death – of his association of separation with death, "he could unlearn it." He could recognize and let go of his crippling unconscious memory of childhood trauma. The uncovering of his unconscious memory of childhood trauma proved therapeutic. He stopped associating separation with death.

I don't yet know what I must "unlearn" to heal Parkinson's. I still don't know what is unconscious in myself that cries out for recognition. But I expect it to be overdetermined, created

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by both collective and personal unconscious needs/opportunities. I envisage a therapy that interprets patients' physical "realities", including brains, as if they are dream symbols. And so I am now asking what social and mental meanings are expressed in neural networks.

I have a number of practical questions regarding the development of therapies appropriate to the projective paradigm. Such therapies would include the interpretation of current events (*e.g.* 9/11, AIDS, economic recession) as collective dreams. The interpretation of personal events would provide clues to the meanings of overdetermined public events – and vice versa.

I am writing this open letter in the hope that some who read it will actively pursue the principles of causality that govern the projective universe, and apply those principles to the interpretation of "realities" as if they are dreamed. As Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* developed the psychoanalysis of individuals, so future science will psychoanalyze the universe. And will apply that psychoanalysis to develop a psychotherapy of the projective universe. And will recognize that the universe is psychogenic. And will ask not only what happens when atoms split, but why we have discovered/created splitting atoms.

Thus such natural phenomena as global warming, and such historical phenomena as Hiroshima, will be interpreted symbolically to uncover the unconscious forces they express. Journalists will routinely report the news from the unconscious, asking, for example, the meanings of the flooding of New Orleans or the election of an Afro-American president of the United States.

Such a revolution of consciousness will require organized work. For example, universities could establish departments of Reality Interpretation. International conferences could foster exchanges of meanings. Academies of science could offer grants for research. Nobel Prizes could be awarded to discoverers of meanings.

But the interpretation of realities will not be specialized. The study and the teaching of reality-interpretation will permeate all of the arts and humanities as well as sciences and engineering.

Everyday life will take for granted that events have meanings, just as everyday life assumes gravity.

One does not have to be a scientist to make use of the interpretation of realities.

In fact, elementary schools will teach reality-interpretation along with reading, writing and arithmetic.

And solitary souls may in their solitudes discover meanings not yet known to the world.

And so I seek meanings in PARKinson's Disease. And so I welcome insights of anyone.

I have scarcely begun the research, but I already have some clues to the meanings of Parkinson's. Phrases keep popping into my mind that are extreme in several ways: involuntary, unexpected, meaningless, brief, random, incomplete, isolated, unconnected, with no related thought before or after, devoid of associations, and instantly forgotten (unless immediately copied).

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I don't yet know if such experiences are commonplace, or rare, or unique, but I know they are new to me. As recently as a year ago I was not pestered by such isolated phrases.

Here is a sample of isolated phrases selected solely by the handiness of pen and paper at the instant when they popped unsought into my head and before they could rush into oblivion:

- The question on your left.
- There aren't too many of us.
- No piggy back.
- It was horrible.
- Didn't have any front teeth.
- Pass the paper please.
- What difference does it make?
- You know what a stretch that is.
- The thing you've got to get in touch with.

Could these phrases be more “scatter-brained?”

I suppose some connection could be could be imposed on this combination of phrases by using them as an inkblot test, or a writing exercise, or a parlor game, but I can't see how the freest of free association could reveal in the combination an intelligent source.

I did consider one possible connection of these phrases. I imagined them as snatches overheard from some kind of instruction preparing one or more persons for some kind of enterprise. But attributing such scattered phrases to some kind of enterprise was so far fetched that I dismissed the idea.

However, as I just now retyped the preceding paragraph I thrice made a Freudian slip, omitting the word “of” so that the paragraph twice spoke of “some kind enterprise” and once spoke of “some kind instruction” Indeed! Whether or not the phrases have meaning, the thrice repeated Freudian slip had a very definite meaning. A meaning to heed. A plea for kindness. A therapeutic admonition. And a partial answer to the question I had just posed.

The scatter-brain character of the phrases fits with neurologists' tracing of Parkinsonian dementia to loss of the neural transmitter dopamine that enables neurons to connect with neurons. Indeed, these phrases are so disconnected that their consistent meaninglessness appears to mean that physical facts – such as neurons – can have no meaning.

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That apparent lack of meaning has meaning. Indeed, the consistently meaningless character of these phrases may represent the unconscious “shadow,” the nagging negation, of my unconventional conviction that in the physical world all matter is made of meaning. Thus my unconscious shadow represents conventional beliefs in our society, and represents the beliefs of current scientific peer review, beliefs that my own unconscious apparently has not yet entirely abandoned.

My belief that physical facts can have meaning can also generate physical facts that support the opposite belief – belief that physical facts are meaningless. As Freud observed regarding dream interpretation, “almost invariably we find, along with a train of thought, its contradictory counterpart, connected with it by the association of contrast.”ⁱⁱⁱ Thus the data of meaninglessness can support by contrast the hypothesis of meaning.

If a hypothesis can be supported both by confirming data and by contrasting data, then the hypothesis can not be tested. The usefulness of Freud’s “association by contrast” is that it removes an objection that might dismiss a hypothesis because of contrasting data. With contrasting data permitted, interpretation of the data is less limited. And all the other ways of interpreting the meanings of physical facts – such as exquisite appropriateness – can be applied.

The absurdity of the random phrases pestering me also points to the mischief of the archetype of the Joker.

But the joke is on the Joker. By repeating a huge quantity of the phrases, and repeating the total disconnectedness of every one of the phrases, my unconscious Joker, in spite of itself, presents totally consistent evidence that these apparently meaningless data are made of meaning.

Perhaps this interpretation of the phrases is the most important: the disconnectedness of the phrases is a mirror of the absurdity of “scientific” explanations disconnected from meaning.

And the disconnectedness of neurons afflicted with Parkinson’s disease may be a mirror of the disconnectedness of scientists who see no meanings in physical facts.

Thus, the universe of meaningless atoms and genes and neurons and whatchamallits is as much gibberish as “The question on your left” or “pass the paper please.”

The failure of conventional science to see the meanings of physical facts is a collective dementia. I am exploring a personal dementia in search of clues to the collective dementia. What could be the collective meanings of PARKinson’s Disease?

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A few days ago I wrote this poem:

The dog has lost its bone
But cannot lose its fleas.

The brain has lost its mind
But can't lose its disease.

I am playing with possible personal and collective symbolism in the breakup of “neural networks,” a phrase I circled and then connected in the margin to “mental and social networks.” The instant my pen traced those words my 26-month grandson handed me some meat from a dissected walnut whose curved contours, hard shell, and twin hemispheres mimic features of the brain.

My first reaction to meaningless phrases was fear of encroaching dementia. But I began to look for some meaning in emphatically meaningless words.

What is the meaning of the meaningless?

Is it the meaninglessness of sciences that never ask – let alone find – meanings in physical phenomena?

Scientists ask the mass and velocity of physical facts but never ask the meanings of physical facts. But the data of meanings in physical facts are data that are irrefutable. By picturing nature as having mass and velocity but not having meaning, orthodox science has fabricated a universe so grossly wrong as to be grotesque. Not only grotesque. Terrifying.

Indeed, the myth of a meaningless physical universe is a source of the terror of terrorism that holds our civilization hostage. To end terrorism requires recognition that the source of our terror is not in our villains but in ourselves.

And one internal source creating the external terrorists who attack us is our own unconscious horror at the “scientific” myth of a meaningless universe. We create enemy suicide bombers to manifest our own suicidal despair.

In my personal life the new experience of totally disconnected – and therefore meaningless – phrases symbolizes the loss of connection between neurons. And the loss of neural transmitters symbolizes, in turn, the collective meaninglessness of any brain research that fails to see that the real transmitter connecting neurons with neurons is meaning.

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As I groped for the connection of my personal experience of meaninglessness and my collective experience of meaninglessness, an image came to mind. As a child fishing with my father I would cast a lure in every direction from our boat, hoping that somewhere in the lake a fish would seize my bait. Were my neurons casting bait into the opaque regions of the brain in hopes of hooking other neurons into connection?

That idea assuaged some of my fears of dementia. The phrases kept jumping at me, but I at least had a hypothesis that might explain the meaning of the meaningless.

In fact, if my unconscious sought only to display lack of meaning it could have produced phrases even more meaningless than those it chose. For example, it could have chosen:

Faint egg you thump wee saalam gregarious ford savoir tickle compute eight Jesus wrench Alice now oops

Or yet more meaningless: grtsope,ckodkekcd,lllldpppepepdlo

My bombardment with meaningless phrases has striking similarities to Americans' bombardment by the media. A breakdown of neural networks could be interpreted as symptoms of a breakdown of media networks. In fact, established media networks are being challenged by new Internet networks.

And the conscious Internet is an outward and visible sign of an Unconscious Internet.

Here is a sample, excerpted from *The Adventure*, of data from the Unconscious Internet network.

THE LAW OF GRAVITY

In the summer of 1994, during moments of despondency, I indulged in fantasies of suicide. I was never close to acting out these escape fantasies ... but my imagination did choose a specific method. I imagined jumping off a cliff a few miles from my mountain home, a cliff above Diamond Lake. Then, in August, my dearest friend accidentally fell to his death from a cliff above Diamond Lake.

Mark fell at about 2 p.m. In the morning before his fall, a new friend arrived at my cabin for a short hike. Her T-shirt displayed a diamond-shaped highway sign with this message:

CAUTION

Law of Gravity Strictly Enforced

The friend wearing that sign had a very unusual first name: "Nature."

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I had previously written, in the manuscript of my book *The Personal Universe*: "To protect the extremely useful [collective] hallucination of natural laws, extremely powerful sanctions enforce those laws.... Someone who challenges the law of gravity may break his neck."

Lest I doubt that we create and enforce the laws of nature, Nature appeared, shortly before the law of gravity executed my friend, wearing the warning: "law of gravity strictly enforced."

Mark's death and Nature's T-shirt emphatically confirmed what I had previously written: "We not only dream natural laws into existence, we dream into existence powerful penalties for those who challenge those laws."

The timely appearance of Nature's T-shirt not only affirmed this principle, it was an example of the type of coincidental data that compel recognition that we create nature.

And the death of my dearest friend was a personal message to me, a powerful reminder that I must not let the loneliness of my work tempt me with suicide, an appalling reminder that I must not give up my work because recognition that we create nature is, for the whole world, a matter of life and death.

There were many other coincidences involved in Mark's death. For example, in May of the previous year, Mark and I had skied to Diamond Lake. We ate lunch on a rock in the middle of the frozen lake. Because it had begun to rain, we huddled together under my poncho. I remarked that the red poncho would be a good marker for rescuers in the event of an accident. When Mark accidentally fell to his death above Diamond Lake, before his brother ran to find rescuers he marked the spot with Mark's red poncho.

Three years later beside another mountain lake, during a raging thunderstorm, I had lunch huddled with another friend under my red poncho. That was the day, I learned later, on which my former wife died in Tehran.

These data are a combination of coincidences:

1. **Location:** My Diamond Lake suicide fantasy, then Mark's fatal fall above Diamond Lake;
2. **T-shirt / Timing:** Warning about gravity on same day that gravity killed Mark;
3. **T-shirt / Words:** Repetition of my previously written words about enforcement of law of gravity;
4. **Name:** Message from Nature about nature's laws;
5. **Red Poncho:** Previous remark about accident-marker, then brother's use as accident-marker;
6. **Red Poncho:** Location of previous remark at Diamond Lake, the location of later accident;
7. **Red Poncho:** On day of wife's death, again huddled with friend under poncho by mountain lake.
8. **Combination:** Each of these seven data, in itself, poses a scientific puzzle. Another fact must be added to this list. The COMBINATION of seven coincidences is an eighth coincidence.

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There are many similar data reported in *The Adventure*, *The Revolution of the Species*, and *The Personal Universe*, all published at TheNextCivilization.com.

Such data require the scientific revolution of the paradigm of the projective universe.

Once the puzzle of coincidences is solved with this paradigm, non-coincidences can be as meaningful as coincidences. One of the functions of coincidences is to underline the importance of a message. But the most important function of coincidences is to pose a puzzle that can not be explained by established paradigms. In the projective universe, as in dream worlds, all matter is made of meaning. Coincidences and non-coincidences, like the data of dreams, can be interpreted.

The wonderful achievements of science and the tragic flaw of science both together call us to a scientific revolution, “an even more radical break with our traditional categories of reasoning than the pronunciamientos of Einstein, Heisenberg, or Feynman.”ⁱⁱⁱ

That radical break will not abandon science. It will make science more scientific. Future science will examine the data of meaning with the same passionate honesty that science now examines the data of mass and velocity.

Future science will recognize that the universe is psychogenic.

That is the new “mode of thinking” that will save humanity from “unparalleled catastrophe.”

DOIDGE AND MERZENICH ON TV

Yesterday (9-19-2008.) I got a phone call from Mark’s widow. “Jean” had suffered a stroke a year ago. To my regret I had lost touch with Jean for the last half year. I was glad to learn of her continuing recovery. And delighted by her reason for phoning me. She was listening to classical music and recalled how her late husband and I so greatly enjoyed listening to classical music together. So she phoned me.

Part of my Parkinson’s syndrome has been a loss of attraction to classical music, a loss that until recently I would have considered impossible. (As I write these words I fight back unexpected tears.) Thanks to Jean’s phone call I will now attempt a fresh start with music I always loved. And I will recognize that my writing is music to me.

I told Jean about *The Brain that Changes Itself*. She was fascinated. I have no doubt that she will quickly plunge into your powerful book. After describing your work and that of Dr. Merzenich I said goodbye and went downstairs and turned on the TV and there, on PBS, was Dr. Merzenich, soon followed by you.

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Thus a TV network and a personal network connected by coincidence. I could chronicle myriad similar connections, many of them more amazing, but could not resist connecting with Mirzenich and you.

Taken by itself, this coincidence might have been mere chance. But the remarkable coincidences surrounding Mark's death demolish the chance hypothesis. In *The Adventure* I report numerous other meaningful coincidences, including the following set of data, that can clarify the operation of an Unconscious Internet.

While I was moving books on a shelf in my carrel in the Princeton University library, I accidentally dislodged an international airletter. It fluttered to my feet like a blue butterfly. When I picked it up I found that it had been mailed to me several years earlier by my friend Terry O'Donnell, who then lived in Iran and now lived in Oregon. Later that day, at home, I looked for some information in a book I had not read for several years. When I opened the book, another blue airletter fell from its pages. It, too, fluttered to my feet like a blue butterfly. It, too, had been mailed from Iran by Terry.

I sent a postcard to Terry at his home in Oregon. "How's Terry?" was all it said. He replied by return mail that he was so sick he could scarcely leave his house, his illness was life-threatening, all his job prospects had collapsed, he did not have enough money to get through the next week, and he wondered if I could lend him \$100.

We have a physics problem. A problem of matter and motion. How were those two airletters moved?

Terry did not consciously say to himself: "I'm going to drop a couple of airletters at Park's feet." But there was some connection between his state of mind and the physical facts I observed.

We can never explain that connection if we assume that physical facts are external, objective, independent of our thoughts, and indifferent to our feelings. We can easily explain that connection when we recognize that we create physical reality in the same way that we create dream images.

I created those falling airletters in the same way that I create dream images. I created them unconsciously.

Terry, too, created those dreamlike facts in my physical world. He, too, created those facts unconsciously.

Although we were three thousand miles apart, and had no prior communication about falling airletters, we both unconsciously created the same physical reality.

Once my wife had a dream in which her aunt died. Several days later she received a letter from Iran informing her that her aunt had died.

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The dead aunt was put into my wife's dream world by the same mechanism that put falling airletters into my real world. My wife was connected to her family in Iran in the same way that I was connected to my friend in Oregon. Unconsciously connected.

Just as two neurons can connect across the minute gap of a synapse, can two people connect across a gap of thousands of miles? Are the neural networks in the brain symbols of an unconscious network in the universe? Did Terry tap into that Unconscious Internet with a search engine that found the two symbolic airletters? Did he then hit "send?" to drop those two blue butterflies at my feet? Was I then scanning my unconscious inbox?

The two of us, thousands of miles apart, with no prior communication about falling airletters, both created the physical falling airletters. In the same way, two cultures, thousands of miles apart, can both create all kinds of physical realities. All cultures, separately and together, can create universes.

Is the connection of neurons in the brain a symbol of the connection of physical facts in a universe? Is this "Connective Unconscious" at work in science? Do neurologists, like neurons, "wire together as they fire together?" Are the laws of nature the wirings of firing scientists? Is a loss of connection between neurons in Parkinson patients a special case of a general loss of connections in scientific civilization?

There is a sequel to the story of Terry's airletters. Many years later I received an email from my son, who was then living in the Philippines. He said he had suddenly encountered three different people with the name Terry O'Donnell. He added: "Dad, you'd better write to Terry."

I did. By return mail I got a postcard with this message:

"If he recovers, Mr. O'Donnell will write to you himself." In the same handwriting were the words "With love and gratitude." Then, in Terry's own scrawl, his barely legible signature: "Terry."

I phoned a mutual friend in Portland and learned of Terry's advanced cancer. I planned to visit him immediately, but while I was checking plane schedules another email informed me that he had died.

If his name had not popped up three times in the Philippines, I would never have known that Terry was dying in Oregon. My son and I were connected by email. Terry and I were connected by a different mail.

Email is a good symbol of that different mail. Just as invisible email can reach someone on the other side of the world, so that invisible different mail can reach someone on the other side of the world.

Just as invisible electronic signals can become visible words on a distant computer, so invisible unconscious signals can become visible facts in a distant physical reality.

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As you now read these words so I typed these words. In between my typing these words and your reading these words was a nonverbal electronic signal.

When a neuron connects with another neuron, what is in between? A neural transmitter bridges the synapse between neurons. If that neural transmitter is missing, as in Parkinson's Disease, the signal is lost.

What kind of signals are lost in today's scientific paradigm? Above all, messages of meaning. Scientists' systematic ignoring of the data of meaning in physical facts has produced the dementia of the established scientific paradigm. Unconscious protest against denial of meaning is expressed in many ways, including the myriad meaningless phrases bombarding my conscious mind.

Here is an example of a conscious search for meaning that uncovered unconscious meaning. A half dozen friends gathered to discuss unorthodox ideas. A physicist took time out and went to another room to attempt telepathy with a distant collaborator at an agreed time. After a while he returned, shaking his head in bewilderment.

"All I got was 'can of beans.'"

Why would anyone expect to find meaning in a can of beans? I knew exactly what it meant,

When my family moved to a rural home near Princeton, New Jersey, a neighbor boy the same age as my seven-year-old son ran home to his mother to report that the new kid he had met was named: "Cambyse Caboose Can-of-Beans Teter." Cambyse was my son's real Iranian name. Caboose was his occasional knick name. Can-of-Beans was a misunderstanding of Cambyse.

The physicist failed to connect with a distant telepather... but he connected with me in the adjacent room, where I was thinking about my son Cambyse, alias "Can-of-Beans."

Here is another example of an experiment in communication that produced unintended results. My neighbor's house guest, visiting from England, was a professional medium who made contacts with the dead. I asked her to see if she could contact my dead father. She closed her eyes and concentrated. At length she opened her eyes and shrugged in bewilderment. "All I get is the trade journal of the London tailor's guild, a magazine entitled 'Tailor and Cutter.'"

I knew at once what had happened. I had just learned that Abby Tiller and Bo Cutter, visiting the home where the medium was a house guest, had announced their engagement to be married. I had never met Bo, and Abby was little more than an acquaintance. But she was attractive. I felt a twinge of jealousy. And regret that I had no one to marry. So the medium's effort to contact my dead father had produced the trade journal Tailor and Cutter to symbolize the Tiller and Cutter on my mind.

Both the can of beans and the London tailors journal were totally far-fetched expressions of my thoughts. Their far-fetchedness allows no doubt of their connectedness. These experiments make

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indisputable the paradigm in which matter is made of meaning. Who can honestly maintain that the can and the journal were meaningless?

Like symbols in a dream, the can and tailor symbols were overdetermined. They had multiple meanings. For example:

- The search for the distant and the dead led to the here and the now.
- Both experiments failed to achieve their conscious goals but both succeeded in achieving an unconscious goal.
- Both experimenters sought a spiritual result but both received symbols of material necessities – food and clothing.
- I consciously sought to contact my dead father but unconsciously contacted my living son.

Like the son who fished with my father I had cast my lure into the unknown... and had dredged up from the muddy bottom a can and a journal. And right here, write now, I am tailoring and cutting the journal of my journey. Some times it feels more like a can of worms than a can of beans. At least worms can serve as bait. And serve as a symbol of our fate. One of my unfinished poems begins:

In the beginning was the word.
At the end will be the worm.

I must note that while I was typing my thoughts about contacting my father, the Parkinson tremor in my right fingers shook so much that I could scarcely type. Was it possible that my dead father was reaching out to me? Or that my own unconscious was reaching out to me? Or just that I was experiencing normal emotion as I recalled my dear father? On those questions I am agnostic.

And here is a poem, full of symbols, about fishing with my father:

FISH STORY

Waiting in a station
Of an abandoned railroad,
Watching paint peel and plaster crack,
I hear a train,
The distant whistle of a train,
Arriving from childhood
With my father,
Who will take me fishing,
Waking me in the morning
While others sleep.

We'll drop anchor,
Bait our hooks,
Cast our lines,
Then wait... wait... wait...
Watching the point where
The black line intersects the liquid plane,
Penetrates the reflecting surface
Toward depths in which
Unseen creatures glide,
Slow, fast, in schools, alone,
Living destinies we know not
Until...

"I've got a bite."
"Give him line."
"There, look!"
"He's running. Now!"
I yank my rod
To set the hook.
I've got him.
What is he?
A bass? A pike?

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My line slices the surface
As the hidden beast flees,
Then goes slack -- he's turned,
He's racing underneath the boat.
I reel fast to keep taut
My thin tie
To the unknown being.
Suddenly he plunges,
Bending double my rod.
I play him,
Then slowly, slowly,
I reel him closer.
"There he is!"
"A beauty!"

My father dips the net.
I try to guide the shining life
That dives, returns, turns,
Flashing and vanishing,
Until a deft scoop
Of my father's wrists
Lifts him into the air.
My father beams at me,
Happier, I know,
Than if he'd caught
The graceful thing
Himself.

Will he be happy now,
When his train arrives,
The train whose whistle I just heard
Sounding the depths of time,
To find me again
At the old train station?
With a wave of my tail
And flutter of my fins
I swim through the door
To the station platform.

Letter to Doidge

Of course poetry is made of meaningful symbols. But so is the physical universe. Just as we can interpret the symbols of a poem, so we can interpret the symbols of a physical reality.

Is the interpretation of the meanings of physical facts legitimate science? Science is usually limited to statements that can be verified by experiment. Meanings can not be verified by experiment. Indeed, a physical fact can have multiple meanings. Even contradictory meanings. Scientists rely on tests of prediction to discover natural laws. Meanings are unpredictable. Does that mean that meanings cannot be included in scientific explanations of nature? Meanings are part of nature. If meanings are excluded from scientific discourse, then science cannot claim to describe nature. Scientists will not be able to explain nature until they can explain Nature's T-shirt.

Scientists are faced with a choice. They must either start to interpret meanings or abandon all claim to describe the physical universe.

While experimental method will still be wonderfully useful, by itself it will never serve what Einstein called "the grand aim of all science – to cover the greatest number of empirical facts with the smallest number of axioms or hypotheses."

The paradigm of the projective universe satisfies that grand aim of all science. The projective paradigm covers the empirical facts of both experiments and meanings.

Scientists' failure to interpret the symbolic meanings of the physical universe is reflected in scientists' failure to connect the material brain and immaterial thought. That connection can be restored by recognition that thought creates everything material, including the material brain.

That recognition is the next paradigm in a nut shell.

A walnut shell.

Hamlet said "I could live in a nut shell and count myself the king of infinite space, except that I have bad dreams." We will awaken from a bad dream when we recognize that we are, individually and collectively, the king of infinite space. In the physical world as in dream worlds each of us is the creator, the hero, and the interpreter.

Can this recognition be the basis of a new therapy? Can it lead to cures or preventions of illnesses like Parkinson's? Is our unconscious creating these diseases as messages that the established paradigm of neuroscience is neurotic? Can the interpretation of realities, like the interpretation of dreams, heal our psyches? Can personal realities provide clues to the meanings of collective realities? And vice versa?

My two chocolate Labrador dogs are fond of walnuts. They fetch them from under the walnut tree and carry them to our veranda. There they crack the hard outer shells and eat the inner meat.

Letter to Doidge

A five-year-old friend was also fond of walnuts. And he discovered that he could give a dog a walnut to crack open its outer shell, and then he could steal the nut's inner meat.

Difficulty opening things – a package, a jar, a bag, a message – is one of the most irritating symptoms of Parkinson's Disease. The five-year-old opened a hard shell by getting help. Where could I find help? Not, surely, by exploiting. By sharing rather than stealing. That, I was reminded, is the way to open my heart.

How can we find a collective dog to crack our collective shells and yield our inner meat?

This year, alas, neither dog nor human enjoyed the nuts. They were full of worms

Noticing symbols is often entertaining. It can also be therapeutic. Here is one way to describe the premises of such therapy: unconscious thoughts use the material body to send messages to the conscious mind.

Illnesses are often messages from the unconscious. Interpreting the messages may heal the physical illness and/or transform mental attitudes. Interpreting as symbols the symptoms of Parkinson's may heal my tremors and slowness and clumsiness and scattered brain. And/or such interpretations may heal collective illnesses.

The material body is a special case of a general principle. Our unconscious not only creates material-body-facts but all kinds of material-facts to send messages to our conscious minds.

The material universe is made primarily of messages sent from our unconscious. Consciously interpreting those material messages can change the unconscious. The changed unconscious can send new material messages to be interpreted. The material universe is, thus, an evolving dialogue between unconscious and conscious thought.

Humans consciously bounce messages off satellites. Imagine that a human has forgotten that it is he who created the satellites and he who uses them to relay messages back to earth. Because he has forgotten that he is the source of the satellites and the messages, the messages that this human unconsciously bounces off satellites will come back to him as if originating not in himself but in some non-human OTHER.

An unconsciously projected message will appear to be "objective." Or "supernatural." Or eternally "mysterious." Scientists will look for material causes of "immaterial" phenomena. Astrologers will look for messages originating in planets. Astronomers will look for life on other galaxies. Prophets will attribute revelations to deities. Neurologists will attribute thoughts to brains.

To question the sacred can prompt retribution by society. Fear of social retribution can lead individuals to internalize, and even champion, sacred beliefs. Thus taboos keep hidden in the individual's unconscious all awareness of the human source of any sacred OTHER.

Letter to Doidge

The human source that projects messages into matter is as deeply hidden as light that cannot escape a black hole.

But a black hole itself is made of meaning. Indeed, physicists have unconsciously created black holes as symbols to be interpreted. **When physicists realize that black holes are not in their stars but in themselves, then light will appear at the end of the tunnel.**

Light from a mirror.

Meanwhile, what would happen if a hypothetical scientist fell into a Black Hole? As he disappeared across the event horizon, the huge difference between the force of gravity at his head and at his feet would pull him apart.

How can we interpret that dreamlike symbol?

Woe to the curious scientist who dares to dive into the darkness of the unconscious, for he shall be pulled apart like a heretic on a torture wrack of the scientific Inquisition.

“One could well say of the event horizon,” physicist Stephen Hawking notes, “what the poet Dante said of the entrance to Hell: ‘All hope abandon, ye who enter here.’”

Does eternal hellfire thus await those who dare to cross the horizon of meaningless science into the black hole of the unconscious?

Or will the interpretation of matter produce a scientific revolution of consciousness in which, as in dream worlds, the act of observation and the act of creation are the same act.

Interpreting material phenomena as if they are collective dreams may then lead to all kinds of discovery/creation. We may find a cure for AIDS, or Middle East wars, or world hunger, or global warming... or Parkinson’s disease.

But healing illnesses is only one of the benefits of interpreting realities. Interpreting messages from our personal and collective unconscious can create beauty, discover truths, empower change, promote justice, unleash fun, and open hearts to love.

The universe is mostly created unconsciously. We can learn to create the universe more consciously.

Just as our thoughts can change the physical brain, so our thoughts can change the physical universe.

When humanity recognizes that brains and universes, like bounced satellite signals, originate in ourselves, then all OTHERS will be history.

Letter to Doidge

Some scientists are considering a theory, known as the “anthropic principle,” that views man as central to the creation of our universe. Hawking objects to the “strong” version of the anthropic principle because it

“runs against the tide of the whole history of science. We have developed from the geocentric cosmologies of Ptolemy and his forebears, through the heliocentric cosmology of Copernicus and Galileo, to the modern picture in which the earth is a medium-sized planet orbiting around an average star in the outer suburbs of an ordinary spiral galaxy, which is itself only one of about a million million galaxies in the observable universe. Yet the strong anthropic principle would claim that this whole vast construction exists simply for our sake. This is very hard to believe.^{iv}

To recognize that human thought can change the structure of the universe, including the structure of brains, requires abandoning “the tide of the whole history of science.”

So much the better!

What Hawking finds “very hard to believe” will be the paradigm of rigorous science and common sense. What Hawking finds hard to believe will be easy to believe.

What is going on with scientists that makes them relish human insignificance?

Is this “scientific” humility the same humility preached, in one form or another, by all the world religions?

Is this universal repression of human pride the source of universal human violence?

That question is explored in “The Urge to Kneel,” chapter 12 of *The Adventure*.

A mere physical universe of a million million galaxies will be experienced as pathetically inferior to the creators of the universe: you and me and every mortal human individual.

The scientific puzzle of meaningful coincidences can be solved by recognition that material facts can be outward and visible signs of inward and unconscious thoughts.

Thus the material universe is an outward sign of inward thoughts of observers/creators.

WE THINK THEREFORE IT IS.

(In Descartes’ “I think therefore I am” the word “therefore” expresses logic; in “we think therefore it is,” the word “therefore” expresses cause.)

Letter to Doidge

The overdetermined universe manifests both personal and collective thoughts, and both conscious and unconscious thoughts. What we call “objective” is really collective.

Calling a belief “objective” serves the same purpose as calling a belief “sacred.” Those who challenge the “sacred” may be treated as heretical; those who challenge the “objective” may be treated as insane. Thus powerful taboos protect collective beliefs from challenge by human individuals.

Natural laws are collective projections. Because natural laws are extremely useful we give natural laws extreme power. Someone who defies the law of gravity may break his neck.

Children outgrow belief that the rules of their games (e.g., marbles) are objective, external, eternal, and not man-made. Modern adults will outgrow belief that the laws of nature (e.g. gravity) are objective, external, eternal, and not man-made.

The paradigm of the projective universe is both elegant and simple. It drives the final nail into the coffin of Descartes’ dualism. When the paradigm of the projective universe is established science and common sense, historians will look upon the objective universe as quaint.

Interpretations of the meanings of observed phenomena will be a standard activity of scientific research and daily routines.

Such a change may require not only a leap of logic but a somersault of emotion.

Here are six of my poems that speak to such emotion:

THE ATOM

A great idea, doomed to fail,
Sent a telegram by mail
To warn the creatures of the night
They had a shadow by the tail.

BRAINWASHING

In a cell
Racked with pain
I learn to love
My enemy.

In a cell
In my brain
I learn that love
Is chemistry.

EXECUTORS

Death is a formality
Of neurons in a brain
Who stamp each will and testament
"Never Again."
And shrug at the umbrellas
Gathered in the rain.

HIGHER TRUTH

If chemistry were right
And life were but a thing,

Then hawks would have no flight
And larks could never sing,

Hope would have no height
And thought could not take wing,

But the world is a kite
On an orphan's string.

THE DISTRACTION

Earth, moon, and sun
Are a juggler's act.
He entertains the stars
To distract them from
The Fact.

RELATIVITY

The first Big Bang
Was a smaller shock
Than a moment when Mozart
Played with Bach.

At the beginning of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud observed:

One might be tempted to grant the contention of the philosophers and psychiatrists, and to dismiss the problem of dream-interpretation as altogether fanciful. I have, however, come to think differently. I have been forced to perceive that here, once more, we have one of those not-infrequent cases where an ancient and stubbornly retained popular belief seems to have come nearer to the truth of the matter than the opinion of modern science. I must insist that the dream actually does possess a meaning, and that a scientific method of dream interpretation is possible.

In the same manner I must insist that realities actually do possess a meaning, and that a scientific method of reality-interpretation is possible. A scientific method appropriate to the paradigm of the projective universe.

Freud wrote:

The pre-scientific conception of the dream which obtained among the ancients was, of course, in perfect keeping with their general conception of the universe, which was accustomed to project as an external reality that which possessed reality only in the life of the psyche.

In the same way modern minds project as an external reality material facts that possess reality only in the life of the psyche. Thus, for example, brain-researchers project the brain as an external reality although the brain possesses reality only in the life of the psyche.

Modern minds make the same mistake about material things that pre-scientific minds made about dream images: modern minds still "project as an external reality" the material universe. Modern

Letter to Doidge

minds still think that physical facts exist "out there," just as pre-scientific minds thought that dream images exist "out there."

Thus modern man has not completely emerged from the pre-scientific "conception of the universe."

Recognizing that dream images exist in the psyche, rather than in an external reality, was part of the advance from the pre-scientific world view. Recognizing that physical facts exist in the psyche, rather than in an external reality, will continue that advance from the pre-scientific world view.

In future centuries, men and women will look back on Twentieth Century man as still primitive because he still thought that the material things he saw existed outside his mind. Recognizing that material things, like dream images, are put "out there" by the unconscious — that is scientific progress.

If a brain researcher seeks to reduce "immaterial" thoughts to material causes, he or she is reverting to the superstitions of "primitive" religions. When scientists attribute thoughts and feelings to brain chemicals they are doing the same thing that "primitives" do when they attribute thoughts and feelings to a stone or a wind. Thus "scientific" reductionism is *reductio ad absurdum*.

But primitives, unlike reductionist scientists, also locate thoughts and feelings in human beings.

To cling to belief in the externality of material things is to cling to the last vestiges of superstition. To let go of superstition is to recognize that facts in the material world, like images in a dream world, have meaning.

In fact, meaning is the material of which matter is made.

The interpretation of material facts, like the interpretation of dream images, can create new realities.

My interpretations of AIDS and Alzheimer's were discovered in semi-solitudes. I now live in an isolated valley with only three other homes within three miles. But my isolated hope (a typo too revealing to erase) home is only 50 miles from the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF), where I am already an out-patient.

When I moved ten years ago from Colorado to California I had already been diagnosed with stenosis of the basilar artery, for which I was referred to UCSF's neurology department. When I developed Parkinson's I naturally continued under the care of UCSF's neurology department. I had no idea of the work at UCSF of Professor Merzenich until I saw him on a PBS program and bought your book.

I just learned that he retired last year from UCSF, but I will send him a copy of this letter/essay.

Letter to Doidge

I was already alerted to a connection between Parkinson's research and brain research by a report of work by Fabrizio Benedetti and colleagues at the University of Turin. The following paragraphs summarize the experiment: (Nature Neuroscience, vol. 7, p. 587).

Sometimes just pretending to give a drug can alleviate the symptoms of Parkinson's disease, as long as the patient believes that the treatment is effective. Such placebo treatment works when it causes a part of the brain that is overactive as a result of the disease to return to a more normal level of activity...

For several days, Fabrizio Benedetti and colleagues gave Parkinson's patients injections of drugs that temporarily relieved symptoms such as muscle stiffness and tremors. Then, the researchers gave the patients a placebo injection (a harmless salt solution containing no medication) without revealing the change. Before this placebo injection, the scientists surgically implanted metal wires into the brain to measure electrical signals emanating from single brain cells in a region called the subthalamic nucleus, which is hyperactive in Parkinson's patients. After the patients received the sham medication, these brain cells became less active and their arm muscles relaxed, allowing them to move more easily. The clinical improvement in individual patients was correlated with changes in brain activity. These findings are the first report of placebo responses in single neurons, and may help scientists to understand how peoples' mental states can influence their bodies.

Benedetti's findings were also reported in an article entitled "13 things that do not make sense" (Michael Brooks, New Scientist.com news service, 19 March 2005). Number 1 of the 13 was the placebo effect. The placebo effect "does not make sense" because we are stuck in the paradigms of an objective or a dualistic universe.

We have a lot to learn, Benedetti says, but one thing is clear: the mind can affect the body's biochemistry. "The relationship between expectation and therapeutic outcome is a wonderful model to understand mind-body interaction."

If a false expectation can influence symptoms, might genuine expectation influence symptoms? Could understanding of the projective paradigm, and practice of the interpretation of realities, lead not only to relief of symptoms but to cure of diseases? And cures not only of individual diseases but collective epidemics. Including mental epidemics? And lead not only to cure of diseases but to release of creativities? And free societies from the sham expectations of placebos implanted in the minds of children.

Can experiments be designed to test the impact of genuine understandings on the behavior of neurons? For example, might the impact on a test subject of revelation that he has been deceived by a placebo be reflected in his wired neurons? Might variations in meaningful statements on flashcards or voice recordings produce variations in the electrical charges of test subjects' wired neurons? Here's a series of meaningful statements which might produce differing, measurable, neuron behavior:

$$E=mc^2$$

Letter to Doidge

Jesus loves me

The brain changes itself

To be or not to be

Pepsicola hits the spot

The same series of statements could be tested with variations in the tested populations. For example, comparisons could be made of the behavior of the wired neurons of priests and scientists, different age groups, males and females, Republicans and Democrats, Arabs and Israelis, Moslems and Buddhists, idiot savants and fashion models...

Variations in neuron behavior could be recorded in focus groups. As wired test subjects interactively modify their original thoughts, any changes in neuronal signals could be projected onto a screen observed by the test subjects. Feedback from the observed images on the screen might then modify the behavior of the neurons in the observers.

The focus group might be given an assignment of reaching consensus on the behavior of the neurons projected onto the screen. The process might provide new insights into the socio-neural foundations of human behavior.

To be more scientific, statements eliciting electronic responses could be mathematical. For example:

$$2+2=4$$

$$2+2=5$$

$$10 \times 10 = 1,000$$

$$4 \times 2.5 = 10$$

Ultimately what is at issue in such experiments is the question of the projective paradigm: Does meaning matter? Are “material” neurons created by “immaterial” meanings? Is the universe plastic, molded and remolded, like the brain, by thought? Is meaning the material of which matter is made?

Maybe a thought-experiment is all that is needed to replace the absurdity of the meaningless universe with a paradigm based on the observation of meaning making matter.

For example, a scientist’s meaningful erotic thought might be observed making a material erection.

Letter to Doidge

The myth of a meaningless physical universe is perhaps the most destructive force of our era. It is manifested in multiple nightmares – nuclear weapons, terrorism, global warming, Middle East wars, economic depression. Interpreting such nightmares is necessary to avert what Einstein called “unparalleled catastrophe.”

Einstein recommended that a young physicist begin his career working in a lighthouse. At the time when I learned his recommendation, I had already lived for three years in a Lake Superior lighthouse... and had moved on to a Rocky Mountain cabin. I know what Einstein meant.

But before embracing these semi-solititudes, I had taught at universities in Lebanon and Iran, and worked as a journalist at the Toronto Globe and Mail, Congressional Quarterly, and the Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service.

I yearn for the day when journalists everywhere report the news from the unconscious.

I now try to cover news from the unconscious. And what I find there is deeply, deeply troubling. I am reminded of experiences of Jung on the brink of World War I.

The following paragraphs are an excerpt from *The Adventure*, Chapter 10, “The Big Bang:”

Jung tells the story of a collective message that he failed to interpret until after the deadly event it forecast.

In the Autumn of 1913, Jung felt a sense of oppression that seemed to spring not only from his own psyche, but from "concrete reality."

“In October, while I was alone on a journey, I was suddenly seized by an overpowering vision: I saw a monstrous flood covering all the northern low-lying lands between the North Sea and the Alps... I realized that a frightful catastrophe was in progress. I saw the mighty yellow waves, the floating rubble of civilization, and the drowned bodies of uncounted thousands. Then the whole sea turned to blood.”

Two weeks later this vision recurred, and an inner voice told Jung: "Look at it well; it is wholly real and it will be so. You cannot doubt it." Jung asked himself if these visions pointed to a revolution, but he could not really imagine anything of the sort.

“And so I drew the conclusion that they had to do with myself, and decided I was menaced by a psychosis.”

When these and similar visions were followed the next summer by the outbreak of World War I, Jung knew that they had revealed not a private, but a public, psychosis.

And he knew that he had a task that "took precedence over everything else:"

“I had to try to understand what had happened and to what extent my own experience coincided with that of mankind....”

Jung did not recognize until after the outbreak of the First World War that he had a task that "took precedence over everything else." In this nuclear age, we must recognize before the outbreak of world war that we have a task that takes precedence over everything else.

Letter to Doidge

This task requires no "visions." Reality itself is a vision. The reality of weapons of mass destruction is as powerful a message as any vision.

Because each of us is dreaming these nightmares, understanding them is not a task for specialists. Every individual can share in the task Jung gave the highest precedence: "to try to understand what has happened and to what extent his or her own experience coincides with that of mankind."

Is the story of the future already written? Can we revise the script before the mass destruction symbolized by weapons of mass destruction?

Yes, we can "change the future." But only by getting the messages of the present.

To prevent the Big Bang of modern weapons we need to interpret the Big Bang of modern science. To interpret the Big Bang of science we need to plunge into the Black Hole of the unconscious.

There we will find the source of the universe.

Equipped, now, with a projective paradigm, what am I to make of the PARKinson tremor that makes typing these letters such a blundering ordeal?

I assume that the symptom, like an image in a dream, is overdetermined – has multiple meanings.

In this letter/essay I have noted questions raised by Parkinson's. I still have much to discover and then report. But I am faced by a handicap.

In addition to discovering more interpretations of Parkinson's I need to work on other works. I want what I have written in this letter/essay to reach a large audience as soon as possible. But efforts to promote my work depress me. They consume time and energy and creativity and caring that I need for my other unfinished writings.

It is when I turn away from efforts to promote my work that the most creative ideas find me.

So, reader, I am asking you a personal favor. If you find value in what I have written here, please disseminate it as widely as possible.

Of course if you find this open letter worthless or worse, you can dump it in the trash.

In fact, I have dumped in the trash many ideas. That's part of my work. As Francis Bacon observed: "Truth will sooner emerge from error than from confusion."

But the pursuit of truth is its own reward. And the discovery of a truth is a thrill.

I have published at TheNextCivilization.com eight works of science, poetry, philosophy and fiction. Summaries and complete texts of these works can be downloaded from my website.

Five appendices to this letter present specific perspectives.

Letter to Doidge

On December 15, 2009, I finished a final version of this essay. There was only one small detail to take care of. One footnote. I was struggling with formatting a footnote reference to a quote from Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*. I found the book on a crowded shelf. When I opened it I saw on the inside of the front cover an ad:

**Coming soon in hardcover
Stephen Hawking
the
UNIVERSE
in a
NUTSHELL**

This ad was illustrated by a picture of an opened walnut shell surrounding a universe depicted as a sphere of illuminated dots and lines.

QUOD ERAT DEMONSTRANDUM

Letter to Doidge

If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in pursuing ideas sketched in this letter/essay, please contact me at

1471 Marshall-Petaluma Rd.
Petaluma, CA 94952
parkteter@gmail.com
(415) 663-8626

Best wishes,

Park Teter

APPENDIX A

Park Teter

Born in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1934, Daniel Park Teter was awarded “Honors with Exceptional Distinction” when he graduated *summa cum laude* from Yale in 1956. He then studied history at the University of London, taught Western Civilization at the American University of Beirut, and married an Iranian.

After working as an editorial writer for the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, and news editor at Congressional Quarterly, Teter was the University of Pennsylvania's Adviser in Humanities at Pahlavi University in Shiraz, Iran, from 1965 to 1967. The next year he evaluated U.S. Peace Corps programs in Morocco, Iran, and Afghanistan.

From 1969 to 1973, at the University of Chicago and at Princeton, he studied psychological changes in Europe during The Scientific Revolution of the 16th-17th centuries. In the age of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton he sought the origins of two Western attitudes he felt were needed in non-Western cultures caught in an earthquake of change: 1) a passion for objectivity; 2) a willingness to abandon sacred beliefs.

Teter was then forced to abandon his own sacred belief, his Western belief in an objective physical universe, by coincidences that could never have been produced by chance. He discovered that coincidences can be rationally explained by a new scientific paradigm that recognizes that we create physical facts in some of the same ways that we create dream images.

Since 1973, Teter has been exploring that paradigm's revolutionary consequences for science, religion, society, and personal life. He has combined a free-lance journalist's immersion in public affairs with years of reading, reflection, and writing in the solitudes of a Lake Superior lighthouse, a Virginia farmhouse, a Rocky Mountain cabin, a cottage by a Danish fjord, and a ranch near the Pacific.

Teter's discoveries are summarized in *The Revolution of the Species*, and analyzed in greater depth in *The Adventure*. The story of the discoveries, and their application to private and public life, is recounted in *The Personal Universe: A True Story of Passionate Love and Revolutionary Science*.

Teter has also written a novel, (*The Trial of God*), two plays (*The Winter War*, *Satan II*), a book of poetry (*Paper Wings*) and a collection of bumper stickers (*Bumper Thinkers*). The novel and stage plays will be rewritten as screenplays for popular feature movies.

All of these works express a revolution of consciousness that will replace the insanity of war with awakening to the adventure for which we exist.

All of these works are published at TheNextCivilization.com

APPENDIX B

CORE IDEAS FROM PARK TETER'S *THE ADVENTURE*

FOUR REALISMS

Overdetermination. (Multiple Causes) Just as a dream image can express many different unconscious ideas, so a physical fact can express the different ideas of many different people. This principle of “overdetermination” solves the scientific puzzle posed by facts that are experienced by many people but coincidentally have a private meaning for one person.

Projection. (The Movie-Universe) Just as a movie projector projects images into a movie theater, so the unconscious projects images into dream worlds and projects facts into the physical world. These overdetermined facts are projected both individually and collectively.

Reality Agreements. (Collective Projection) Just as maturing children become conscious that the rules of games (*e.g.* marbles) are not objective, external, and unchangeable, so maturing adults will become conscious that the laws of nature (*e.g.* gravity) are not external and objective and unchangeable. Natural laws, like game rules, are agreements. Because these reality agreements are extremely important, they are given extreme power.

Matter Matters. (The Real Stuff) In the physical world, as in dream worlds, meaning is the material of which matter is made. Atoms, genes, viruses, earthquakes, stars, black holes, assholes, wars, taxes, pollutions, celebrities, prisons, rituals... are all made of meanings that, like dreams, can be interpreted.

FOUR GUIDELINES

Who Are We? (Trinity) Just as any individual can be the creator, the hero, and the interpreter of a dream world, so every individual is the Creator, the Hero, and the Interpreter of the universe.

Why Are We Here? (The Adventure) Each of us individually, and all of us together, are embarked on the amazing adventure of creating, entering, exploring, explaining, enjoying, sharing, and re-creating the universe.

How Shall We Live? (The Four R's) In private and public life, we can Revel in Recognition that Reality is Revelation. We can use the interpretation of realities to end recurring public and private nightmares (wars, injustices, illnesses, anxieties...), and to create new realities.

How Shall We Love? (Radical Love) Anyone who knows that he is the Creator-Hero-Interpreter of the universe will recognize his own infinite worth. Anyone who knows her own infinite worth will know the infinite worth of every other Creator-Hero-Interpreter. Thus radical self-love creates radical love of others.

Letter to Doidge

APPENDIX C

Excerpt from THE ADVENTURE, Chapter 4: “Scientific Revolution”

We have been taught, in modern Western culture, to assume that images in a dream world and facts in the waking world are created in different ways.

In our waking world, if we see a house catch fire and see that it is damaged, we generally assume that the fire caused the damage. We cannot make the same assumption about cause and effect in a dream world.

In a dream world a house may catch fire and remain unchanged. Or it may catch fire and turn into a horse. Or a cloud. Or the dreamer's mother.

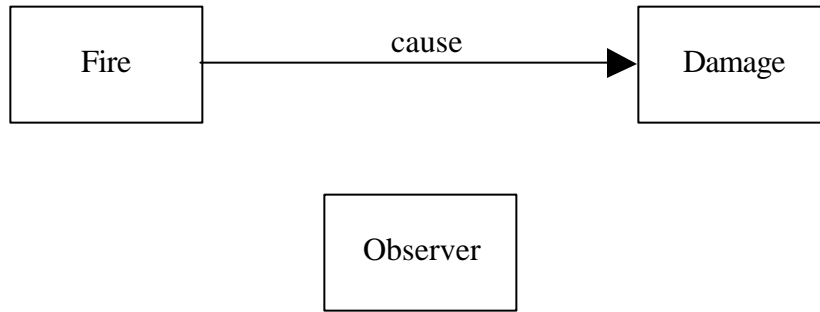
In such cases did the fire cause the transformation into a horse or a cloud or a mother? In the dream of a burning house that remains unchanged, did the fire cause the lack of change?

Of course not. But if the fire did not produce the change, what did?

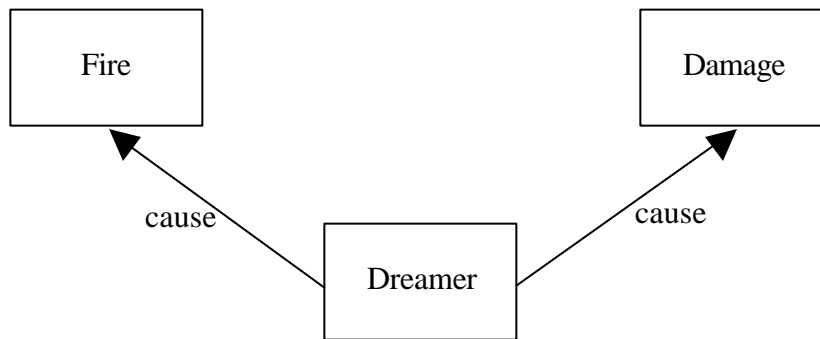
The dreamer. The dreamer caused both the fire and the change — or lack of change. The different ideas of cause can be summarized by two diagrams:

Letter to Doidge

WAKING WORLD

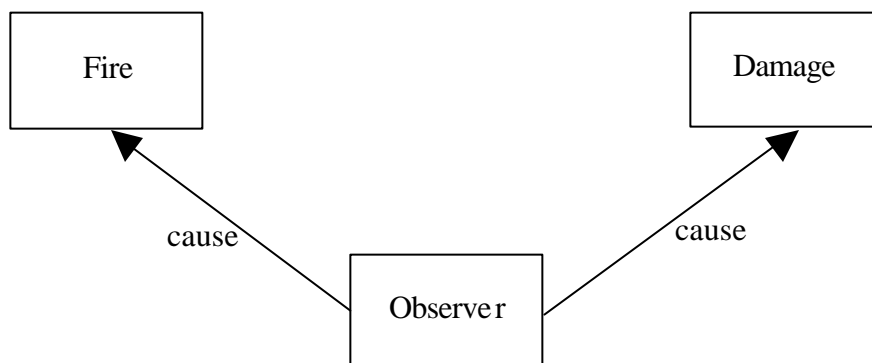


DREAM WORLD



Once we recognize that we create physical facts in the same way that we create dream images, we can correct the Waking World diagram:

WAKING WORLD (CORRECTED)



APPENDIX D

NEXT CIVILIZATION WORKSHOP

The goal of this workshop is to offer understandings that participants can use to know their own infinite worth and, thus, the infinite worth of every mortal human individual.

Before the workshop, all participants will read the complete text of Park Teter's THE ADVENTURE. Each participant will mark the text with colored markers: Green for strong agreement; red for strong disagreement, blue for lack of clarity.

Participants will share their marked passages at the beginning of each of the six parts of the workshop: Scientific Revolution, Religious Revolution, Interpreting Realities (e.g. Mideast, AIDS, Big Bang), Social Revolution, Personal Revolution, and Action.

The Scientific Revolution is based on a new paradigm that solves the puzzle of coincidences by recognizing that we create physical facts in the same way that we create dream images. Therefore realities, like dreams, can be interpreted; and, in the physical world as in dream worlds, each individual is the creator, the hero, and the interpreter.

The Religious Revolution exposes the common error shared by all the world religions that have failed to end the insanity of war because they teach children to hold in awe some god or nature or nation or nirvana or territory as greater than his or her own self.

The Social Revolution describes what life will be like in the Next Civilization, when: 1) everything in the physical world, like everything in a dream world, is made of meaning; 2) every individual is recognized as the creator-hero-interpreter of the universe; and 3) every individual, and all of humanity, are embarked on The Adventure of creating, exploring, explaining, enjoying, sharing, and re-creating the universe.

In **The Personal Revolution** each individual will be thrilled by knowledge of her or his own infinite self-importance... and the infinite importance of every individual. Each of the unique individuals you meet is embarked with you on a human adventure filled with greater variety, and played for higher stakes, and pursued with greater passion, than you can find in all the monotonous reruns of the soap operas of immortal gods.

After discussing the four revolutions, participants in the workshop will consider what they want to do, in both private and public life, with what they have learned. Each can decide whether, and how, he or she wants to take action to advance The Next Civilization. Participants are encouraged to continue, or reconvene, their workshop. And to proliferate The Adventure by organizing new workshops.

The workshop may also use any of the seven other works by Park Teter published at TheNextCivilization.com. CONTACT: parkteter@gmail.com

APPENDIX E

**These quotations from Park Teter's THE ADVENTURE
can be used to spark discussions, enliven the Internet, and advertise
lectures, courses, workshops, and publications of TheNextCivilization.com**

The end of war will be the byproduct of something even more wonderful than peace.

What will replace all the religions that have failed to end the insanity of war?

How does the extreme religion hidden in science produce extreme wars?

This book is dedicated to all of today's children who will be killed, or crippled, or raped, or orphaned, or terrified, or heart-broken, by tomorrow's wars... unless we change.

Nuclear extermination of the human race remains a possibility. The existence of that possibility is the greatest change in all human history.

The inner migration that will create The Next Civilization is this: recognition by 'ordinary' individuals of how extraordinary they truly are.

The patterns, timing, interconnectedness, recurrence under recurring conditions, responsiveness to induced mental states and – above all – the EXQUISITE APPROPRIATENESS of coincidences make the chance-hypothesis laughable.

The data of meaningful coincidences confront the world's community of scientists with a choice: Scientists must either 1) examine the data of meaning or 2) abandon all claims to be describing nature.

Before we can abandon failed faiths, we must recognize their glory.

Only something as idiotic as a chemical could think that a chemical thinks.

When we recognize that the physical world is revelation, then we experience in the physical world the glory that repressed souls seek in escape to non-physical worlds.

When we abandon worship of the sacred, we will be free for love of the living.

War is so ghastly, so cruel, and so insane, that every belief-system that has failed to end war must be abandoned.

In the physical world, as in dream worlds, the act of observation and the act of creation are the same act.

Recognition that we project reality is the paradigm of future physics. It will be the common sense of the next civilization.

Letter to Doidge

Making conscious what is unconscious is what gives us freedom to change the future.

The unconscious uses the physical body to deliver messages to the conscious mind.

Like a child buried alive, our unconscious is using AIDS and Alzheimer's as screams for help. But no one hears.

Modern civilization has largely lost "primitive" man's ability to recognize symbolic meaning in physical facts. In this respect, modern civilization is demented.

The virulence of AIDS in Africa symbolizes the collapse of traditional culture's immunity to the world-conquering religion hidden in modern science.

Things are thoughts expressed in the images we call material.

What we call objective is really collective.

The refusal of scientists to examine the data of personal meaning in physical facts is just like the refusal of theologians to look at the heavens through Galileo's telescope.

Legislatures consciously make social laws. Societies unconsciously make natural laws.

The huge differences between Darwin's Nature and Christianity's God serve to highlight their terribly important similarity: compared to Christianity's God, and compared to Darwin's Nature, man is puny.

Both Darwin's nature and the Judeo-Christian-Moslem god practice selection.

Warnings that our advancing technology may produce an ecological disaster are projections onto the physical world of unconscious fears that advancing science is creating a psychological disaster.

The Work Ethic will be replaced by The Meaning Ethic.

Every conflict with an opponent is as an external symbol of one's own inner conflict.

Immortal gods can never play for mortal stakes. And so they can never love as humans can love.

Here is a powerful spiritual exercise: when you meet another human being, listen.

It is truly naïve – catastrophically naïve – to believe that the human race can, in this new age of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, continue to rely on weapons to resolve conflicts.

How can an individual immigrate, today, to The Next Civilization?

ⁱ Koestler, Arthur, *Janus: A Summing Up*, Random House, N.Y., 1978, p. 259.

Letter to Doidge

ⁱⁱ Freud, Sigmund, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Translated by A.A. Brill, Modern Library edition, New York, 1950, p. 202.

^{iv} Hawking, Stephen, *A Brief History of Time: The updated and Expanded Tenth Anniversary Edition*, Bantam Books, N.Y, 1998, p. 130.