

SALTA FIDE

LEAP OF FAITH

BY JOHN A CIAMPA

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**YOU NEVER KNEW A MICROBE
COULD BRING THE WHOLE WORLD
TO ITS KNEES IN DAYS.**

**WHILE YOU'RE DOWN THERE, YOU
MIGHT AS WELL HOLD HANDS
AND PRAY.**

PROLOGUE

Hurricanes and holocausts; pandemics and pandemonium are as unexpected as they are unwelcome. We can't believe they're inevitable and so we are inevitably unprepared.

Lost in the fray, you count on ingenuity to get you home, like your well trained horse, Saltafide, who you never quite understood. But suddenly Saltafide bucks like a bronco and you're thrown.

Lying there on your chagrin, you have three choices: bury your head in the sand; shoot your horse and hitch a ride, or get back on Saltafide.

The "bury head" option gets you out of trouble, but it also gets you out of everything else. Your head becomes a sessile potato.

The 'hitch a ride' option seems natural: you started out sitting in a carriage with someone else pushing; why not sit this one out in someone else's carriage; join the silent majority who sits in church pews, at office desks, on TV couches and in the stands at the rodeo settling for the vicarious thrills of the half life.

Getting back on your horse, now that you know it's a bronco, seems foolhardy, but keep in mind that bucking energy can become a jumping, leaping, flying energy which just might be the glory ride out of the rodeo. Riding it out adds bounce to your life, and, more importantly, it adds life to your bounce. Whether the ride flies you to eternal bliss or dumps you in the black hole, in the end you got there on your own and you will be whole, if not holy.

THE HOLE-Y PLAN

Science dissects the whole plan for unholy answers; searching down through the microscope and up through the telescope. Below it finds a befuddling zoo of subatomic particles; above dark matter.

Religion swallows the holy plan whole; there is no questioning a message received directly from God, until we look more closely at the handwriting and the post mark.

The unquestioned answers of religion, and the unanswered questions of science, have carved a chasm between “homo...” and “...sapiens. The depth of the chasm is unfathomable and the gap in the ‘terra firma’ looks daunting. There is no getting around the fact that the chasm seems to be between you and whatever lies beyond, and as you get closer you sense an up draft which seems to invite ascension. You struggle with the the terror that holds you back. The whole plans is all laid out, a holy plan; how can the next move be up to me? There must be a hole in the holy plan, does that negate the plan.

The only way to deny the plan is to say that the peach I just ate and the sunset I just witnessed are by chance. But then you have to explain “chance,” and how that differs from any other supernatural plan. If your “chance” affects all of nature, regularly, and cannot be further explained, then it is a supernatural belief, with a nickname.

Even atheists have to admit there is a plan. They preserve their atheism by erasing the planner. To get around the conundrum of a plan with no planner, they use other words for the origination, like ‘meme’. If a meme does the same thing as God, it’s a just another nickname.

No one, to my knowledge, has been able to imagine, let alone prove, that the natural order proceeds without a plan. There has to be a plan; we can’t explain the regularity of

natural processes any other way. If there is a plan that governs **over** nature, it must be **super**-natural. and if there is a supernatural plan, it is reasonable to assume there must be a supernatural planner, no matter how little you know about him/her/it.

Having said all that, we must add that a detailed definition of the plan or the planner is impossible from where we stand. In fact, anyone with the hubris to define the divine is probably a false prophet taking you for a ride.

The fact that the plan is indefinable and enigmatic and even paradoxical does not mean it is non-existent. Whether we will ever be able to understand it completely is a deeper question that underlies the philosophy and science we are about to explore.

The paradox is offputting. You see love and kindness growing right next to banality and brutality. The beautiful eagle is a killer. So is my cat. So am I. I killed a chicken and a stalk of celery to make my chicken salad. I didn't kill the chicken myself but I was part of the conspiracy. Is killing to eat part of the plan? Is killing your enemies part of the same plan as helping your friends? What makes them friends or enemies? Is the enemy virus that's killing off humans part of the same plan that is making the world a better place? Does the better place include humans or does the plan call for human extinction? Good God! Is there another God that is bad? Which one runs that rodeo I ride in?

In my last book, "[The Blink of an I](#)", and on the "Philosophy" page of [Saltafided.com](#), this paradox is considered in detail under the heading of "Theodicy". Theodicy addresses the paradox which arises from the attribution of malevolence to a benevolent God. Either God is benevolent and "feckless", that is, without the power to control evil and suffering, or God is all powerful and "fickle" and just enjoying the rodeo, watching us bounce around. An all knowing God would not need the contest if he already knew the results, and a benevolent God would not enjoy watching us struggle and suffer. And yet the rodeo struggle is as undeniable as the plan.

To put a better face on this ‘rodeo’ view, it has been suggested (by Aquinas and others) that it’s not just a show but a test to see who gets to ride in the paradise parade, which would include those who freely choose to ride through fire hoops, and leap hurdles. It is undeniable that the rider’s have a choice, so the plan has to have an un-plan, a hole.

The hole-y holy plan has been challenged all the way back to Epicurus**, centuries before Christianity. We will revisit Epicurus further in this work and on the above mentioned web site page, but here we need to address whether his plan gets around the hole, or simply replaces it with another.

The aim of the Epicurus plan was noble - to replace the root cause of all suffering (fear of God and fear of death) with a humane, humanist plan, where humans, of their own free will, can choose tranquility over anxiety. (No one knows whether he knew about Buddhism which was centuries earlier on another continent.)

According to Epicurus, humans can choose to avert suffering and evil just as one chooses to dodge obstacles in a course. But those obstacles need to be in place in order to be averted. Someone has to put them there before any one can learn their way around them, i.e., there has to be a plan, a plan with a hole. Epicurus defers to Democritus for the plan and gets around the hole by calling it a swerve (*παρέγκλισις paréngklisis*;) of atoms. This makes the hole part of the materialist, non-divine plan, but in name only; it is still a holy “hole-y” plan, if you boil off the semantics.

The materialist, let’s call him Matt, believes that he is the material that makes up his body parts and nothing more. Matt would have to bravely admit that when the material in his body is gone, what is left of him is nothing. But Matt has to be rational and his own science now teaches that there is no such thing as nothing; there is always some matter or energy left even if it’s only the mysterious but detectable Higgs, vacuum energy field. So Matt cannot become nothing; his material is rearranged as energy but continues to exist. The former arrangement of matter and energy that was Matt was a form only, not matter. The form Matt is/was/will be a format

which is part of a non-physical, or you could say metaphysical plan, which, no matter what you call it, is a holy hole-y plan.

There is always a plan whether it is called whole or holy, and the plan always includes a hole for the obstacle course that tests human free will. This is true for both scientific and religious philosophies.

Jews believe they are the chosen ones of a god who protects them, albeit not very well at times, from their enemies and the enemy gods. The power to shape destiny goes to the winner of this divine wrestling match, (imagine the old testament God in white trunks and Jupiter's tag team of deities in purple). The wrestling match with its rules and referee necessitates a holy, hole-y plan.

Catholics following Saint Augustine recognize that God's plan includes free will which they say is impaired by sin; so the hole in the plan is dynamic. The game here is the more you sin the more the hole closes in on you, and the less freedom you have and the more you suffer. So the holy plan has a test hole.

Christian Science says there is no evil or suffering; it is an illusion. Health for the Christian Science winners or losers is seeing through the illusion with the help of the doctors of the church. You have a choice between the medical and the spiritual, all according to a holy, hole-y plan.

Calvinism, believes the winners are selected by God in advance. The capitalist in the mansion and the slave in the hut are all predetermined by the Calvinist, God plan, but why? This seems to close the loop hole with predestination, but not really. The hole is just on another page in the plan. If we turn the page back, there must have been a planned choice, a holy, hole-y plan which resulted in the selection of the 'elected.'

Eastern religion also has the hole on a separate page. Karma in the Hindu religion explains the bumps in the ride as payback for choices made in previous rides. There are many gods helping and hindering; they are coordinated but it is not

clear by whom, but clearly all are guided by a holy, hole-y plan.

Somehow every materialist belief and every religious faith rests on a hole-y plan which is beyond physics, metaphysics, a second realm .

The plan and the second realm has long been questioned by Western philosophy and has spawned a myriad of ever-changing answers such as: skepticism, gnosticism, agnosticism, atheism, polytheism and the scientific method, which led us down a subatomic rabbit hole in quantum physics, to “Uncertainty,” a hole in the scientific plan with wiggle room, where we can throw in some home made philosophy.

**I shall be referring to my earlier works frequently and to save space I shall use abbreviations as follows:*

Communication the Living End = CLE;

Castle of Consciousness = CC;

The Blink of an I = BI

***Epicurus is one of the major philosophers in the Hellenistic period, 323 B.C.E. (and of [Aristotle](#) in 322 B.C.E.). He taught that the point of all one's actions was to attain pleasure (conceived of as tranquility) by limiting one's desires and by banishing the fear of the gods and of death. Epicurus' gospel of freedom from fear proved to be quite popular, and communities of Epicureans flourished for centuries after his death.*

2020 VISION

Earthquakes, hurricanes, global changes, race riots, and pandemics have pushed us to the brink, which makes it harder to think and harder to plan. The 2020 vision test chart shows shocking images. Public health and political pictures have left every thinking person blindsided and dumbstruck.

POLITICAL SHOCK

The political surprise of the decade was the rise to power of Donald Trump. “Trump,” is a name that has taken up more media space than “Jesus”. The reason for the incessant buzz is the surprise that so many can be taken in by so little.

The root of the political shock is a possible systemic failure. Even the thoughtful, no matter how well informed, are perplexed by the vote. The long ballots of tap dancing red and blue officials, spinning the truth; and the problem of collecting informed consent may mean democracy doesn't work in its current form. This political surprise was predicted by Plato centuries ago.

Plato's alternative aristocracy (government by the best) may not be the answer either because we don't have that “Guardian” class of “beneficent philosopher kings,” trained from birth to govern. Spin doctors and yellow journalists seem to have incubated a new breed of leaders which are the exact opposite of Plato's aristocracy. Plato called the spin doctors ‘sophists’ and their only skill was the use of the prod that moves the mob. It requires no talent to replace information with slogans because the uninformed are actually grateful to be relieved of the burden of thinking for themselves. Information is all “fake” anyway, so, we are not missing anything by being uninformed. So goes the thinking, or lack thereof.

The authority of elected leaders everywhere rests on the lowest levels of public trust in the history of the collective consciousness. There are more street mobs rioting about more topics than at any time in history.

Collective consciousness, which is part of our 'extra-consciousness,' is the lake on which all of the public boats float and or sink. We have to look beneath the floundering boats for any understanding of their fluctuating draft.

The lake is tidal. Public sentiment ebbs and flows mysteriously. Without understanding the myriad of complex gravitational forces, we know that "there is a tide in the affairs of men..." (Shakespeare -Julius Caesar) which, taken at its ebb, can turn brother against brother.

Leaders could not on their own divide the collective consciousness into love and hate groups; black and white; red and blue, without the sectarian propensity that rises and falls in the analog connection continuum of extra-consciousness. (We will see why the lower love levels should not be called hate later on.)

The fuzzy logic of the gray scale of the continuum is harder to manage than the bold black and white logic of urgency. The result is a simple but blinding binary affliction.

2020 vision is a binary misunderstanding of an analog process. The alarmist, simplistic data of pollsters encourages the analog subjects to behave digitally and be red or blue, black or white; friends or foes; allies or enemies. We are neither; and we are both.

We slide up and down on the connection continuum. It would appear that the middle majority swings more than the two minorities at either end, but there are no solid rules for predicting human behavior. Like quantum physics, demographic truth is confined to probability, which really means anything can happen. There's that hole again.

The hope is that we find ourselves all on the same side, instead following the leader to a two sided fight where we kill each other, and then wonder why.

PUBLIC HEALTH SHOCK

The public health surprise has to do with the fastest, broadest, world wide conquest in history. Last summer Corona was a light beer I drank on occasion, with a raw lime; this summer it is the new name for Armageddon. In my book BI, I called the Corona virus “an invasion from inner space... by little bastards.” Little Bastards is an apt term for these invaders from ‘inner space’: “little” because they, and their microscopic planet, are too small for us to grasp, and “bastards” because they have no natural parents; instead, they hi-jack living cells to procreate, which turns out to be, devilishly, more efficient.

The micro-enemy appears to be ingenious enough to have turned our strength, ‘togetherness’, into our weakness. They have weaponized human contact. They use friends and family as their foot soldiers and the alarmist media as their war drums to create panic.

It’s hard to keep from thinking that there must be some evil genius behind this attack, until you look further and see some good things that may come out of this surprise.

Never before has private health become such a public concern. Never before have so many been asked to do so much together. Like it or not, we have all suddenly been forced to think globally. For the first time, we see that everyone has to work together for the species to survive. The response to this common enemy may trump the political surprise.

AFTER-WORDS

The 2020 vision test has also forced us to focus on death tolls. Mortality score cards frame the nightly news screens, comparing death by city, state and nation. It’s as though having lost live sports audiences, media has found another spectator sport to hold your interest through the ads. Most of us see death as a game that includes us only as spectators.

Death happens every day. Death happens to everyone and yet it’s always a shocking surprise when it comes close

to home. What follows the grim reaping, is a mixed harvest of hope and horror.

The old pessimist joke goes: “I see the light at the end of the tunnel; and it’s a train”!!! The light at the end of the tunnel is supposed to be daylight, a happy end to the long dark tunnel, but instead it threatens to be annihilation. We’re all in the tunnel, and, as the sage Woody Allen put it, “No one gets out alive.” Woody Allen has tickled many of us into philosophy. Another Woody Allen philosophical tickle has to do with the most important point in all philosophy, the Platonic separation between divine and human understanding.

In this scene Woody is visiting his working-class Jewish parents in Brooklyn and announces his conversion to Christianity. His mother is shocked; she nags at her husband to come out from the TV room to the kitchen and help straighten out his son. The father remains silent off camera.

Woody confronts his mother’s outrage with a conundrum. Could she please explain how a Jewish God could bring the holocaust to his chosen people? At this point the nonplussed mother demurs, “Ask your father”. Dismayed by the silence, she yells back at her husband, demanding an answer. From the back room comes a voice with the sing song tone of irony: “You’re asking me? I don’t know how the can opener works.”

Like all those who have chosen to hitch a ride rather than get back on Saltafide, Woody’s parents had to go with what they learned in Hebrew school. Those who defer to the bible babble and doubtful cosmology of Genesis, and the ineffable wrath of a punishing God, harvest more horror than hope.

SEEING AND BELIEVING

The newer testaments and scriptures of science both raise doubts, but that double doubt seems to add to hope, as when a double negative statement becomes a positive.

Let's say there is a plan which we can never fully understand. We already said that the house of consciousness is built on the quicksand of doubt. Descartes had to use doubt itself to prove existence beyond the doubt. "Cogito (should be "dubito") ergo sum": I think (should be "I doubt") therefore I am.

Yes "sum", "I am"; the doubter exists by virtue of the doubt itself. If doubt is the foundation of existence, then everything we know rests on a foundation of doubt. We crave certainty because it is always just out of reach, and we are doomed to suffer the existential anguish of doubt, some more than others.

We feel more certain about objects than subjects and so we treat subjects as objects, the quintessential error. I kick the stone, I feel it, even in the dark, I can locate it and feel its dimensions. But can I kick consciousness; even in the light, can I tell you where it is and how big it is? Billions of hours and dollars have gone into neuroscience and psycho-tropic pharmaceuticals, both legal and illegal, to frame this illusive phantom of subjectivity, but it continues to elude objectivity.

And yet I know consciousness exists and I know the outside material world exists even though I doubt what's in it. I know I am conscious but I can never be absolutely sure that what I am conscious of is real. Maybe I'm on a rocking horse instead of bronco; in a carousel instead of a rodeo. The horse goes up and down and appears to be moving straight ahead, and I think I'm "going" somewhere. Like sitting in a train next to another train that suddenly moves backward; you swear you are moving forward.

As I look off at the collateral reality going by, I cannot see that it is not really going by. I don't know that it is my slotted view point that is going around. I assume each scene did not exist before I came around on the carousel to the line of sight, and then it appears to have just occurred, and then no longer exists, as I roll away from the line of sight.

Time seems imbedded in physical objects including our own bodies. "Physical" and "seems" are the operative word

here. Our time-based vision of the material universe may be quite different from what is really going on, or not going on.

We induced the mis-concept of time from observations of objects and then we misapplied it to subjects as well, such as consciousness, which is why consciousness constantly fights off the blindfolds of time. Imagination looks ahead, memory looks back, as though there is no “ahead”, or “back”. Unconscious dreams seem to ignore timelines; death does not prevent your dead brother from taking part in countless dream scenes.

Consciousness cheats time by making records, from a hand print on the wall of the cave, to an iPhone photo of your last vacation before the pandemic. We preserve whatever we can however we can, from history books to holograms, from video to virtual reality. We try to cheat the “time keeper” which no one has ever seen in person.

We know we can ‘make’ time; we know we can ‘take’ time, but we don’t see how we can ‘break’ time. Not yet, anyway, but the voyage of human understanding is punctuated with course corrections. We were wrong about space and we corrected. We thought the flat earth was the center of the universe; and we were sure that gods beyond the clouds made it rain, when they were pleased by our dancing and our sacrifices.

The dancing of the 60’s hippies at Esalen were not addressed to rain gods, but to the spacetime God of Einstein, and his son, the “uncertainty,” quantum God of Schrodinger, and Heisenberg.

It is counter instinctual for us to account for the relative movement of the point of view; the idea that there are different realities for the observer and the observed is counter instinctual, but not for Einstein and the quantum physicists who followed.

It is a little known fact that Augustine discovered “relativity” 17 centuries earlier than Einstein. We don’t know whether Einstein knew about Augustine’s “Confessions” where he talks about time arising as an illusion because of

the need to understand the movement of objects through space. Yes, Augustine gave us “spacetime”. Einstein would have been the first to admit that he didn’t own the idea of Special Relativity even though he won the prize for it. Both men knew about the connection of extra-consciousness and the flow of ideas from ultra-consciousness. (more on that later)

Special relativity replaced reality of the hour glass and the map, with the reality of ‘spacetime.’ General relativity bent it; modern cosmology may have broken it, (with black hole singularity in the macro universe and quantum particle entanglement in the micro universe).

Time and space were bent and broken by experts who were hired to bring us certainty. They bring us ‘uncertainty’, instead, which seems like a failure, but maybe not.

Here and now, there may be no “here” and no “now” “Here” and “there”. “before” and “after” may be an illusion; events may not be a chain of cause and effect; they may be simultaneous instead of sequential?

If entangled quantum particles and singularity can defy spacetime, of which there can no longer be any doubt, it makes no sense to confine consciousness to spacetime borders.

Physicists and priests are humans with intra-consciousness connected to extra-consciousness, and that makes them innate philosophers. It is the physicists and cosmologists, who have put holes in their own time-based plan, worm holes, and black holes. Until now the establishmentarian focus hardened their wondering into branded truths, certified by the imprimaturs of scientific and religious warlords, guarded by the dogs of dogma. But the mystery of quantum entanglement exploded the conventional wisdom and caused a nuclear fusion of spiritual and scientific doubt, which calls forth a new rational faith, a scientific spiritualism.

Whether you call the plan whole or holy, it has atomized the branded dogma and blown it back into the generic

particle/wave superstate of philosophy where we can speculate.

Scientific spiritualism may sound like a preposterous oxymoron, but how many times have we seen the preposterous becomes the postulate?

That fermentation process for vintage truths is a thousand times faster now without the time bubbles. Imagine that understanding took no time to ooze out of ignorance. Imagine if time were just a wrapper on reality which could be removed. It is speculation but so is all of philosophy. We are philosophers; we have to be to stay conscious. As always, those who think for themselves, dodge the dogs of dogma, even if it cost them their lives.

The one statement that Plato and Epicurus and Buddha could all agree with is that the less philosophy you own, the more you will suffer. I believe all of our psychological anguish can be traced back to the outsourcing of personal philosophy, whenever and however that happened. Philosophy is thinking about our immaterial “selves” in the material world, and it must be done by each of us separately in our intra-consciousness and then shared in our extra-consciousness.

The enigmatic plan has intentionally or coincidentally also triggered mind boggling, mind bending, mind connecting extra-consciousness extension tools. The more and more access to extra-consciousness, the less and less we need certified pundits. If you're lucky enough to be in the extra-consciousness loop you can become a do-it-yourself philosopher and if you're really lucky, or maybe I should say “blessed”, you might even connect to the ultra-consciousness.

None of this will be accomplished with absolute certainty; of that you can be certain. Even the statement “there is no absolute certainty” is a conundrum. If it is true then it is also false. This is where the path of thinking in terms ends at the chasm.

Why the chasm? Why the rodeo? Why the human race? Why not put us all at the finish line to begin with? Good

question! “Good Question” is another name for “no answer”. But that shouldn’t end the quest. You never stop speculating, wondering.

Think of wonder as a Saltafide saddle, shipped to your door from the human knowledge base, hand tooled by physicists and theologians, with inscriptions: “Only God knows.” “To err is human....” It will make the bumpy ride more bearable and keep you on your horse, thinking for yourself.

Thinking **for** yourself does not mean thinking **by** yourself. In fact the point of this ride, is that you can’t think by yourself. Once you saddle up on your intra-consciousness, you are already high enough, with a new perspective, and can see the paradise parade beyond the rodeo, beyond the chasm, a choreographed equestrian dance, with the nameless and the famous, all at your elbows and fingertips providing sacramental confirmation and communion.

You are riding with Schrodinger, Plato Aristotle; Plotinus, Leibniz, Kant, Hume, St. Augustine, Heisenberg, Wittgenstein; the fathers of Quantum Physics, and, of course, Jesus, and Buddha, Arendt, CS Lewis....

This does sound preachy, but I must tell you, although the idea for the scientific spiritual parade came to me decades ago in upstate New York, I have not received any golden plates from any Elmira angel. I have not downloaded any tablet of commandments from a cloud.

My tablet is connected to the same cloud network as yours where we have found each other and Plato, who’s Idealism is essential to this equestrian event.

Beyond that, I have no answers, just a saddle to smooth out the ride and keep us mounted while Saltafide gallopss across the terra firma for the great leap of faith.

CONSCIOUSNESS

It may be more than a curiosity that the “...sci...” in consciousness, which means knowledge, is also the first syllable in the word “science;” however, it follows “con...” in consciousness. “Con,” of course, means “with” or to join as in **connect**, and so I also colored “us” as the connection point. Nevertheless, for most of **us**, **consciousness** is not understood as a prior, basic connecting tool, or we could say as a **continuum**.

A continuum continues continuously, nevertheless, for the sake of our analysis, we are going to create some wrinkles in the continuum which can easily be ironed out: three, to be exact, to represent phases or levels of consciousness. They are: intra-consciousness; extra-consciousness; and ultra-consciousness.

There is no denying that internal intra-consciousness exists. You would have to use it to deny it. And there is no denying that it connects to extra-consciousness, or we couldn't be sharing these thoughts right now. But what about that pie in the sky ultra-consciousness?

Science cannot tell you where consciousness lives in the brain, or that it is contained in the brain or that it will die with the brain. Neuroscience has recently discovered neuroplasticity and neurogenesis, which demonstrate that consciousness does not obey the rules of the physical universe. Neuroplasticity means mind can redeploy mental functions from damaged neurons to other parts of the brain. Neurogenesis refers to neuro stem cells which create new neurons for new learning, if and when it is called for. For a long time it was thought that adults can only lose brain cells; now it seems the hippocampus which shrinks with age (causing forgetful senior brain farts) can also generate new neurons for those minds that insist on continuing to learn. Science is now struggling to explain the old bromide, “use it or lose it.”

It is natural to lock intra-consciousness in solitary confinement, within our respective skulls. No one can read your mind, and so you assume it is completely contained within. But before long, you read your thoughts in other minds, in other places and other times; still, for some reason, it's hard to make the **connection**.

Elsewhere in my work (BI, CC) I have talked about “connection” as a life force. Feeling connected, however, is both intuitive and counter intuitive. We come into this world screaming because we have just been disconnected and we think we may remain that way. After the screams are placated by a warm breast, we begin to suspect that we might be able to reconnect, but still not sure. We struggle with life long physical, social and economic connections and eventually those of us who stay on the ride discover intellectual connections which may lead to spiritual connections. Coincident ideas and emotional resonance lead us to more and deeper connections.

In every case, self consciousness, i.e. intra-consciousness, seems to begin disconnected, and, at different speeds, and to different degrees, it connects to extra-consciousness, and in a few cases, it may connect to ultra consciousness.

INTRA CONSCIOUSNESS

Intra-consciousness includes reflection, i.e. everything beyond perception and muscle memory: such as conception, ideation, feeling, imagination, etc. These seem to be far removed from physical laws, and do not respond to them directly; reflective intra-consciousness includes ‘potential’ connections to extra and ultra consciousness; actual ‘kinetic’ connection seems to be case dependent: how long you can stay in the saddle.

At the low end, some mental functions seem at first to be off the bottom end of the continuum, and so we dub them “unconscious,” but a continuum should have no bottom end. There may be no reason to disconnect these reflexes from reflection.

Reflexes are closer to the material elements of our body and brain and so, resonate more with the rules of the physical universe. The physical effects of reflexes are observable, measurable. Flinching, swooning, shock, amnesia are observable autonomic anesthetics for the inevitable psychic pain caused by inevitable adversity. These quasi-physical mental functions appear to be designed in mechanisms for automatic, autonomic damage control.

Whatever else they share, reflex and reflection both sit on the wobbly theodicy paradox.

The design which includes reflexes to mollify pain admits by implication that it has no control over the causes of this pain. Why would an all powerful God need to design emergency equipment for suffering, if he could control the causes of the suffering?

Like the reflex paradox, the reflection paradox raises a similar doubt: if God wanted us to connect, why start us out disconnected? Why do we need anesthetic and esthetic - numbness and sensitivity?

Once again Plato to the rescue. Plato said, in so many words, that a natural being trying to define the supernatural is unnatural. Defining God, by definition, is beyond our mental capacity, beyond our math, beyond our science, beyond our logic, beyond our philosophy. It's blasphemy, not philosophy, to second guess God.

Well then, how can we philosophize about being connected to divine consciousness? Isn't that blasphemy? Isn't it blasphemy to posit (define) a holy hole-y plan where the path to virtue and transcendence is a human choice? How can there be progress and timelessness?

Paraphrasing Plato the answer is beyond our present knowledge, which means it might be available at another time. When? If only we could erase time we would know.

There are some thoughts about thought that have a time base backbone which seems impossible to remove.

The most difficult concept to file is intellectual growth, i.e. learning, including spiritual development. Cutting the time bone out with all its spiny consequences and leaving the concept intact is nearly impossible.

Development”, i.e. “growth”, seems to be a reason for being; how do we ‘proceed’ without that? No start and no finish, no learning curve, no contest; isn’t progress the name of the game? How can we approach the divine ultra-consciousness if there is no ‘progress’?

Despite the fact that I may never be privy to absolute truth in this mortal coil, I am justified in believing that truth is out there, which is why I cannot keep from wondering about all of it; it is part of my God given, human mind, while I am in the saddle, to speculate about it, to wonder, to philosophize.

Let’s make a commemorative coin to honor Plato. Plato never meant to imply that truth and belief are not connected. The coin will help us remember that Plato distinguishes between belief and truth, and that distinguishing is not the same as extinguishing; instead truth and belief are two sides of the same coin.

The tail side of the Plato coin is belief and the head side is truth. For now the coin sits tail up, and you can’t see the head side, until it flips, or you flip. Knowing that there are two sides to the coin and that you cannot see the other side makes you fallible and infallible at the same time. The two states become a superstate, which is why admitting human fallibility is humbling and at the same time empowering. Every one knows instinctively that admitting ignorance is the ticket to knowledge.

There has to be a right answer for me to be wrong. I can know I’m wrong, even though I don’t know the right answer. If I know I’m wrong, I have to know that right exists and I am thereby inchoately connected to the “right.” Fallibility is on the continuum of infallibility, which is how I have the power to imagine what I don’t know, to speculate, to learn, to philosophize.

So I am free to believe, without knowing for sure, that God planned for development, which could have included suffering as fertilizer for spiritual growth, which growth connects intra-consciousness to extra and ultimately, maybe, ultra-consciousness.

[This very thought occurred mysteriously in my “entangled” intra-consciousness months before it forced me to search the extra-consciousness where I discovered the 2nd Century Irenaeus theodicy and the related “Cruciform theodicy. See “Philosophical Digest”/ saltafide.com]

So with full cognizance of the immortal words of The Bard:
“There is more in heaven and earth than is dreamed of in your philosophy,” I will, wonder; I will speculate; I will philosophize. I shall spur Saltafide for a running start across the extra-consciousness to the brink.

EXTRA-CONSCIOUSNESS

Extra-consciousness is the continuum of intra-consciousnesses of other minds, including those present or absent because of space or time.

While the ‘kinetic’ energy to connect to the continuum varies in every case depending on choices, the ‘potential’ energy to connect exists in every intra-consciousness.

Philosophers from the ancient Greeks to the modern Wittgenstein agree that there is an a-priori propensity which generates languages and other communication skills which are connection tools.

We enhance that communication propensity with channels and forms for media as well as in-media connections.

For the first time in the history of consciousness, instantaneous connections are available for any mind to other minds near and far.

The priestly prayers from the Vatican corridors can be heard in the chambers of Hadron Collider.

In addition to wireless waves and fiber optics invisible corridors between separate castles of consciousness have come to light. Like penetrating positrons and entangled particles some have discovered the mystery of extra-consciousness resonance.

DO IT YOURSELF PHYSICS

Both the microcosm and the macrocosm have flown the scientific coop. Just as quantum physicists have stumbled into “uncertainty,” so too, cosmologists have discovered dark

matter and dark energy, 95% of the universe which we know nothing about, call it: 'dark knowledge'. In the newly discovered darkness, we are all feeling our way humbly and together.

HEISENBERG

Probably the most important connection between science and philosophy is the "Uncertainty Principle," a term coined by Werner Heisenberg. The Uncertainty Principle is actually a non principle. Uncertainty is the absence of certainty.

Uncertainty could be looked at as another way of saying what Plato said thousands of years earlier, which we can paraphrase as: Certainty is not available to the human intra-consciousness; it must wait for connection to ultra-consciousness, the divine. As to whether the coin flip can only happen after death, I am not sure. It follows that I would have to be unsure, never having been dead that I recall, but that doesn't keep me from imagining the other side.

There is both philosophical and scientific disagreement as to whether and how much of Plato's "truth" is available to the mortal belief systems. Heisenberg agrees with Kant that "it will never be possible by pure reason to arrive at absolute truth" ("Physics Philosophy" Heisenberg p. 92). And again later in that book he imagines the other side of the Plato coin: "...idealization is necessary for understanding" (Heisenberg, *Ibid.*, p. 108).

Heisenberg cut out a place for consciousness in the monistic, materialistic scientific plan. He made the point that the tools of material science would never be fine enough for the particles of the psyche. He said that we can never expect to measure the "life force" of brain cells or any other biological particles because the experiment itself would obliterate the very vital energy it was trying to measure.

Heisenberg' uncertainty principle acknowledges the chasm naming the ledges "observer" and "observed," and offering a shaky rope bridge between the two, called probability.

This “Copenhagen” view was challenged by no less than Einstein himself, nevertheless, it is now confirmed by most physicists. I am suggesting that the chasm between the observer and the observed is the same as the space between belief and truth, posited by Plato; and, I would add, it justifies the distinction I made between the Object and the Subject domains in my book CC, which admittedly is not directly on point.

HIGGS

Higgs pointed out that no matter how much he divided matter, bottom line, there was always something left, called by some vacuum energy. I called it “mattergy” in BI. Whatever you call this conserved field, it is something as everlasting as it is mysterious, which led to the Higgs Boson (God Particle). The scientific revelation here is that there is no such thing as “nothing”; there is always going to be something, and I would add, something that we can’t measure and define.

HAMMEROFF

Stuart Hammeroff, a physician, divides the material brain and the non-material consciousness with tails of NDE (Near Death Experiences) where patients whose consciousness survived clinical death, reported “a light at the end of a tunnel”. Hammeroff is cited in Penrose’s books and in YouTube interviews with Deepak Chopra where he talks about subatomic micro-tubules in the brain which come under the spell of quantum entanglement. This mystery is important in Penrose’s “quasi spiritualism” (my term, which he would not be happy with; we will see why below).

BOHR

Neils Bohr, of the Copenhagen school of thought and Heisenberg’s mentor, also saw clearly that the human mind was too narrow to comprehend the master mind of the universe. In his famous rebuke of Einstein’s statement that “God doesn’t play dice with the universe,” Bohr said “Stop

telling God what to do.” (More on Bohr in saltafide.com, “physics digest”)

EINSTEIN

Einstein believed that the human mind could come to understand the divine plan which had to be solid, absolutely knowable, with no “uncertainty” and “probability.” He questioned the fluctuating reality of quantum physics, which he created.

PENROSE

Roger Penrose, another philosophical mathematician and physicist, (famous for the black hole work with Stephen Hawkins) suggested that the slack created by the “uncertainty principle could be the hole in the plan for “free will”. Like Epicurus he tries to make the hole part of the plan, but not a divine plan. I don’t think Penrose would mind being called a Platonist. In his book Shadows of the Mind, (page 414), he connects the Platonic world of ideals with the mental world and the physical world.

If not a spiritualist, Penrose is at least an idealist in that he insists that consciousness and machine intelligence are different and will never be the same. In both his books: Shadows of the Mind, and The Emperor’s New Mind, and in his fascinating YouTube presentations, he refutes the artificial intelligence promise that eventually computers will be able to mimic consciousness. According to Penrose, mechanical intelligence is the limit of computers and it is always and only algorithmic. Computers can only follow algorithms; they can’t create them. Only human minds can do that. Penrose makes it clear that human intelligence is different from the paint by numbers, algorithmic artificial intelligence. Algorithms can be invented by human minds but can only be followed by computers.

Penrose tells us in so many words that the other side of the Plato coin connects to human consciousness which can invent computers, but computers can never invent consciousness.

Penrose points out that no artificial intelligence could have had Einstein's inspirational leap which led to the theory of general relativity.

The connection of human consciousness to divine consciousness can be deduced **from** what Penrose says, but not **by** him. No, Penrose's insists: "the human mind is neither a gift of God nor a cosmic accident." (You Tube). He believes we just need time to bring the ocean home in our tea cup. He believes that physics will one day find a new theory that explains the micro universe of the brain where subatomic, micro-tubules are "entangled" and there, in that current mystery, non-computational consciousness will be proven and there will be no need for a leap of faith.

I have to point out with all due respect that this future oceanic tea cup Penrose is waiting for is the same as our leap of faith.

Penrose subscribes to the mystery club but only as a temporary member. Like all good physicists, he has to believe that what we don't know now, science will eventually discover.

That's as far as his faith goes. Unlike Einstein or Bohr, or Schrodinger, Penrose does not believe that any god is involved, Penrose cites the law or the plan which makes sublime thinking possible for humans, but refuses to call it 'divine'.

Fine, call it ideal; call it sublime; call it lemon and lime. "What's in a name....?" the Bard asks.

SCHRODINGER

Schrodinger had no trouble acknowledging the divine. He is an amazing example of "scientific spiritualism." He is the

most precise and, at the same time, the most speculative of the physics/philosophers. His work on the wave theory and his ground breaking equations sit in stark contrast to his “entanglement” discoveries and his superposition state and, of course, his ironic dead/live cat.

It is important to note here that, here again, my thoughts about consciousness and the connection to universal consciousness occurred to me before I knew the name Schrodinger. As with so many other thoughts which I repeated before ever hearing them, the synchronicity provides an instantiation of the “entanglement of consciousness” - mine and Schrodinger’s and Bohr’s and everyone else’s. Like particle entanglement named by Schrodinger, ‘consciousness entanglement’ (my own term), defies spacetime.

Another example of consciousness entanglement can be found in the “entangled” consciousnesses of Schrodinger, and Crick and Watson. The discovery of DNA was predicted in Schrodinger’s work. Crick and Watson, both admit that in their autobiographies (See saltafide.com / Physics Digest) .

This consciousness entanglement continues on in the extra-consciousness of microbiology after the discovery of DNA, culminating in the minds of genomic mutation researchers.

Recently codes in the genome have been discovered which guide the improvements brought about by cell mutations. This code implies a scheme for improvement of the species included in the Plan.

Again theodicy rears up. Why would God need mutation to improve on defects, why have defects in the original design? Good Question!

Since Solvay, where all of the fathers of modern physics gathered in 1927, “everything” changed. The ‘theory of everything’ has become a muddle. Scientists are now forced to wonder whether being human means you can’t ever know it all. Again, Plato comes to mind.

DO IT YOURSELF PHILOSOPHY

PLATONISTS

By now you know that Plato distinguishes between belief and truth. Belief is all that is available to mortal consciousness; the full close up view of the “truth” has to wait until we leave the mortal coil. We are not sure that only death flips the Plato coin. Neoplatonists tell us some living consciousnesses can experience the Platonic other side - the ultimate truth, our ultra-consciousness.

Plotinus, a key neoplatonist, in his henology, suggests that one can reach a state of tabula rasa, a blank state where the individual may grasp or merge with “The One”. (This might connect to the more modern idea of singularity.) The two sided coin becomes one; that chasm we talked about between homo- and sapiens is bridged. Henosis for Plotinus sees through the illusion of spacetime, materialism. It would appear that, for Plotinus, you do not have to die to experience henosis.

Saint Augustine also believes that human intelligence is aberrant but not irreconcilable. In the City of God he calls it “evening knowledge,” which can be clarified. We can share the light of eternal dawn, “morning knowledge,” the further away we get from carnality and the closer we get to spirituality.

It would be the highest levels of extra-consciousness where the singularity occurs, where we land in the Plotinus ‘One’ state, where we cross the chasm to ultra-consciousness.

The continuum does have a low end and a high end. We have been talking more about the high end where connection to extra-consciousness continues to amaze us.

The lower end of the continuum is unimaginably low. That's why we're fascinated by horror shows and cop shows; we are fascinated because we can't imagine the cutoff point where love ends and hate and evil begin. We can't imagine the cut off point because it is based on a yardstick which does not exist. We would be less fascinated and more enlightened if we see the yardstick as a continuum, a continuum without calibration; no red line for evil. Evil becomes a low level of goodness; hate becomes a level of lovelessness. This is a long winded way of saying good and evil is not black and white but a grayscale, a continuum.

There is no ultimate low end to the continuum, no vacuum. There is always the potential energy and some small amount of kinetic energy. Not in any home, not on any street, not on death row, will you find a consciousness devoid of love and totally disconnected, or off of the continuum.

Plotinus describes the continuum where the "less perfect" must, of necessity, "emanate", or issue forth, from the "perfect" or "more perfect." Thus, all of "creation" emanates from the One in diminishing stages of lesser and lesser perfection.

The Plotinus continuum was passed on to Augustine where it made its way into Christian thought, and then Wittgenstein and most importantly Hanna Arendt kept it alive in modern thought.

Augustine uses the word "testimony" for what we are calling extra-consciousness. He, with Plotinus, saw the importance of the connection with other human minds.

What we are calling ultra-consciousness, Augustine refers to as "illumination." This is related to Plotinus' One and Henosis. (see "Philosophical Digest/ saltafide.com).

This neoplatonist continuum replaces the brittle binary values 1 and 0 with the more elaborate analog levels of good, including the lowest loveless levels of good, which a modern philosopher Arendt calls "banality" instead of evil.

Hannah Arendt began her philosophical writing with a dissertation on Augustine's concept of love, *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin* (1929): "The young Arendt attempted to show that the philosophical basis for *vita socialis* (the perfect love society) in Augustine can be understood as residing in levels of neighborly love.

Augustine and Arendt did not see evil as demonic but rather as an absence of good, a lower love level.

Arendt was pilloried by her fellow Jews for applying this view to the extreme evil of the Holocaust, which she characterized as merely 'banal' [in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*]."

We know instinctively that binary blinders are not the way to look around for the truth. When we say "it's not all black and white," we are trying to broaden our focus. The ones and zeros of binary thinking may be all right for early machine intelligence, but not for human intelligence, or the new quantum computers.

The alternative to black and white thinking is the gray scale metaphor or the analog continuum which we borrowed from the platonists. This analog conceptual tool provides us with much bigger tea cup with which to bring the ocean home.

Applying this continuum to extra-consciousness allows us to think about consciousness in degrees or levels of connection. A binary concept of connection would have only two states: connected and disconnected which might work for computer gates but would not adequately represent the human condition. Everyone is connected, more or less; the "more or less" suggests a continuum.

This analog thinking keeps philosophical minds from black and white judgements, even for something as horrendous as Nazism; so much so that Arendt, a Jew, could become the longtime lover of Heidegger, a Nazi philosopher and also a follower of Augustine.

NON-PLATONISTS

Plato's pupil Aristotle distinguished himself from his teacher. Aristotle shares some Platonic beliefs in super-nature, albeit reluctantly. Aristotle set out to reverse the epistemology of Plato. For Plato humans **deduce** an imperfect knowledge from perfect Ideal forms, for all objects and subjects. For Aristotle humans **induce**, rather than deduce, knowledge from field observations; data gathering comes first. Aristotle is the father of empiricism and materialism and the scientific method.

Nevertheless Aristotle's teachings introduced the word "meta-physics." For Aristotle there are super-natural forms, the knowledge of which is **induced** from specific empirical facts collected from natural observations and induced into super "knowledge", principles.

In his treatise *On the Soul* (*peri psychēs*), Aristotle posits three kinds of *soul* ("psyche"): the vegetative soul, the sensitive soul, and the rational soul. Humans have a rational soul. The human soul, like the vegetative soul can grow and nourish itself; like the sensitive soul, it can experience sensations and move locally. The unique part of the human, rational soul is its ability to receive forms of other things and to compare them using the *nous* (intellect) and *logos* (reason). This is the same as saying subjects need another realm which differs from objects. Penrose would agree.

Epicurus knew about Aristotle, and was himself an Aristotelian in that, while he acknowledged a super-nature, his focus was on the here and now nature. He knew the Atomists (Democritus and Heraclitus) and had his own atomic theories. Epicurus was the father of humanism. Like Buddha, centuries earlier, Epicurus wanted philosophy to address the problem of human suffering with worldly human solutions. Like Buddha his solution had to do with will power and self control and most importantly, like Buddha, his prescription for the good (peaceful) life had no theological pre-conditions.

For Epicurus the root of all suffering is fear; he points out that there is nothing to fear but fear itself (which may be where Churchill got the idea). It is pointless to fear death

because when you're dead you won't be able to feel anything, and while you are alive you can't imagine death - so, why bother fearing it. Craving an afterlife is a cause of suffering so it is not worth doing either. [Text 4: *Letter to Menoeceus*: Diogenes Laertius 10.121-135].

Keeping fears and stress to a minimum is good advice for leading a peaceful life then or now. And I would agree that one should not obsess about the afterlife, or the soul. However I believe connecting this life to eternity somehow lends it significance, without which, life is pointless; and a pointless life is the ultimate suffering.

It is important to point out that neither Epicurus nor Buddha deny the existence of the sublime; they both make reference to a kind of universal consciousness, which we are calling ultra-consciousness.

Although their philosophies were worldly (as opposed to other-worldly), both thinkers went beyond worldliness when thinking about consciousness and how it connected. For Epicurus friendship and love (extra-consciousness) was one of the solutions to suffering.

It is hard to say what any of the worldly philosophers Aristotle, Epicurus or Buddha really thought about super-nature and the holy plan. None of them left authenticated versions of their teachings. We have to rely on the writings of others and hearsay in all three cases.

The other team, the Idealists: Plato, Plotinus, Augustine preserved their own thoughts in their own writings.

CHRISTIAN LOVE

For Christians the connection continuum is the love continuum. Jesus, they believe came down from the ultra-consciousness to bring the love continuum to our extra-consciousness.

God was so offended by His loveless, wrathful, paradoxical portrait in the old testament, that he sent his son to demonstrate the love continuum with the crucifiers at the low end and the crucified Christ at the high end. He forgave their low level ignorance - "Forgive them... for they know not what they do."

As an aside we should point out the connection to the "Cruciform theodicy" mentioned earlier, wherein Jesus' archetypal suffering is seen as the formula for the road to virtue.

Jesus represents the incorporation of divine love into flesh and blood. The fact that the love message spread itself all over the world suggests that there must have been an a-priori predisposition for love in every heart, or in our terms, a link in every intra-consciousness, for that extra-consciousness and ultra-consciousness connection.

We suggested earlier that the gregarious propensity to connect (Love) reaches down even into the reflex domain.

We see suffering and we cringe. We are able to feel the suffering of other humans and even animals, wherever we are on the continuum. Even at the bottom of the continuum there is "pathos", the route word for suffering, "..pathy", finds its way into our sympathy, and empathy, which is our autonomic low level love. Psychology researchers study the "entrainment" response in gregarious mammals. Someone yawns and suddenly others start yawning. The same with giggles, or wiggles, or stretches, they become contagious in connected groups. The point here is that the love continuum reaches all the way down, just as it rises all the way up. At the top of the continuum you "love thy neighbor as thyself..."; at the bottom, you "fuck thy neighbor as you fuck thy self." Please understand this is not a gratuitous profanity; it is exploiting a linguistic artifact with deep philosophical overtones.

"Fuck" has more connotative meanings than any other word in American slang. It means play with, bungle, penetrate, harm, kill, destroy. "Fuck" is a low level love, lust, and violent contact. "Fuck yourself" is found in many

languages because it is loaded with philosophical significance. It is the sheer irony where you are plugging back into yourself, short circuiting, instead of connecting, the ultimate solipsism.

The reflexive pronoun- “yourself”- works perfectly in the equation at both ends: you do it to others; you do it to yourself, whatever the predicate is.

LOVE AT A DISTANCE

The quarantine necessitated by the 2020 pandemic, whether planned or accidental has provided us a an extra-consciousness experiment. This experiment affects both self love and neighborly love “vita socialis”.

Whether intended or not, the quarantine has forced us to take a step back and find new ways to relate. We have had lots of time to think, those of us who still think for ourselves. Social distancing has forced us to rethink togetherness. We are testing the limits and the benefits of virtual togetherness.

The separation and social distancing of the quarantine also provided a ‘retreat’ with time to learn about ourselves and our connections.

The spatial distance also affords insulation from the vagaries of contact, such as violence and infection (including pandemics which have recently become a major concern).

The pandemic has subtracted the physical element from the love equation. We’re not touching each other as much. Social contact, hugs and handshakes, have been all but removed from many of our associations. Just how this affects each us provides some indication of where we are on the love continuum. How important is contact? Is it the same for everyone?

What if virtual love was all there was. This takes some imagining. Right now the physical separation is temporary; at least as far as we know. We expect to touch loved ones once the “all clear” signal sounds. But imagine that there was no all clear signal. What if you were told that you would never

be able to touch loved ones; or what if you were told you could look but not touch; or what if you could neither see or touch but could only hear; or what if you could neither see, touch, or hear but could only text. We have all experienced each of these mediate connection forms, but always with the assurance that im-mediate connection was out there waiting. We could meet for dinner after the email. We could hug next Thanksgiving, after the phone call. But what if physicality was completely subtracted from the equation.

The answer to these question will locate your love on connection continuum somewhere between lust and agape: the more physical your requirements, the less spiritual and vice versa.

Those higher up on the love continuum are closer to spiritual love and by definition further away from the need for physical affection. They should be in less need of a hug. Those at the high end of the continuum already knew that agape doesn't need contact. You don't have to touch to love.

Connection continuum position is not related to seniority. There are young people who are much higher on the continuum than their grandparents and vice versa. We've all known someone who lusts for contact and maybe accepts violence as well as affection. And we've all seen children who grow out of there infantile needs at different rates, learn how to care and how to share at different times in their lives, and some, never.

Never before in the history of mankind have so many been so connectable. That doesn't guarantee a high rate of connection. In fact, the bulk of the bandwidth is dedicated to the lowest love levels, which have to do with taking rather than giving.

Opportunities for connection abound but will not hatch themselves; just as tools will not work themselves.

Now that there are a lot more people 'not in touch,' the kind of non-physical love that transcends spacetime has come into our lives. The pandemic has provided some of us, lower down on the love continuum, an opportunity to glimpse

agape. We never had the need or the opportunity to get around physical presence, and we never had the tools. Now we have both.

This sidelining of space and time also adds a ray of realization to our time blindness.

Those who are absent because of space can now be reached in real time almost anywhere on the planet; those absent because of time can be reached back to and beyond recorded history.

The expanded pool of spatially absent partners offers a broader selection and therefore, a higher probability of fitting in to particular connection needs. The pleasures of absent company is paid for by the exclusion of present company, with whatever pleasure and/or pain that contact affords.

Even before the pandemic, we spent less time with “present company” and more and more time with absent company than any other generation.

MEDIA VS IM-MEDIA

“Communogenesis”, (a term I invented in my book CLE), is a raison d’être that shapes consciousness.

Once we realized that our minds are nodes in a circuit that sends and receives information across time and and space, it was inevitable that technology would enhance the connectivity. However they got there, (we won’t blame God) the space/time baffles to communication are hurdles that science continuously surmounts. Particle entanglement is the latest channel, already finding its way into the quantum computer networks.

Instantaneous, interactive virtual connection with spatially absent partners has demonstrated that it has the bandwidth to satisfy intellectual and even spiritual needs. Just in time learning is a brand new phenomenon which adds breadth to

consciousness. The instantaneity of the connections forces the realization that consciousness is not time bound and not confined to any space.

REEL WORLD AND THE REAL WORLD

The same need to connect, which leads us to love our neighbor also makes us susceptible to identifying with fictitious characters through whom we can live vicariously. Our unique ability to absorb the experience of other members of the species is connected to our propensity for vicarious experience in the 'reel' world of media. For better or worse, technological changes have created an enigmatic entanglement between the "reel" and the "real" realities.

Each world has an effect on the other. The more the reel world is like the real world, the more we are drawn to it.

We dedicate our talent to making the reel world more like the real world, and we dedicate our ingenuity to making the real world more like the reel world.

The vicariousness of the 'reel' world reverses the maxim 'no pain; no gain' and appears to be offering experiential gain without pain. The 'reel' world offers painless violence, duty free affluence, and worry-free romance.

Unlike great art, which forces you to think and leaves you with something you can apply to your real world, entertainment media, more often than not, leaves you with nothing but a hangover.

Sartre calls the media hangover "nausea". His book, Nausea, describes a dizziness which occurs when the house lights shock and awaken the, 'in the dark', cinema audience and dump them back into the glaring chaos of "real" reality. Suddenly the smooth, orchestrated unfolding spool of 'reel' events is gone and the chaotic 'real' world of 'anything can happen' is back in your face.

While connecting with fictitious characters of the 'reel' world, we are effectively taking a vacation from the more

complex ‘real’ characters in our own real world. The vagaries of survival make us want to flatten the chaos out of real events and spool them onto a reel of predictable events.

Vicarious experience is much easier to ingest, whether or not it is ever digested. While we are in the chaotic real world, we are all, young or old, domestic or foreign, drawn ineluctably to the organized reel world. But in the end we have to come back from the vacation, sober up from our vicarious binge.

“Binge,” which means an extended period of inebriation, has come to describe immersion into an extended series, a reel of concatenated episodes. Since the coming of Netflix and Amazon and other providers, there is no waiting between the hooks of each episode, which makes for much longer viewing sessions.

Reel fiction comments on itself in “The Truman Show” and “The Matrix,” suggesting the possibility that one day the reel links will become effective enough to capture and completely contain the spark of intra-consciousness and put it in a virtual jar like a firefly, where it will live for months instead of hours, maybe even an entire lifetime.

The ‘reel’ world of media is flattened, sequential and easily assimilated, which makes it addictive. Addiction to “binging” should be called “vicariosis” (invented term from BI), which would make it a disease and then we could search for a cure.

Vicariosis is a boon to media parasites, who rely on the addictive powers of their reel-ware formulas to capture and hold attention span as long as possible, in order to dupe consumers into buying something they never knew they wanted. The size of the profit is directly related to the amount of attention span captured. For these predators, like Plato’s sophists, humans are no longer subjects, but objects, target audiences to be prodded. Plato cited their demagoguery as the reason for the failure of democracy. As we said earlier, we may be witnessing that failure right now.

Baiting and setting extra-consciousness traps has become a high paid specialty. In our case, the potential dire consequences of media exploitation extends not only to political disasters, but also to the planetary destruction.

Despite the domination of the bandwidth by low level intentions, media does provide positive extra-consciousness transactions, albeit less frequently.

So far, no power outside ourselves has ever been able to eliminate choice. No matter how seductive media becomes, virtual reality is still reel not real, and the pause button is real.

This 'reel' experience is not "per se" good or bad; it depends whether it optimizes our real experience, or attempts to replace it. Intent shapes content.

Positive intent, i.e. loving, sharing, at the sending end creates relevance because of its honesty. Interest held because of this content honesty is different from interest captured by the formulaic hooks of form.

Not all binges are a total waste of time. In a few cases, total immersion in a different place or a different time, like Nazi Germany, ancient Rome, or ancient China, can provide something closer to a gestalt of "real" experience. Some of the complex emotional gestalts would be impossible to share any other way.

For a positive binge transaction to occur, in addition to well intended content, the receiver must be self possessed enough to add the content to self knowledge rather than using it to supplant self knowledge.

It is impossible to predict whether the media will be used to connect or divide; to create or destroy. Neither is inevitable because of that hole in the plan, allowing choices at both ends.

This is true of all media and especially music.

MUSIC

It may seem odd at first to find music in a treatise on consciousness. Unless, of course, you have managed to focus on the “con” as well as the “sci”. The “sci” part of consciousness has led us to the beliefs and speculations of physics and philosophy. The “con” leads us naturally to connection and communication.

Claude Shannon’s information theory would look at music as a message between a sender and a receiver. In my book CLE, the delivery systems for music have changed in our lifetime. In previous centuries music had to be translated into code to be stored and then had to be decoded and reinterpreted by a performer as sound in order to transcend time or space. Music can now be sent or stored as sound, which eliminates the intervening interpretation step for better or worse.

The fewer best performances enjoyed by the smallest audiences in the past, are now available to broader audiences, as are the more abundant worst performances. The effect on musical standards is not clear. What is clear, is that more people are listening to more music than ever before. The effect on the consciousness of the listeners and performers can only be guessed at since the data is for financial information rather than philosophical or esthetic truth.

Not all the music sent is received as intended. And not all music intended is sent, which seems to make music a ‘non message’ for purposes of extra-consciousness. And yet unsent music may be a communication with ultra-consciousness.

What I am referring to by “un-sent music” is the fact that some players, including musicians and non musicians such as Heisenberg, Schrodinger, Einstein and me play music ‘**for** ourselves,’ which is not as pointless as playing ‘**with** ourselves.’ For it to be communication there has to be a consciousness at each end, i.e. the “self” that is being “played for” is something other than the “self” that is playing.

[My earlier work BI, is based on a theory of multiple selves within each intra-consciousness.]

Music has an inner and outer reality. The outer reality is governed by the physics of body parts and/or instruments causing sound waves. The inner reality is a flow of non material dark energy in intra-consciousness which connects to the extra-consciousness of others, powered by the ultra-consciousness of ideal musical forms (Plato).

How else could dots on a page from around the corner or around the world, sent seconds or centuries earlier, become thought again, which flows through hands, ears and/or vocal chords, embouchures, diaphragms, and re-materializes as sound waves in the material universe. In that sense music is sublime communication, the ultimate message.

Music is never alone in intra-consciousness, in that it is always reaching out through extra-consciousness to ultra-consciousness, which is always reaching in to intra-consciousness.

You have to learn to listen inside in order to be able to listen outside, and you have to listen in order to learn to play.

So, we can say music is a message as long as we understand that either sender and/or the receiver may be out of this world. Saint Augustine would endorse this view. (see [saltafide.com/philosophy/Augustine of Hippo](http://saltafide.com/philosophy/Augustine%20of%20Hippo)).

In any performance for either a live or media audience, music is an extra-consciousness intended message. Performed music, typically, is a “one to many” transaction - one expression to many impressions. More often than not, more is sent than is received.

On the receiving end, musical awareness is inversely proportionate to the audience size. By that I mean, the greatest amount of musical awareness is in the smallest number of listeners, which puts music at odds with consumer capitalism.

On the sending end, quality and quantity are inversely proportionate, as well. By that I mean, there is more noise than signal, more craft than art. more popcorn than pearls. Of course quality is completely subjective, and yet there seems to be some deep level of agreement on what to cherish.

Every culture, and, I dare say, every intra-consciousness has a musical propensity and an opportunity to connect to extra-consciousness and ultimately to ultra-consciousness. This is the potential energy in every intra-consciousness which becomes a different level of kinetic energy in each individual.

Since this is not a book on musicology, I will highlight only a few things that shed light on our discussions of the plan,“consciousness connections”; “self esteem” and “ the love continuum.”

For analysis we can divide music into three aspects: practice, performance and appreciation.

Practice relates to self control, and the will power required to change self consciousness from reflection to reflex. Our reflective intra-consciousness is inspired by a sublime array of frequencies and spaces and rhythms from ultra-consciousness, through extra-conscious connections, but our muscle memory-reflex, founded on inertia, naturally won't play, at first because it resists change. The adage “practice makes perfect’ refers to the invisible, mysterious inner processes where the beck and call of sublimity overpowers the inertia of the material elements, (the complex set of muscles and tissue). This is quite magical; not only in the practice of music but any other choice of consciousness. Consciousness can over power the material inertia behind obesity, weakness, sadness, and other undesirable conditions. We all have admired the dominion of consciousness - mind over matter in athletes and artists, and in the legendary minds who dance in the ultra-consciousness.

With the musical skill set and any other muscle memory, as in the game of musical chairs, the new skill set must grab a seat displacing a former occupant. Old habits die hard;

existing reflex patterns are not easily replaced by the reflex changes required by reflection. Any new skill has to elbow its way through the crowd of old survival habits, including one incorrigible habit: 'look before you leap.'

The "gestalto-stasis" (invented term in BI, borrowed from homeostasis), likes to keep things the way they are. Reflection must first logically convince the homunculus, "free will" traffic cop that the new skill replacement is humanly possible. Here imitation is not suicide, it is rebirth and emulation of extra-consciousness exemplars who have made the change to mastery.

There is a prerequisite ritual initiation which inevitably requires long hours of solitude. It's as though there is some rule that you have to come to terms with yourself before you are let in to extra-consciousness. Not every one makes it through the initiation. Nevertheless the inertia and self doubt have been overcome thousands of times.

In the depths of doubt which prevents action, there is that underlying doubt about the holy, hole-y plan and theodicy.

This comes down to asking God, why put obstacles in my path if you want me to get to the goal. Why not make us all virtuous virtuosos to begin with?

As we have already seen my answer is similar to Niels Bohr's answer to Einstein. Bohr said: "Stop telling God what to do." I would add, here, "instead of telling God what to do, ask him how to do it." How to get to the virtue which underlies virtuosity. Accept the fact that mastery is mystery. If you want to learn something, don't waste psychics energy asking why; just ask how.

Performance content is also powered by intent through extra-consciousness, in live venues, im-media, and in media forms. Despite the fact that the performer may have mastered the reflexes, the music that comes out may be uninspiring. "Phoning it in" is an expression used to describe competent but uninspired performances. The performer's mastery is inspirational because it points to the ultra-consciousness and it's super-nature. The inspired

performance finds the love in the heart of the musical message.

Appreciation depends, as we have already pointed out, on the state of intra-consciousness of the receiver. The ability to connect to the extra consciousness of the performed music varies depending on receptivity of the receiver's consciousness.

Learning to listen involves the same sort of initiation wherein you have to come to terms with yourselves. You have to embrace your ignorance in order to love learning.

You have to love learning in order to be open to the extra-consciousness; you have to love life to find your way through the extra-consciousness to the sublime ultra-consciousness.

Again, the potential energy of appreciation is in all consciousness, the kinetic energy depends on the action freely chosen, which varies in every case.

The sublimity of musical appreciation erases cultural boundaries, as if there were a universal consciousness. In our own time, more Asians play western music than ever before, and the opposite is also true. Ravi Shankar jams with the western musicians; jazz chords find their way into Piazzolla's Argentine tangos, and Bonfa's bossanova; Ellington tunes cross geographic borders to Pori Finland, and St Louis and Tokyo and even through the iron curtain to Moscow.

Musicians complete each other's riffs whether they are from Harvard or Harlem. This resonance could not occur without connected consciousness including some contact with the muse who is part of ultra-consciousness.

Many philosophers have suggested that music and mathematics sit next to each other in the ultra-consciousness. Jazz musicians often assign numbers for the scale degree of the notes and another set of numbers for the role of the chord in the harmonic pattern. C in the key of C would be 1, D -2 etc... At the risk of losing you, suffice it to say that everywhere and always, the mathematical patterns, in the

form of chord progressions, proliferate themselves like sonic fractals.

For instance, 2-5-1- which is at the basis of thousands of tunes becomes part of 1-6-2-5- like “Blue Moon,” and that can become, so called, ‘rhythm changes’ - blues, minor blues, and “dixie” changes 1-3-6-2-5. Familiarity with this Mandelbrot, sonic geometry gives you the tools you need for appreciation.

Mastery of this musical, magical math affords you the mysterious joy of creating and/or appreciating unexpected/ expected harmonic particles and melodies, which are at the same time familiar and brand new.

This development of improvisation applies to the composition and appreciation all music, not just jazz. Jazz, however, moved the composer onto the band stand, and somehow audiences enjoyed watching that magical improvisational process during the performance

In the war years (Forties), the swing music of the Twenties, was continually embellished and audiences were broadened as never before. Eventually, the expanded harmony of swing; the ninths, thirteenths, blues, rhythm changes, and the like, were folded into, what I must call, an esthetic revolution, which happened in spite of the commercial desire to keep music “simple and stupid.”

Bebop, as it is sometimes called, came from much smaller combos, where each individual musician was both soloist and instantaneous composer.

I haven’t missed one story or movie about jazz musicians, and I can say, without a doubt, that none of them deal with the mastery mystery at the root of jazz. Unfortunately, it is much easier to interest the audience in a freak show, where jazz musicians have to use drugs to numb the pain they suffer as misfits. This completely misses the point. The fact that the jazz musician is not ordinary does not make him/her a misfit. Like any artist they must possess extraordinary discipline, extraordinary dedication and extraordinary talent.

Extraordinary angels should be what interests us not the paradoxical demons.

For the first time, jazz audiences could listen to the new music and at the same time have a front row seat at the creative process that was instantaneously composing the music.

As sophisticated as that sounds, it was not reserved only for elite audiences of cognoscenti. In the im-**media** world of live performances, there were affordable jazz bars and coffee houses in every major city for up and coming small groups and jam sessions, which helped form new groups. Right around the corner were the big jazz clubs, where higher cover charges were now divided by a much smaller number of artists. Eventually in the late fifties, jazz stars made more money than surgeons.

Some of this is lost in listening to a jazz record, which may have gone through several cuts and edits. You miss the magic of watching it flow before your very eyes, but still the music, like all music, is a river from intra-consciousness through extra-consciousness to the universal ultra-consciousness.

ULTRA CONSCIOUSNESS

Others have referred to it as universal consciousness. As such, ultra-consciousness would transcend spatial or temporal boundaries, a 'non room with a partial view' of divine perfection. Ironically, there is much less to say about the keystone of our scientific spiritualism.

Were we to include ultra-consciousness on the "truth" side of Plato's dualism, i.e. the flip side of the Plato coin, details would be understandably unavailable.

Plato's dichotomy "truth/belief" could mean you have to leave the material body to experience the ultimate truth side. As far as I know, those who have left have not come back. And so, there are no eye witnesses. I have already admitted that I have never been dead, as far as I know, and have never claimed to have actually seen the light directly. So, how can I tell you about something or someplace I've never seen?

Well, I can repeat what I've heard from others who have never seen it, and there are many. We preserve and treasure the authors of these stories; geniuses, avatars and saints from every culture have been immortalized because of their idealism.

All of the idealists were alive when they told us about the other side. Pre-platonists- Parmenides and Pythagoras; Plato himself with his ideal forms; Neoplatonists-Plotinus' perfect 'One, and Augustine's "illumination" - these were all written by humans who were still living, in the dark cave of the "mortal coil."

If divine vision was confined exclusively to afterlife visitors, none of these idealists could have been eye witnesses. In a court of law their testimony would be "hearsay". We the jury would not be allowed to consider these writings in coming to our verdict.

Likewise if this were a lab experiment, the reports would be unsubstantiated by observation and would be discarded.

However, we have not discarded these reports; on the contrary, we preserve them; we immortalize them. It is the hope of immortality within the myth that keeps it alive. The idea that there is another aspect of existence which is not mortal divides existence in two, like the two sides of the same Plato coin.

Dualism is an ancient philosophical belief that there is another coexistent realm which is different from the eye witnessed, illusory, material reality. In the materials realm objects behave according to an understandable rational plan. In this material jurisdiction of objects, objective evidence prevails over hearsay.

However, in the non-material realm of subjects, evidence is a useless tool because there is no object and no objective data, only subjectivity. It would be impossible, and a waste of psychic energy to prove or disprove objectively that subjectivity exists and is all connected.

If reason is all we had in our heads, there could be no Idealism, no imagination, no art, no love. On the other hand, if faith is all we could manage there would be no logic, no logs, no lodging, no temple for the soul.

No doubt, the proportion of reason and faith is different in every mind, but they both must be there. Mind could not work with reason or faith alone. It's a duet no matter how unbalanced. If reason and faith are equally proportioned as in scientific spiritualism, we have enough mental power to flip the Plato coin.

Flipping the coin is a less than an apt metaphor because it comes from the object domain and doesn't fit in the non-objective subject domain.

Perhaps there is no need to flip, because there is one coin and one continuous side that only looks like two sides with the digital blinders on. The coin now becomes a möbius continuum where two sides are all on one side.

Dichotomy is our handiest tool. Dichotomy divides for analysis and then baffles until unification occurs. Dichotomy is an essential feature of our binary nature and its parallel foot prints are everywhere including this analysis: “on the one hand and on the other hand”; “in one ear and out the other”; reflex/ reflection; mind/matter; luck/blessing; chance/ destiny; faith/reason; God/meme; subject/object; science/ spiritualism. We had to give the coin two sides, before we could come to understand that there really is no wall between the two sides of dualism. There are two sides to the coin, but with the tim-blinders off we might see that Plato platinum is a möbius plane were the two sides are also one side.

The basic tenet of dualism is that consciousness is not an object which can be weighed and measured like objects. Nevertheless, subjective consciousness is connected to objects. We know that weightless consciousness has enormous power over weighty objects. The subjective (non-objective) force of consciousness can move mountains and/ or destroy planets. Stones become architecture; sounds become music; words become bonds; promises become marriages, communities and corporations. All of consciousness is a continuum of subjectivity which is artificially, heuristically divided from objectivity. It may be that there really is no difference between monism and dualism.

The reunification of dichotomy is the quintessence of universality; universality is the quintessence of consciousness.

Just as we should not be subjective about objects, (i.e. don't fall in love with your car or your computer), we cannot be objective about subjects, like consciousness. We see them as separate with the crosseyed double vision of dualism, but if we keep watching, we see them merge.

One philosophical surprise that results from the reunification of the dichotomy, is the realization that self consciousness and universal consciousness are one. With this dichotomy out of the way :”self realization” can occur: I come to suspect that the road to knowing God is knowing

myself. Socrates (Plato) told us that was the whole reason for the rodeo.

In addition to “know thyself” and “the unexamined life is not worth living,” Socrates also said “I am not alone; I am by myself.”

Without being saints or geniuses, many of us already guessed that self love is the root of all other love. With self love, solitude is no longer a burden; you never feel lonely because you enjoy your own company; you enjoy your own company because you are one with everything, with God. That fit provides the ultimate comfort.

The phrase from the “Star-wars” movies some stays with us: “may the force be with you”. We were amused by the notion because the force as farce, but the notion stays with us for other reasons having to do premonition. Science and spiritualism will stumble into each other in the same “unified field” where the newly discovered force seamlessly connects self love and universal love, self consciousness and universal consciousness, intra-consciousness and ultra-consciousness; human and divine.

Matt is not buying it; he insists that there is no God unless it is located, weighed or measured.

I would then ask what is the difference between the materialist belief which says ‘there is no God beyond measuring,’ and the spiritual belief which says ‘there is no measuring God’?

Science has begun to erase the dichotomy between matter and energy. ‘Dark knowledge, which fills the chasm, provides a lift which supports our leap of faith.

In the leap we will eliminate the chasm, erase the dichotomies. It all comes together in the “unified” end.

About the Author



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