



THE SOCIETY FOR Consciousness Studies

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EDITOR'S WELCOME

Anne Kinne

Welcome to the summer 2017 issue of Continuum, and my first foray into editing the Newsletter. To submit to *Continuum*, please contact me at anne.g.kinne@gmail.com

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UPCOMING EVENTS

A number of our SCS members will be giving presentations at the upcoming [CONSCIOUSNESS: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY](#) conference in early October, in Shanghai. This looks to be a world class event for consciousness studies.

Pratibha Gramann

Pratibha Gramann, Ph.D. will be presenting a talk at the upcoming 23rd *International Vedanta Congress* August 10-13, 2017, at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Title of presentation: *Ancient Roots of Consciousness Expanded*.

NEWS ITEMS

A NEW THINKING ALLOWED VIDEO CHANNEL ON YOUTUBE

Jeffery Mishlove

The [New Thinking Allowed](#) video channel on YouTube releases new video conversations in the field of consciousness studies and related areas (particularly parapsychology) twice a week — every Monday and Thursday. Recent guests have included Stuart Hameroff, Russell Targ, Stephan A. Schwartz, Charles Tart, Stanley Krippner, Stephen Braude, and Edwin May. In addition “[Video Nuggets](#)” (short, 3 - 5 min, excerpts from longer interviews) are currently being released on a daily basis.

Upcoming shows include:

Aug 3: Controlled Remote Viewing with Lyn Buchanan

Aug 7: Non-Violence with Stephan A. Schwartz

Aug 10: The Life, Death, and Afterlife of Elisabeth Targ with Russell Targ

Aug 14: The Hard Problem of Consciousness with Stuart Hameroff

Aug 17: Living Kabbalah with Samuel Ben-Or Avital
Aug 21: Healing Intention, Part One: Research With Healers with Stephan A. Schwartz
Aug 24: Healing Intention, Part Two: Time and Consciousness with Stephan A. Schwartz
Aug 27: The ORCH OR Theory of Consciousness and Its Critics with Stuart Hameroff
Aug 31: Kinesthetic Intelligence with Samuel Ben-Or Avital
Sep 4: King Lear and the Power of Tragedy with James P. Driscoll
Sep 7: The Power of Intention with Stephan A. Schwartz

A complete, regularly updated, list of past and future video conversations can be viewed [listings](#).

JAMES VAN PELT FACILITATES CONFERENCES

James Clement van Pelt

From James: Last month (June) I facilitated two conferences at Yale, one of which was ours (SCS); the other was the annual meeting of the Society for Scientific Exploration (SSE). For ours my presentation was "Silent Echoes at the Gateless Gate" about the location of the nexus ("Theta Point") between the world we know by our physical senses and the world beyond. For SSE it was "The Cult of the Meaningless Coincidence" concerning the pervasive power of the regnant paradigm to ward off challenges from "outside the box" research. Also during June I presented "Climate Change in Context: Stress, Shock, and the Crucible of Livingkind" as Shapley-Booth Fellow of the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS) at its annual meeting on Star Island (New Hampshire), where I was elected a Board member of IRAS. This month (July) the English edition of the book of which I'm a co-author and co-editor, *Seeking Home in a Strange Land: True Stories of the Changing Meaning of Home* became available on Amazon.com and elsewhere. I also completed an article with my Dutch collaborator, Dr. Sietske Dijkstra, called "Trauma and Identity: Decoherence and Pathways to Recovery" for the APA Journal (not yet accepted). I'm working on an article for *Tradition and Discovery*, the journal of the Polanyi Society, and one for *Zygon*, the journal of IRAS, both to be published (hopefully) next year.

And what a pleasure it was to be with you all at Yale in June! I hope to have you back in 2019.

NEW ORGANIZATION: ALLIANCE FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF MUSICAL ACADEME.

Creativity Spirituality/Consciousness Social Justice/Race Sustainability Peace
Ed Sarath, founder

From Ed: I am happy to announce the formation of a new organization: Alliance for the Transformation of Musical Academe (ATMA). The word ATMA, which translates from Sanskrit as “soul,” is intended to inspire an entirely new kind of change visioning that penetrates deep into the creative and spiritual bedrock of musical artistry, pedagogy, scholarship and activism. In addition to stimulating new perspectives on common reform themes in music studies, ATMA seeks to catalyze conversation around those as of yet to be significantly addressed—including Consciousness/Spirituality, Social Justice/Race, and Sustainability. As I point out in an accompanying essay, the fact that diversity discourse rarely broaches the realm of black-white racial dynamics, and the extraordinary social justice and musical ramifications thereof, is but one indicator that change conversation and action in our field lag far behind what is needed if music studies is to align itself with the musical, educational and societal needs at this extraordinary moment in history. If, moreover, the neglect of that core social justice imperative is not problematic enough, the scarcity of discourse in our field on the relationship between music, music studies and sustainability—ecological, cultural and beyond—represents another indicator of the embryonic status of the music studies change conversation. The same can be said of spirituality, which—while viewed as inextricably linked to music in cultures from time immemorial, including in much contemporary practice—is an elusive, if not entirely evaded topic, in our music schools.

Inspired by an emergent worldview called Integral Theory, ATMA views these and other issues not in isolation but as part of an overarching matrix of considerations that will only be addressed through a revolution in creativity and consciousness. Moreover, restoring the connection between music and soul in our music schools will not be achieved through additive strategies to the existing model (what integralists call horizontal change) but rather by rebuilding the entire framework from its foundations (hence vertical reform) around an expanded artistic and spiritual template. The broad creative and cultural horizons of the Contemporary Improviser Composer Performer paradigm that has long been central to my work

and is at the heart of the widely-read CMS Task Force ‘Manifesto’ will thus open up to include a rich contemplative/consciousness studies component that exemplifies the highest ideals of an arts-driven spiritual vision. In a single stroke, unprecedented capacities to penetrate deep into the treasures of the past will coexist and coevolve with heretofore unmatched capacities to navigate the riches of our times, and to advocate the transformative power of music.

ATMA invites the participation of colleagues who recognize the urgency of this juncture in human history for a vastly new conception of the human being, and human creative and spiritual potential, to guide educational and societal practice. ATMA invites the involvement of individuals who understand the important contributions of the arts to this emergent vision, and that music studies will remain seriously impaired in this regard as long as improvisation and composition, let alone other essential experiences, remain absent from core musical identity, and that this problem will never be rectified by sprinkling these processes atop existing curricular and cultural foundations. ATMA invites the participation of colleagues who thrive on wrestling with the biggest questions surrounding ultimate reality and meaning, who are not squeamish about words like ‘spirituality’ and ‘religion,’ and are committed to engaging in difficult dialogues on topics such as race and gender—even if this means confronting their own racism and sexism—in a recognition that the unprecedented outer change called for in our time will require unprecedented inner change.

Please consider joining me in this endeavor. sarahara@umich.edu

BOOKS WE ARE READING

The Leap: The Psychology of Spiritual Awakening (An Eckhart Tolle Edition) by Steve Taylor, Eckhart Tolle (Foreword).

“What does it mean to be enlightened or spiritually awakened? In *The Leap*, Steve Taylor shows that this state is much more common than is generally believed. He shows that ordinary people — from all walks of life — can and do regularly “wake up” to a more intense reality, even if they know nothing about spiritual practices and paths...” [Goodreads](#)

This book generated considerable discussion on the SCS listserv. It is a well-written and easy to read exploration of Taylor’s investigations of individuals who have undergone awakening experiences, often abrupt and outside of traditional

practices or traditions. I personally found his description of such experiences among famous poets and artists particularly fascinating. – Leslie (Allan) Combs

Ecology of Consciousness: The Alchemy of Personal, Collective, and Planetary Transformation by Ralph Metzner. (Paperback, 664 pages, Published March 1st 2017 by Reveal Press)

“Who are we, really? In *The Ecology of Consciousness*, a Harvard scholar and pioneer in the field of consciousness studies—well known for his groundbreaking psychedelic research with Ram Dass and Timothy Leary—presents an expansive work culminating decades of research in Eastern philosophy, shamanism, and more to guide you along the path of true consciousness and transformation...”

[Goodreads](#)

I found this book to be amazing in scope and depth, and at the same time highly readable. At 664 pages it covers many of the topics of interest of consciousness scholars, as well as quite a few that I had not approached previously. If I had one book to recommend to a student or colleague who was seriously interested in the living and exciting aspects of consciousness studies, this would be my candidate. – Leslie (Alan) Combs

The Psychedelic Renaissance, The Second Edition: Reassessing the Role of Psychedelic Drugs in 21st Century Psychiatry and Society by Ben Sessa

Ben Sessa takes the reader on a journey through the fascinating history of psychedelic plants and chemicals, examining their role in human culture from prehistory to modern times. Based on a thorough review of scientific evidence, he makes a clarion call for a reevaluation of their clinical potential with appropriate setting in scientific research, psychiatry, psychotherapy, and personal growth. First published in 2012, *Psychedelic Renaissance* has been extensively revised and expanded to incorporate the extraordinary developments in research into psychedelics over the intervening years.

[Goodreads](#)

This book covers recent research with MDMA, ketamine, ayahuasca, and psilocybin, as well as an extensive review of their role in psychotherapy. The author, Ben Sessa, who has published some two dozen articles on psychedelics in peer-reviewed journals, discloses how his own psychedelic experiences have transformed his life and his psychotherapy practice. It is authoritative, well-written, and contains some marvelous photographs. – Stanley Krippner

SCS 2017 YALE CONFERENCE RECAP

The Report by [John K. Grandy](#)

This was the second CT conference, and overall the fifth annual SCS conference, held June 2-4 at [Yale University](#) and [The Graduate Institute of CT](#). Many of the presentations are summarized below.

Opening the conference was headliner Ervin Laszlo, who was Skyped from Budapest. He began by discussing the reality of conscious experiences even when the brain is not functioning, citing near death experiences as an example.

Laszlo next focused on his current scholarship, which addresses the question of how we locate and situate consciousness in what we do know about the world and the universe. He initiated his answer based on the premise that the laws of the universe were in place from the beginning, i.e., the Big Bang. Furthermore, these laws can be conceived as a type of non-material intelligence that has “in-forms” the world in what he terms “a forming effect on nature”. This concept is consistent with the conclusion of his handout *Consciousness* (soon to be posted at [CONSCIOUSNESS](#)); that consciousness is not produced by the brain, and is not confined to the brain. Laszlo maintains that it is a fundamental phenomenon. The universe is constantly and seamlessly in-formed by a hologram that undergirds both space and time. Our individual consciousness is a localized reception and read-out of that hologram. These ideas are further expanded upon in Laszlo’s forthcoming book *The Intelligence of the Cosmos: Why Are We Here? New Answers from the Frontiers of Science*; expected out later this year.

In addition, free copies of one of Laszlo’s books *Macrosift: Navigating the Transformation to a Sustainable World* were available to the conference attendees. This book focuses on the both the benefits and perils that will be a result of what Laszlo foresees as the next macrosift, caused by the rapid explosion of technological advances and worldwide economic globalization.

Thomas Lombardo, the director of the [Center for Future Consciousness](#), The Wisdom Page, and Wisdom and the Future, then gave a presentation that focused on his forthcoming book *Future Consciousness: The Path to Purposeful Evolution*. The central question to Lombardo’s work is “what is a good future and how do we

create it?” He proposes that this question is the fundamental challenge to humankind and is the motivation to study the future.

The concept of “Future Consciousness” was defined by Lombardo, as the total integrative set of psychological processes and modes of experience and behavior involved in our consciousness of the future. This includes hopes, fears, desires, planning of goals, future visions, theories, stories, and purposeful behavior. In his view, the value of future consciousness and the capacity to set goals is what built human civilization, which implies that that human consciousness is constantly purposeful. Lombardo concludes that our preferable future evolution of the human mind is to become “wise cyborgs”, in that we are embracing technology as part of our evolution; “we are already cyborgs, so we may as well be wise ones”.

Beth Torpey, from Kingdom Consulting, Seymour Lakes, gave a presentation on “Global Sustainability, the Evolution of Consciousness and the Role of Water”. She discussed several critical issues, including global starvation, overpopulation, poverty, and the impact of climate change. Torpey proposed that a paradigm shift and an evolution of consciousness are required for the necessary change; some examples included were decreasing dependence on oil and non-renewable resources, and the urgency to discover a new spirituality or reconnecting with an older one. The second portion of her presentation focused on intention in relation to water. Torpey explained the hypothesis that water can communicate bio-information, has a memory, and may interact with conscious intention.

John K. Grandy, author of this report and a physician assistant and independent researcher, discussed the concepts of DNA autopoiesis and consciousness, providing evidence of gene families that support this system of autopoiesis and sustain genetic cognitive action cycles (called the three dynamic levels of DNA consciousness). He expanded on these concepts and discussed the role of DNA in conscious systems, e.g., the human brain. The notion termed “neurogenetic correlates of consciousness” was broken down into three phases: the emergence of neuron-based consciousness, the continuum of neuron-based consciousness, and neurodegeneration. Collectively, in this paradigm, DNA is a degree of consciousness that maintains a pivotal role in higher degrees of consciousness, as seen in the human brain.

Steven Mitchell, a PhD student working with Leslie Combs at CIIS, and conference assistant, presented “How the Brain Forms its Politics”. This started with an

unfortunate story involving his daughter, Hayley, being bullied at school. Mitchell went on to discuss research that demonstrates neurological differences in conservative leaning brains compared to liberal leaning brains. Specific neurophysiological evidence examined included examples, e.g., conservative brains demonstrate an increase in the right amygdala, whereas liberal brains show increases in the left posterior insula.

Later on the first day of the conference there was a concurrent session at The Graduate Institute. This session featured Thomas Lombardo, who gave a presentation on the “Evolution of Science Fiction”. Lombardo began by examining the question “why is science fiction so popular?” to which he proposed that science fiction enables the holistic psychological development of what he refers to as “future consciousness” (discussed in his earlier presentation). In this presentation, his new book series, “Science Fiction: The Evolutionary Mythology of the Future” was introduced, which will offer a sweeping overview of the evolution of science fiction. The first volume, “From Prometheus to the Martians”, is expected to be out next year.

Ed Sarath, University of Michigan, Department of Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation, gave a presentation on “Improvisation, Cosmos, and Psyche”. Sarath did some [improvisation with a trumpet performance](#). He used this improvisation as an example to support his thoughts on the compository nature of the universe and human improvisation as a manifestation of cosmic improvising. Sarath suggests that we are co-create the universe with a larger cosmic intelligence.

The second day of the conference was opened by Jeffery Martin, Jeffery Martin, Executive Director of the [Center for the Study of Non-Symbolic Consciousness](#). Dr. Martin gave a presentation entitled “Clusters of Individual Experiences form a Continuum of Persistent Non-Symbolic Experience in Adults”. This was described as an initial large-scale cognitive psychology report on 50 participants reporting persistent non-symbolic experience. His results revealed five core categories in which individuals in his program change: self-of-self, cognition, emotion, perception, and memory.

Paula Rayo, a Master’s degree candidate in professional education in curriculum and pedagogy and managing director of Seventh Dimension Health, London, Ontario, Canada, presented her research on ayahuasca and its effects on

individuals' existential meaning. Her study included 29 participants who visited the ayahuasca center Nihue Rao Centro Espiritual, Peru. During this study the subjects participated in ayahuasca experiences. The results revealed that the altered states of consciousness that were experienced under the influence of the ayahuasca ceremony did not appear to be a predictor for change in existential meaning.

Allan "Leslie" Combs, the president of the SCS and conference organizer, gave what he termed a "five minute Shakespeare". This presentation was based on a recent article published in the journal [Spanda](#) that deals with the topic of intersubjectivity. Combs began with a "basic definition of consciousness," defined as "what is it like" to be here, right now, sitting in a chair, tasting (or not tasting) what is in your mouth, etc. He suggests that this is a fundamentally subjective definition. This definition is, somewhat in contrast, to the idea of collective consciousness—or what it is like to be embedded in group consciousness. There were other sub-definitions of collective consciousness, e.g., social collective consciousness. Intersubjectivity, according to Combs, is a phenomenon existing between conscious minds. This phenomenon represents a psychological relation between people. He used an example, based on his background as a Quaker, and being at a "gathered" Quaker meeting.

Christine Keating gave a presentation titled *Questing Toward the Resting Point- Doris Lessing's Non-duality of Self and Other- From Metafiction to Mythopoeic Fantasy*. Worthy of mention is that Christine, at Assumption College, is coauthoring a book with Alan Combs, *Mythopoesis and the Feminine in the Literature of the American Renaissance*.

Overall, SCS Yale conference 2017 featured several well-rounded points of view dissecting the subject of consciousness. These topics ranged from spirituality, non-materialism, and future consciousness, to neurological and genetic based presentations. In addition, Yale University is a fantastic location for the SCS conference, in that it has a traditionally historic atmosphere of intellectualism.

VIDEOS FROM THE CONFERENCE (Thanks to Simon Senzon, and Steve Mitchell)

Rick Barrett <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaJm8uNA7c8&feature=youtu.be>

Leslie Combs - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Zx9jLy54M0>

Liz Jelinek <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KovKBziLeXs&feature=youtu.be>

Ervin Laszlo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYImZYrI5sE>

Tom Lomardo - TGI <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snvyp53slXg&feature=youtu.be>

Tom Lomardo - Yale <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Llohn7VSrVE>

Bonnitta Roy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRCoUjuE_6g&feature=youtu.be

Ed Sarath <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aICAzUeRWs&feature=youtu.be>

Constance Scharff <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrZQCCEQM9Q>

Simon Senzon <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRVmSIRgvl4&feature=youtu.be>

James Clement Van Pelt <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uleyjfC3vKs>

Bob Wright <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w95ovbnGgdE>

Imants Barušs writes that a version of his talk will appear as a published paper in our journal CONSCIOUSNESS sometime after this summer, so anyone who is interested, can explore what he discussed.

INCIDENTAL WRITINGS AND NEWS REPORTS BY MEMBERS

REALITY APPEARS INCURABLY SPLIT—NOW WHAT?

Deepak Chopra, MD and Anoop Kumar, MD; From [SFGATE](#)

“In many fields, such as medicine, psychology, and neuroscience, there’s a serious problem with the difference between subjective and objective reality. Until this problem is solved, the two realities will never really mesh. At first the subject-object split seems easy enough. If you feel a pain in your foot and you find a rock in your shoe, the rock (objective fact) is the cause of the pain (subjective experience). Medicine, psychology, and neuroscience all accept this as the true

model for all subjective states (love, happiness, depression, anxiety, etc.)—a physical cause in the objective world creates a subjective feeling....

[Continue](#)

RIPPLES OF KNOWING – part of a forthcoming book, *Seeds of Awakening*, by Peter Russell

This selection from the forthcoming book - *Seeds of Awakening* – is a collection of 18 or so essays on the nature of consciousness, the essence of awakening, the Self, and associated material. It has an underlying non-dual flavor, as can be seen from the piece below, and is a good reflection of Peter's current thinking. Anticipating that it will be available sometime mid-Fall.

Where are your thoughts?

"In me," is the obvious answer. They are not "out there" in the physical world. They might well stem from brain activity, but here I'm asking where do you actually experience them. And that is within you—in your mind.

So what are thoughts made of? They are not material things; they are not made of atoms or anything physical. Yet our thoughts clearly exist. What, then, is their essential substance?

Because we don't often consider this question we don't have any ready words for the "stuff" from which mental phenomena are made. Perhaps the best we can say is they are made from mind-stuff. That doesn't in itself say much, except to emphasize that they are not made of matter-stuff.

In Sanskrit, the language of Indian philosophy where these questions have been pondered more deeply, they do have a word "mind-stuff"—*chitta*. *Chit* means "consciousness" in the sense of being aware, and *chitta*, means "of consciousness." Thoughts are described as *chitta vritti*, meaning "the movement, or whirling, of consciousness" In that sense, they are made of consciousness.

But some caution is needed here. The word "consciousness" has various meanings and my idea of it may be different from yours.

In addition it is a noun, which implies it is some "thing." And is therefore something that can be known in some way, however subtle, rather than the common essence of all knowing.

The suffix "-ness" (as in conscious-ness) means "the state or quality of." It is appended to an adjective to create an abstract noun that allows us to talk about that quality in a general way. Happiness is the state of being happy. Softness is the quality of being soft. But neither happiness nor sadness exists as an independent

thing.

Similarly there is no such "thing" as consciousness. The word refers to "the state or quality of" being conscious. The word "conscious" deriving from the Latin *consciūs*—literally, "with knowing."

A thought is an excitation in the field of knowing. This is experienced as words in my mind, with perhaps some image from the past and maybe an associated feeling. But the thought has no independent existence beyond my knowing of it. It is but a temporary ripple in the ever-present field of knowing.

The same is true of any other experience that may appear in the mind. The scenes or sounds that constitute a memory are all "in the mind," and are likewise just modulations of the field of knowing. So are the images, sounds, smells, tastes or feelings we may experience when we imagine the future.

In dreams, the scenes we see, the characters we meet, the conversations we have, the feelings that arise, may all seem very real in the dream, but they too are nothing more than ripples in the field of knowing.

It is only a short step to appreciate that the same applies to our experience of the world. If you close your eyes and explore your experience of your body, you will find various sensations—some pressure in places, some warmth here, a tingling there, or some tension perhaps. These different sensations are then integrated into the experience of having a body. But, like the various sensations, this experience of a body is itself in the mind, another modulation of the field of knowing.

Similarly with sound. It is easy to appreciate this when we imagine some music. That clearly is an experience arising in the mind. Similarly, when we listen to a recording on headphones; the brain may interpret the sound as coming from somewhere outside us, but it is actually just another appearance in the mind.

There is no essential difference with "live" music. The brain is taking the data relayed to it from the ears, and from that creating the sound of music. This is experienced as coming from an external world beyond the body, but that experience is itself still arising in me, another excitation of the field of knowing.

In our minds we construct a mental representation of the world out there. And, as more sensory information is integrated into this picture, it begins to take on the mantle of an independent reality. We begin to believe that the world arising in our awareness *is* the world out there—the so-called "real" world.

This is made all the more real as soon as we open our eyes.

Vision takes us out into the world of an apparent external space that seems to be independently real and filled with material objects. But however much it may appear so, we are forced to accept that the visual experiences themselves are also

just ripples of knowing.

This is where it begins to get mind-bending. We may realize that the colors we experience are just appearing in the mind—the light itself is not colored, it is simply energy of varying frequencies, the color we experience coming from the representation of that frequency in the mind—but it is more difficult to appreciate the same is true of the solidity we experience around us. It not only looks solid, we can touch it and feel its solidity, and experience how it impedes our movement. We seem to be experiencing the world directly, but in truth all that we are experiencing, including its solidity, is a representation of the world "out there" appearing in our field of knowing.

But wait! I hear you say. There clearly is a very real, solid world out there. When I kick a stone I am coming into contact with the real world. My experience of that contact—the pressure and pain perhaps—may be another appearance in my mind, but it nevertheless argues for a very real world "out there." I would agree. Everything points to there being a world "out there." However, we can never know it directly. We can explore our experience of it, and from that draw inferences or conclusions about it—which is what the scientific approach aims to do—but all that we discover, all that we know and understand about the world, all our scientific theories and mathematical equations, our concepts of matter, energy, quarks, strings, particles, waves, space and time, are but appearances in the mind, more ripples in the field of knowing.

It is all knowing, knowing ripples of knowing. Knowing knowing itself.