

SCIENCE, PSI, SPIRITS AND SPIRITUALITY

E. Janet Warren

Alice: “There’s no use trying, one can’t believe impossible things.”

The Queen: “I daresay you haven’t had much practice. When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why sometimes I’ve believe as many as six impossible things before breakfast.”

Lewis Carroll
Through the Looking Glass

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF
SCIENCE, RELIGION AND
WORLDVIEW**

Challenges for Theology

- ▣ 1. Contemporary Physics
 - A. Einstein and time
 - B. Quantum physics and entanglement
 - C. Chaos-complexity theory

‘the distinction between past,
present and future is an illusion,
though a persistent one’

Einstein

Challenges for Theology

- ▣ 1. Contemporary Physics
 - B. Quantum physics
 - ▣ Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle
 - ▣ entanglement
 - ▣ quantum vacuum
 - ▣ quantum field theory

Challenges for Theology

- ▣ 1. Contemporary Physics
 - C. Chaos-complexity theory
 - ▣ Non-linearity
 - ▣ Sensitivity to feedback
 - ▣ Long-term unpredictability
 - ▣ Self-organization



Challenges for Theology

- ▣ 2. Neuroscience
 - A. Brain
 - B. Mind/Brain problem
 - C. Mind over matter

‘the mind is an embodied and relational process, emerging from within and between brains, that regulates the flow of energy and information’

Dan Siegel
The Mindful Brain

Challenges for Theology

▣ 2. Neuroscience

■ C. Mind over matter

- ▣ biofeedback
- ▣ CBT
- ▣ placebo effect; nocebo effect
- ▣ effects of meditation/prayer
- ▣ psychoneuroimmunology

Challenges for Theology

- ▣ Implications:
 - ▣ Nature is inherently random, unpredictable & non-local
 - ▣ The universe is alive
 - ▣ Everything connects & interacts
 - ▣ whole is greater than the sum of its parts
 - ▣ indeterminism is part of the fabric of creation
 - ▣ reality is flexible, multi-layered and intertwined
 - ▣ humans are participants in creating reality

'contemporary science is discovering a world that is irreversibly temporal, dynamic, interconnected, self-organizing, indeterminate, and boundlessly open to evolutionary transformation'. This 'new cosmic story requires theological repair work'

David Toolan
At Home in the Cosmos

Challenges for Theology

- ▣ 3. Parapsychology
- ▣ A) history
- ▣ B) definitions
- ▣ C) evidence
- ▣ D) evaluation
- ▣ E) theories



Challenges for Theology

- ▣ 3. Parapsychology
- ▣ B) definitions

Parapsychology:

“scientific study of experiences which are...outside the realm of human capabilities as presently conceived by conventional scientists”

H. Irwin

Psi: Ψ

general term for extra-sensory
perception and extra-sensory motor
activity

Telepathy:

information exchanged between two or more minds without the use of the ordinary senses

Clairvoyance:

information received from a distance, beyond the reach of the ordinary senses

Precognition:

“information perceived about future events, where the information could not be inferred by ordinary means”

D. Radin

Psychokinesis (PK):

direct influence of mind or intention of an agent on matter in a manner beyond any known medium or cause

Challenges for Theology

- ▣ 3. Parapsychology
- ▣ C) evidence
 - ▣ 1. ESP (telepathy, remote viewing)
 - ▣ 2. PK & psychic healing
 - ▣ 3. Global consciousness

PARAPSYCHOLOGY

- ▣ Disembodied Psychic Phenomena:
- ▣ Out of Body Experiences
- ▣ Near Death Experiences
- ▣ Mediumship
- ▣ Apparitions

Challenges for Theology

- ▣ 3. Parapsychology
- ▣ D) evaluation
 - Consistent, statistically significant low-level effect
 - 4000 experiments, controlled conditions, worldwide, many decades; critical evaluated
- ▣ E) theories
 - how is information mediated?
 - how does psi manifest itself in the individual consciousness?
 - ?EMF, spirits, 6th sense

OVERARCHING THEORIES

- Physics:
 - Bohm's implicate order
 - Laszlo's connectivity
- Parapsychology:
 - Radin's entangled minds
- Neuroscience:
 - Powell's Möbius Mind

holokinetic reality is 'one, an unbroken,
undivided wholeness which is the
background for everything in the universe,
underlying both matter and consciousness,
providing the raw material for manifest
entities'

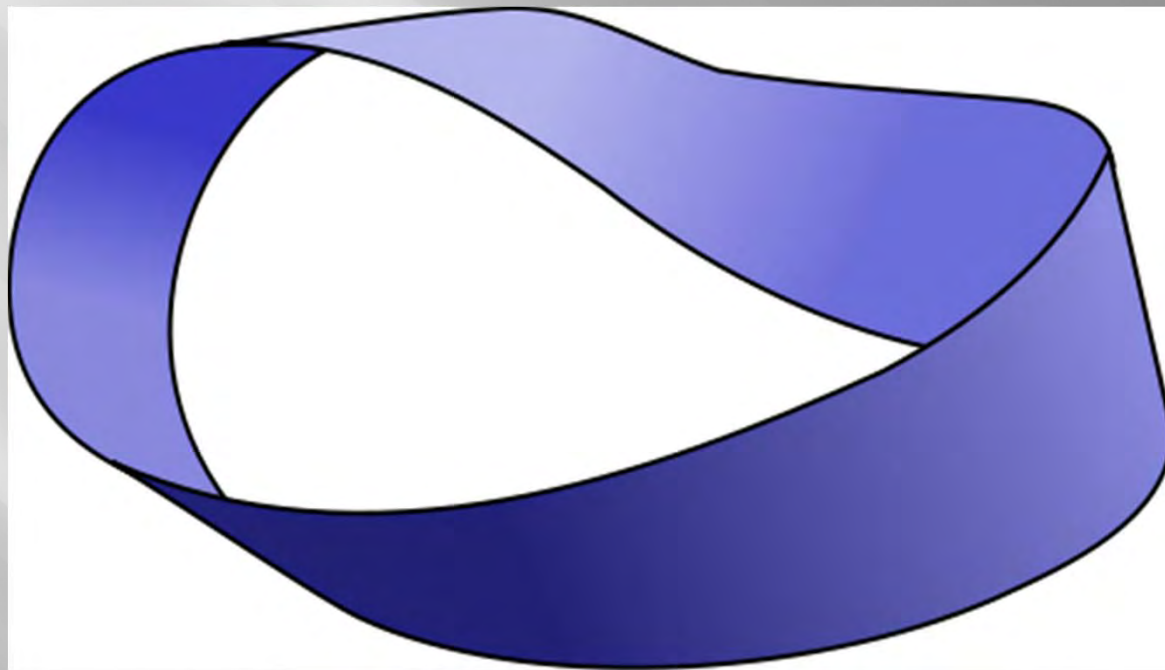
David Bohm

Wholeness and Implicate Order

‘psychic experiences are reframed not as mysterious “powers of the mind” but as momentary glimpses of the entangled fabric of reality’

Dean Radin

▣ Möbius Strip



'the religious person disregards
the evidence of paranormal
phenomena at his peril'

H.D. Lewis

Christian Theology: Reflections and Response

- ▣ 1. Challenges and Methods
- ▣ 2. The Bible and 'psi'
- ▣ 3. Ethics
- ▣ 4. Towards a theory...
- ▣ 5. Future research

Christian Theology: Reflections and Response

- ▣ 2. The Bible and 'psi'
 - Ethics/morals
 - Spiritual reality
 - Emphasis on mind
 - ?Evidence of nonlinearity, nonlocality, ASC, OBE, mediumship, ESP
 - Interconnectedness

Love the Lord your God with all
your heart, and with all your
soul, and with all your mind

Mt 22:37

Be transformed by the renewing
of your mind

Rom 12:2

Christian Theology: Reflections and Response

- ▣ 2. The Bible and 'psi'
 - Ethics/morals
 - Spiritual reality
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 - ?Evidence of nonlinearity, nonlocality, ASC, OBE, mediumship, ESP
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I know a person in Christ who
fourteen years ago was caught up to
the third heaven – whether in the body
or out of the body I do not know;
God knows.

2 Cor 12: 2

Christian Theology: Reflections and Response

- ▣ 2. The Bible and 'psi'
 - Ethics/morals
 - Spiritual reality
 - Emphasis on mind
 - ?Evidence of nonlinearity, nonlocality, ASC, OBE, mediumship, ESP
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He himself is before all things, and
in him all things hold together
Col 1:17

The spirit of the Lord has filled the
world, and ... holds all things
together
Wis 1:7

Christian Theology: Reflections and Response

- ▣ 3. Ethics
 - Dangers of reductionism
 - Dangers of pride, idolatry
 - Wise use of gifts
 - Responsible research

Christian Theology: Reflections and Response

- ▣ 4. Towards a theory...
 - General views of interconnectedness
 - Theological discussions of parapsychology
 - ▣ David Ray Griffin
 - ▣ John Heaney
 - ▣ Lisa Schwebel
 - ?Christian Model

‘God is no idler but the great Energy
Field in whom all creation lives and
moves and has its being.’

David Toolan

At Home in the Cosmos

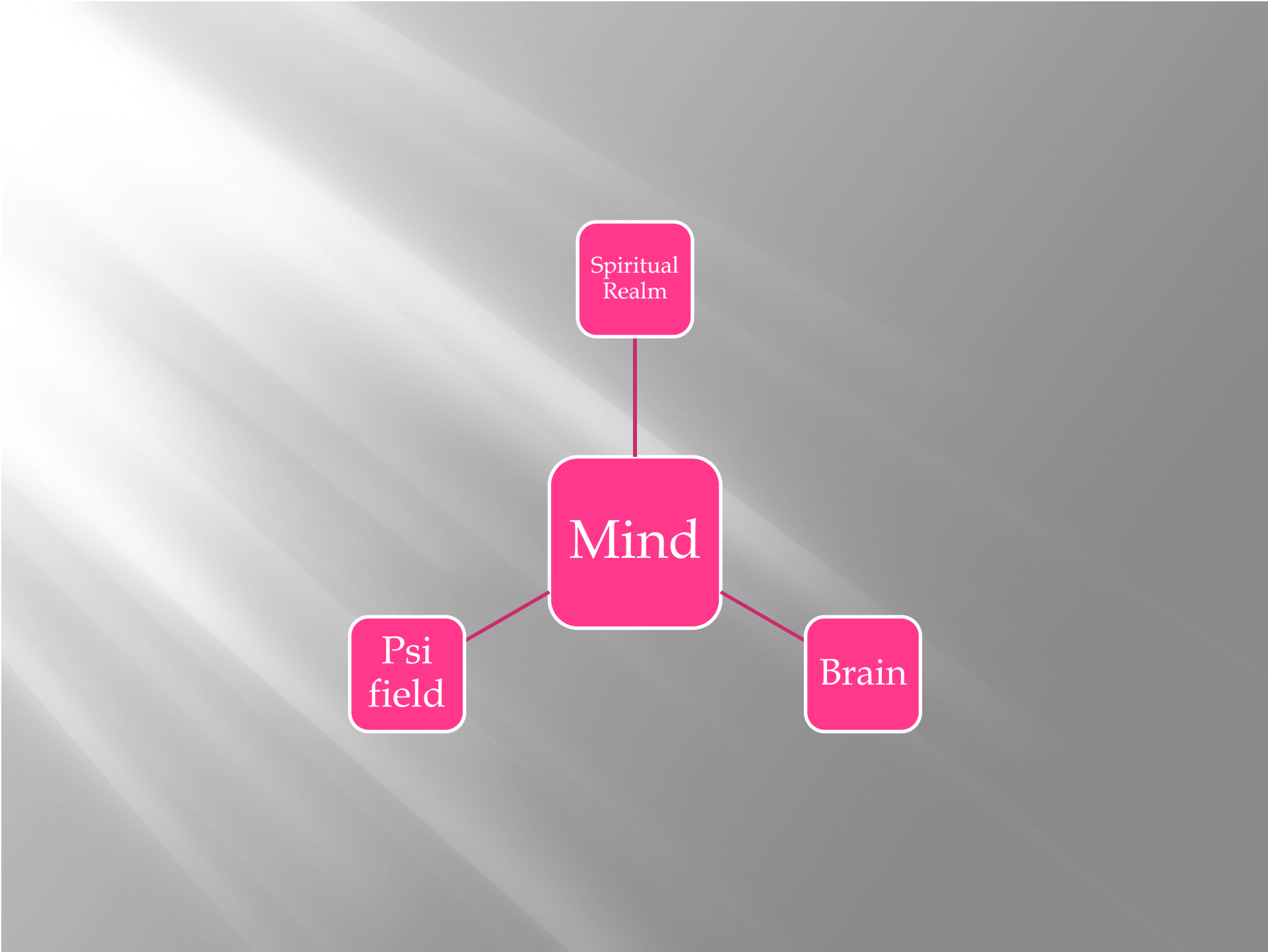
‘by thinking of extraordinary healing as necessarily always involving the co-operation of divine power and the psychokinetic power of one or more human minds, one can avoid’ the problem of a God who heals arbitrarily

David Ray Griffin

Parapsychology, Philosophy and Spirituality

Christian Model?

- ▣ Shared medium of influence
- ▣ Psi field=consciousness field=spiritual realm?
- ▣ Psi as manifestation of divine gift
- ▣ Prayer as a way to interact with realm
- ▣ Consider action of other human spirits plus angelic and evil spirits
- ▣ Discernment critical!



Spiritual
Realm

Mind

Psi
field

Brain

Christian Theology: Reflections and Response

- ▣ 5. Future research
 - Biblical exegesis
 - Practical theology
 - ▣ Spiritual 'gifts' vs psi abilities
 - ▣ Discernment
 - Philosophical theology
 - ▣ God-world interaction, free will
 - ▣ Nature of spirit/soul/mind/consciousness
 - Ecclesiology
 - ▣ Gift development
 - ▣ Ethical guidelines

Further Information

- ▣ e.janet.warren@rogers.com
- ▣ Irwin & Watt, *An Introduction to Parapsychology*
- ▣ Dean Radin, *The Conscious Universe*
- ▣ Lisa Schwebel, *Apparitions, Healings & Weeping Madonnas*
- ▣ Diane Hennacy Powell. *The ESP Enigma*
- ▣ Institute for Noetic Science: www.noetic.org
- ▣ www.gotpsi.org
- ▣ DVD: What the *% do we know?