

News and Notices

Consciousness Studies

Journal of Consciousness Studies

Chris Nunn writes: Most 'Network' members probably know of the JCS. It is of course the only journal around that publishes peer-reviewed and invited papers on virtually any aspect of what is, for many of us, the most fascinating of topics. Maybe it spreads itself too thin, but I don't think so. Understanding consciousness surely demands an inter-disciplinary approach. The JCS helps to get psychologists, say, interacting with philosophers, neurophysiologists with theologians; specialised publications can't do this. Trouble is the JCS doesn't 'belong' to particular institutional departments, so few of them stock it. Individual subscribers are already quite numerous (a snip at £37 p.a.!) but, if the journal is to survive long-term, many more libraries will have to buy it. If you have university or other relevant affiliations, please try to persuade your librarian to subscribe. Keith Sutherland (keith@imprint.co.uk) will gladly supply promotional literature if needed.

International Science & Consciousness Conference, Albuquerque, April 1999

Ronald Russell writes: Some 530 people packed into the dizzying heights of the Crowne Plaza Pyramid on the northern edge of Albuquerque for the first International Science and Consciousness Conference. (NB 'and' not 'of'). This was not much like Tucson; focus was mainly on the 'softer' end of the spectrum and there was little, if any, mention of phenomenology, qualia or even cognitive neuroscience. Keynote presenters included Edgar Mitchell, Peter Russell, the cosmologist Brian Swimme, Larry Le Shan and Paul Pearsall from Hawaii, author of 'The Heart's Code'. The harder sciences were represented by, among others, William Tiller and Amit Goswami; the influence of music on consciousness was discussed and demonstrated by Steve Halpern and Jacotte Chollet; Jeffrey Misholove held workshops on the paranormal; Huston Smith and Robert Forman, as well as Peter Russell, took the subject into the mystical/spiritual areas. Stanley Krippner talked on shamanic states, dreams and myths, Christian de Quincey showed that philosophy's pursuit should be Wisdom rather than Truth; and Beverly Rubik, Ralph Metzner, Brian O'Leary, Elisabet Sahtouris, Carlos Warter and Swami Beyondananda were among a host of others who blended ideas and information with entertainment, revealing how very multi-faceted, and how approachable, the subject is. The Conference will be held at the same venue next year, by which time Albuquerque will have advanced even further into the desert. It should be well worth attending.

Online Out-of-body Experience Survey

The International Institute of Projectiology and Conscientiology is running this project. The survey consists of seven sections and 98 topics, which aim to elucidate such issues as the level of lucidity, frequency of occurrence, types of OBE, cultural influences on the OBE and ways of generating the experience. You can take part by visiting www.iipc.org

Science and Religion

Expanding Humanity's Vision of God - Templeton Foundation Prizes

As mentioned in the last issue (p. 37), the Templeton Foundation is awarding prizes for newly published essays and sermons on humanity's vision of God - Can we have a more comprehensive, more exploratory, more humble theology? The deadline for submissions (which have to be published or accepted for publication by the deadline date) has now been

extended to March 31st 2000. Further information from the Templeton website (well worth visiting) at www.templeton.org email to Dr. Robert Herrmann on herrmann@gordon.edu

Esoteric Science Online Mailing List

Over the past few weeks an online discussion has been taking place with a view to establishing an institute of some kind to pursue research in various fields of esoteric studies. Its concerns will be wide, drawing on a number of traditions and will focus on conventional science with the addition of esoteric principles. If you are interested in catching up with developments so far, send an email to Eugene Carpenter at ecarpent@co.la.ca.us

Ecology

"Technology Protection System" (TPS) -Terminator Technology.

Bob Mueller writes: The USDA, spending public money, has developed a technology whereby seeds can be stripped of their ability to propagate. They are in the process of patenting the process world wide on behalf of Monsanto, through a subsidiary (Delta and Pine Land Company). The driving force behind the Terminator technology is the ability for the companies to protect their "inventions" from being "duplicated" unlawfully, which, granted, sounds appropriate and fair. The result, however, will be to replace natural crops world wide, with genetically enhanced, superior, high yield crops. Superior, that is, except for the fact that they can no longer reproduce themselves, effectively forcing farmers world wide to buy their seeds annually from Monsanto...the world's only supplier. The patent applies to ALL PLANTS.

This is the ultimate in Capitalism. We're going to remove nature's ability to propagate herself, so we can charge money for that privilege.

However, I only wish this were the full extent of the issue. Martha L. Crouch, Associate Professor of Biology at Indiana University, has published a series of papers specifying how the resulting castrated plants WILL be able to sterilise nearby normal species, via the spread of Terminator pollen. Not only that, but how these plants will be able to actually pass the toxin gene to other plant species through cross-pollination: See <http://www.bio.indiana.edu/people/terminator.html>

Yet this "product" has been virtually assured of being passed as safe, in the USDA's own words: "These approvals are expected because there appear to be no crop or food safety risks to the new technology. There also appear to be no environmental risks." The licensing fees are estimated to be worth 1.5 billion dollars a year.....See <http://www.rafi.org/translator/termtrans.html>

The following web page gives both sides of the story. There are many more potential problems with this technology than I have outlined here. See: <http://www.rafi.org/usda.html>

Physicians and Scientists for Responsible Application of Science and Technology - A Global Network -

'Science has reached a level where its applications can cause irreparable damage at a global scale. We, who founded PSRAST, are seriously concerned about conditions that have been hampering impartial comprehensive, interdisciplinary evaluation of the safety of new applications of science and technology. We invite every scientist and physician all over the world, who shares our concerns, to become a member of our network. With a large number

of qualified members we will be able to contribute to responsible application of science and technology. For more information, see: About PSRAST <http://www.psrast.org/> Our present focus is on the issue of genetically engineered (GE) food, see "Genetically Engineered Food - Safety Problems"

OECD Environmental Indicators

OECD has just published its tables of key environmental indicators under the rubric of 'Towards Sustainable Development'. Its purposes are 1) to keep track of environmental progress 2) to ensure that environmental concerns are taken into account when policies are formulated and implemented and 3) to ensure similar integration of environmental concerns into economic policies, mainly through environmental accounting. So far, OECD countries have agreed to use the pressure-state-response (PSR) model as a common harmonised framework, and the indicators are regularly used in environmental performance reviews. The publication contains an impressive level of detail on such topics as climate change, ozone layer depletion, water and air quality, forest and fish resources, and biodiversity, with graphs and tables related to GNP and per capita output of, say,, emissions. This is followed by another section on socio-economic indicators on transport, energy, agriculture etc. A good companion to the State of the World analyses from the WorldWatch Institute. See also www.oecd.org Available from OECD for FFr 155, 2 rue Andre Pascal, 75775, Paris-cedex 16

Aviation Climate Effect "could grow four-fold"

Climate emissions from air transport will continue to increase and could account for 15% of total human-induced global warming effects by 2050, according to an international scientific panel report just published. The report is expected to strengthen debate over how aviation emissions can be incorporated into greenhouse gas reduction commitments under the Kyoto protocol. Prepared over two years by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the report calculates that aviation was already to blame for 3.5% of total global warming in 1992, and that projected growth in passenger and freight transport will ensure that it accounts for at least 5% and perhaps as much as 15% in fifty years time. Fuel consumption is expected to rise from 130m tonnes in 1992 to 300m in 2015 and 450m in 2050. Contacts: UNFCCC (<http://www.unfccc.de>). References: "Special Report on Aviation and the Global Atmosphere" (<http://www.unep.ch/ipcc>).

Forum for the Future Report 1999

The Forum has recently published its latest report outlining progress during the past year. Its mission is to accelerate the building of a sustainable way of life, taking a positive solutions-oriented approach. its work covers a number of areas including education and learning, business, a sustainable economy, working with local government and sharing and communicating best practice. The report makes encouraging reading and shows what can be achieved with vision and commitment. It can be obtained from the Forum Office at 222a City Road, London EC1V 1JT. Tel: 0171 251 6070

World Scientists' Statement on GM Crops

This statement was launched at a conference in Columbia at a UN Convention on Biological Diversity and calls for an immediate moratorium on further environmental releases of transgenic crops, food and animal feed products for at least five years, a ban on patents on living organisms, cell lines and genes, and support for a comprehensive, independent public enquiry into the future of agriculture and food security for all, taking account of the full range of scientific findings as well as socioeconomic and ethical implications. The Statement itself is tightly drafted and is supported by a lengthy technical supplement. All of this can be

found on the web site of the Institute of Science in Society on www.ii-sis.dirconco.uk or else write to Angela Ryan at Flat 3 42 Manor Rd, High Barnet, EN5 2JJ or email ryan@ii-sis.dircon.co.uk

Education

Landegg Academy, Switzerland

Having begun as a conference centre, the academy has now expanded into a full time university offering a pioneering BA and MA in Integrated Studies. The Rector Dr. H.B. Danesh writes that 'all programmes at Landegg Academy are based on the conviction that true human development and civilisation are only possible when scientific research and technological development are harmonised with universal spiritual and ethical principles. At the core of this integrative perspective are the universal spiritual principles present in the religious, cultural and philosophical heritage of humanity'. He writes further: 'The greatest challenge before humanity today is to create a civilisation which is peaceful and just, united and diverse, prosperous and benevolent, technologically advanced and environmentally healthy, intellectually rich and ethically sound'. One can only agree wholeheartedly. Their programme includes a particularly interesting foundation Conceptual Module consisting of the following four parts: 1) Fundamentals of Applied Spirituality 2) The Concept of Unity: Towards an Integrated View of Reality, Human Nature and Social Organisation 3) The Structure of Reality: An Epistemological Analysis of the Relationship between Religion and Science and 4) Theories of Knowledge: A Survey of Emerging Integrative Perspectives in Scientific Theories, Philosophical Discourses and Social Sciences. More details: Landegg Academy, CH - 9405, Wienacht/AR, Switzerland. Web: www.landegg.edu

Waldegg Centre, Switzerland

This venue for the Network ski trip itself runs educational courses all the year round. It describes itself as an experimental community where people can learn to balance their needs. Courses include elements of Taoism and other Chinese themes, spiritual knowledge and health, Guests can also just come to the Centre to ski, hike or simply relax. Address: CH 3823 Wengen, Switzerland.

Medicine

College of Healing

The College has now been running courses on healing, self-development and personal growth for 14 years. The College aims to enable the development and empowerment of the student's natural healing abilities, thus improving their own health and wellbeing as well as encouraging them to provide healing for others. Courses are now accredited by the Open College Network and the main ones offered are the Pre-Diploma Intensive Healing Course and the Professional Diploma Course. For details write to the College at Runnings Park, Croft Bank, West Malvern, Worcs WR14 4DU. Tel: 01684 566450

LIGHT Trust

Following the success of an international conference in Reading last summer, the Light Information for Growth in Healing Trust has been established to promote the use of light and colour in physical, mental and spiritual health. Their specific aims are to develop research projects, facilitate professional standards, provide an independent advisory service and support the use of light and colour in the creative arts. Details from 28 Devonshire Road, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO21 2SW

Study of Medical Students' Health in Croatia

Based on the analysis of 521 questionnaires, this survey found that 42% of students blamed their current education for a deterioration in their health. Of these, 35% reported emotional and 35% physical symptoms and 11% have actually been diagnosed with one or more diseases related to studying. Among the interesting findings were the prevalence of vision deterioration, headaches and digestive problems, the 45% reporting specific stress related conditions including lack of sleep and, ironically, paying less attention to their own health! The co-ordinator, Petar Kresimir Hodzic, is now interested in extending his study to other countries.

General

Twilight Club and the Creation of a Moral Community

Dating back to the late 19th century and founded by such luminaries as Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Herbert Spencer, the Twilight Club exists to promote inspired moral action and ethical practice on the basis of an eternal moral vision and universal ethical principles. It is founded on the 'Poets' Code of Ethics' enunciating ten principles with which most readers would agree, such as 'to teach man to think rather than remember and repeat' and 'to judge the righteousness and religion of any man by what he does to his fellow man and not by his beliefs, doctrines, creeds or dogmas'. A boklet explains the aims of the Club in more detail or you can look up the web site on www.twilightclub.org Address: PO Box 520, Waynesboro, VA 22980, USA.

Forgiveness Research

The Campaign for Forgiveness Research is halfway towards its target of raising \$10 million to fund 60 scientific studies on critical issues from substance abuse to domestic violence and ethnic cleansing. Research has already shown that forgiveness can be taught and learned. You can share your own story of forgiveness by visiting their web site at www.forgiving.org Address: PO Box 842018, Richmond, VA 23284-2018, USA

Greensleeves Books

Formerly run by Member Nick Rose, this is a second hand bookshop that has produced catalogues on comparative religion, healing and, more recently, one on spiritualism/parapsychology, and channelled teachings. Email: greensleeves@mcmail.com Address: 2 Market St, Chipping Norton, Oxon OX7 5NQ.

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