

because the very words comprehend and concept imply the duality of grasping with (cum) - the Latin words *prehendere* and *capere* both mean to grasp, as David Bohm noted. Ironically in some respects, Russell also regarded mind's union with the universe as its highest good, though almost certainly in an impersonal sense. (p. 59)

Descartes's revolution was to propose that the mind precedes the world – he was certain only about his own mind and its conscious states: 'he knows his own mind first, then God, and then the world' by representation, introducing a sharp division between objective and subjective corresponding to that between realism and idealism, and primary and secondary qualities where only the quantitative, visible and measurable is real. This in turn gives rise to subjectivity and qualia in the same way that it is assumed that matter is primary, and the brain generates consciousness. The author shows how these ideas are developed by the empiricists, Fichte, Kant and others, as well as subjectivity in art.

A key shift, the reverberations of which are only too present, is the change in the ground of morality from living in harmony with the world to individual autonomy, which one can see broadly reflected in liberal and conservative attitudes with respect to social harmony and the protection of individual rights. This is also expressed in the distinction expressed above between persons and selves as outer and inner categorisations: 'the value of the person is the value of rationality. The value of the self is the value of subjectivity' (p. 111) – which is reflected in different conceptions of dignity.

The last two chapters ask if we can grasp all of reality, proposing second-person intersubjectivity as the third greatest idea. This can be approached either from the inside out or the outside in, and in asking if the eye can see itself, the author could have reached for Eckhart who memorably said that the eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees [in] me – pure and non-dual s/Self-reflexivity. Both these perspectives leave a missing piece to try to fit in, so maybe we should say that they are codependently arising and not try to achieve consilience by reducing one to the other.

In the final chapter, the author draws on phenomenology and could have brought in the I-Thou approach of Martin Buber. She does discuss Heidegger, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, also referring to the work of Iain McGilchrist. The precondition for the first idea to become significant is what she calls a revolution in subjectivity on the scale of the scientific revolution. What she advocates is in fact already developing through the more contemplative scientific approach of Goethe and what Brian Goodwin called a science of qualities, as well as through transpersonal psychology mapping the depths of human experience. Goethe pointed out that in contemplation we are one with what we contemplate, while in observation we separate ourselves

– this seems to point back to the work of Richard Tarnas and others in developing not only a participatory worldview, but also participatory methodologies through cooperative enquiry and action research. Maybe we are further along the track than the author realises, but her original approach and analysis provide a great point of departure for further development.

FIRST MIND

David Lorimer

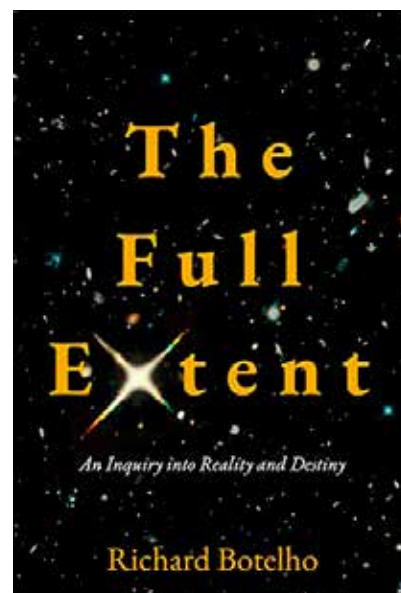
■ THE FULL EXTENT – AN INQUIRY INTO REALITY AND DESTINY

Richard Botelho

Windstream, 2022, 270 pp., \$17.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-9643926-3-2

This morning, Avigail Abarbanel sent me an article with the headline **Quantum Physics Could Finally Explain Consciousness, Scientists Say** (<https://www.popularmechanics.com/science/a40898392/quantum-physics-consciousness/>) in which two physicists and a philosopher gave their views. Towards the end of the article comes the following observation: "The physicist also believes that it is definitely the case that the rise of quantum mysticism is hurting legitimate research. "Quantum mysticism makes it very difficult for serious scientists to think about problems like quantum mechanics and consciousness," he adds. "This is because there is a risk that you might get associated with things which are not so serious." Earlier, the 'supernatural' is mentioned with a fearful frisson as something absolutely to be avoided even if it is in my view a highly dubious category. What is regarded as 'not so serious' is in fact any departure from the orthodoxy of scientific materialism, reinforced by political and academic strictures to keep people in line.

Richard Botelho has no such qualms, even though the said physicists would likely dismiss his book as 'quantum mysticism'. This would be a mark of their lack of intellectual courage and integrity. In this penetrating and philosophically far-reaching analysis of the implications of quantum physics for our understanding of mind and consciousness, Botelho ventures into exciting territory, always with a critical approach that draws out an intellectually satisfying ontology that does full justice to human experience, and structured into three parts and 17 chapters. He is the heir of the pioneering quantum physicists writing in the 1930s who actually understood the revolutionary consequences of taking quantum physics seriously in relation to consciousness, especially Schrödinger, Heisenberg and Max Planck. The book is helpfully structured with key passages in bold.



Like Planck, the author postulates Consciousness, Mind and Spirit as the ground of being and basis of reality where the invisible becomes visible, the unmanifest manifest. His starting point is the double-slit experiment, which he interprets as Consciousness bringing things into existence by materialising potential into matter. Classical physics is based on locality and realism, while nonlocal and entangled quantum physics is naturally philosophically idealist; in this way realism corresponds to the appearance, and idealism to the origin. He postulates a First Mind, commenting that many physicists are reluctant to draw such an inference as a universe entangled with Mind due to the restrictions imposed by scientific materialism and the dogmas that consciousness is merely a by-product of brain activity and that the universe is entirely physical. Moreover, mind is found in plants, trees and fungi, which do not have brains.

Botelho discusses paradigms in terms of structures of understanding, arguing that we need to move from scientific materialism to a Consciousness Paradigm, as also argued by Willis Harman 30 years ago. He has a good chapter critiquing scientism, also in terms of politics and dominant institutions that maintain the status quo – partly through the peer review system - arguing against the God of the gaps and promissory materialism. Science should be creative and curious rather than defending ideas against the evidence: as we have also seen with Covid, dissent is silenced for the preservation of orthodoxy. We have reached the point where this stagnation is a real impediment to progress. The author comments that knowledge and advancement 'are directly correlated to the willingness to change beliefs.' (p. 108)

The second part discusses the elements of a spiritual universe. This begins with a discussion of various theories about consciousness, highlighting Bernardo Kastrup's approach where Consciousness has both universal field and individual properties. Botelho then widens the lens to unifying principles that point to post-

materialism that is capable of encompassing human values. I found his characterisation of the New Age movement somewhat harsh – he himself advocates the need to achieve a higher consciousness – though I do appreciate his distinction between humans having the divine essence as opposed to thinking they are gods. I don't agree that it discredited the concept of Consciousness, although of course there are more extreme articulations. Botelho goes on to elaborate on the supremacy of consciousness in terms of creative power within a multi-dimensional universe and where mind is the matrix of matter, Spirit is an eternal essence and Soul that essence within humans, as we find in the phenomenology of the NDE: the immaterial animates the material.

In his chapter on the Matrix, Botelho explores the idea that the universe is an idealistic simulation before moving onto the third part, universal destiny within the framework of Block Universe that nevertheless allows for free will and flexible outcomes as part of the learning process by means of creativity and taking responsibility. Within this scheme, dreams and visions can convey very important messages 'insinuating of both purpose and design', while synchronicity is evidence of a deeper or hyper reality. I found his interpretation involving entanglement as the underpinning of synchronicity a very fruitful one. The next chapter provides a thorough investigation of the features of UFOs as indications of advanced technology and civilisations – a field that is also resisted by one-dimensional physicalism though supported by many senior ex-military figures.

As we all know, humanity faces systemic challenges to our survival, which Botelho sees as emanating from the biological imperative of self-preservation where we seek to accumulate possessions in order to achieve security. We are conflicted by being both civilised and uncivilised, which makes it unlikely that 'we will suddenly transform away from self-interest and towards altruism and greater guardianship of the planet.' (p. 216) Nor is space colonisation in the answer, for the same reason. What is required is a prioritisation of our spiritual nature with corresponding values that would issue in a just society: 'the hope of man lies less in the expansion of his intellect and more in the advancement of his spirit.' The question is how to achieve this – adopting the primacy of Consciousness and Spirit would be a good start.

The final chapter presents and systematically explains Botelho's megatheory on the basis that it offers more explanatory power, which it does. He summarises his findings in a series of bullet points, delineating them into foundational, societal and spiritual relating to the corresponding realms and enlarging our scope of meaning and the sense of destiny. He admits that some of these arguments are more speculative but the notion that universal destiny is the growth of souls and the fulfilment of spirit makes sense of his findings within an overarching

metaphysical and scientific framework. The book is a brilliant and important contribution in elaborating the implications of quantum physics for our understanding of the nature of consciousness and reality.

HEALTH AND HEALING A GREAT TRANSITION?

David Lorimer

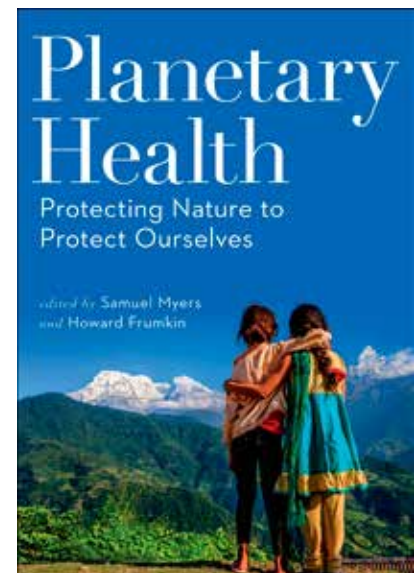
■ PLANETARY HEALTH

Edited by Samuel Myers and Howard Frumkin

Island Press, 2020, 512 pp.,
\$39, illustrated p/b - ISBN
978-1-61091-966-1

This must be the single most authoritative and comprehensive volume on planetary health taking an integrated systems perspective, one element of which is the relationship between human health and the health of the soil, a connection already apparent to Sir Albert Howard and the founder of The Soil Association, Lady Eve Balfour, as far back as the 1940s, and more recently championed by Vandana Shiva – members will find the video of our June 2021 event on the website. Howard had learned this from his own experience of Indian traditions (see his *An Agricultural Testament*, 1940) and wrote: 'the birthright of all living things is health. This law is true for soil, plant, animal, and man: the health of these four is one connected chain.' It follows that any weakness or defect in the health of any earlier link eventually reaches us and that regeneration of the soil is a key factor in regenerating human health. In other words, humans are systemically integrated in natural systems with complex feedback loops usually dependent on our basic attitude towards and relationship with Nature.

This multi-author book by world authorities in their fields is structured into four parts and 18 chapters, beginning with foundations and moving on to the health of populations, pivoting from threat to opportunity and finally saving ourselves, saving our planet. The final draft was written at the beginning of the pandemic, where the editors remarked that Covid 19 is a planetary health problem reflecting our basic orientation towards Nature where the destruction of habitats promotes the potential spread of zoonotic disease. They were writing before the hypothesis of the lab origin of the virus became more respectable, as well as information about the enormous dangers posed by gain-of-function research, as now noted even by Prof Jeffrey Sachs in his capacity as chair of the Lancet Commission – Sachs dismissed a number of members, including Peter Daszak of the EcoHealth Alliance, for not being transparent about having no conflicts of interest. The editors highlight a number of illustrative themes arising out of the pandemic: complex systems, geographical reach, surprises, equity, the human relationship with nature, building resilience, heeding science, and the



role of government. They ask if this gives a basis for hope in terms of our realising the precariousness of life on earth as well as our capacity for rapid and massive change.

Early in the book, the editors identify key systemic drivers of biophysical change in the dimensions of climate, pollution, rapid biodiversity loss, reconfiguration of biogeochemical cycles, pervasive changes in land use and land cover; and depletion of resources including fresh water and arable land. The important point is that 'each of these dimensions interacts with the others in complex ways, altering core conditions for human health' whether in terms of air, water, food or exposure to disease. In addition to the themes highlighted above, they add the need to reduce vulnerability, quantifying externalities, the role of political power, stewardship, winners and losers, urgency, and the fact that we are in new ethical terrain prefigured by pioneers such as Tony McMichael, Barry Commoner, René Dubos and Rachel Carson. Current global responses tend to be vertical and top-down using technological fixes and simplistic metrics as a response to the dark side of development. The overall context includes population, consumption, equity and rights, which are contextualised in the chapter on a changing planet with its arresting analysis across different factors.

The next section on the health of populations covers food and nutrition, infectious disease, noncommunicable disease risks, the relationship between environmental change, migration, conflict and health, mental health and happiness, and the impact of climate change. Overall, we are witnessing the ecological consequences of economic growth and the great acceleration since World War II. We now face a triple challenge of providing nutritious diets to the burgeoning population, doing so in a context of changing climate, increasing water scarcity, degraded arable land, declines in fisheries in pollinators, and other biophysical changes; and we need to achieve this by reducing the ecological footprint of our food production systems. I found it interesting that the editors chose to