

# CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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:Editor / Writer:

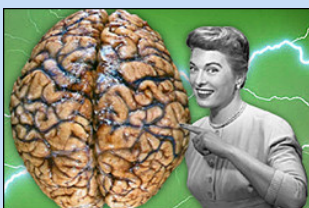
**Dennis W. Hauck**

Assistant Editor::

**Greg Schrum**



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## EDITORIAL

### Can you help? Your monadic experience.

I'm writing a new book on panpsychist Monadic Space and looking for personal experiences of cosmic consciousness or being one with Nature, or other experiences of sacred or mystical space in which an interface or portal seems to be established between everyday reality and the conscious universe.

These can be anonymous or credited, either introvertive or extrovertive experiences.

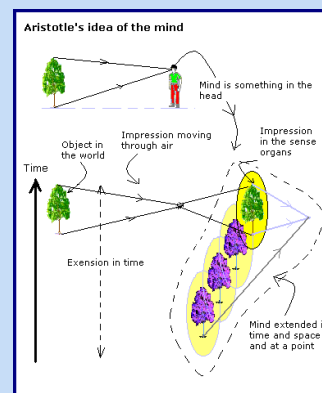
-Dennis W. Hauck

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### Alfred North Whitehead



Many 20th century philosophers have taken

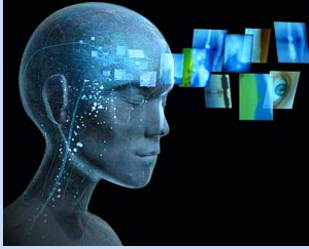


### Aristotle's Model of Mind

by J.W. Schmidt, Robin H., et al.

Aristotle, perhaps more than any other ancient Greek philosopher, set the terms of reference for the future discussion of the problem of consciousness. His idea of the mind is summarized in the illustration above.

Aristotle was a physicalist, believing that things are embodied in the material universe: "That is precisely why the study of the soul [psyche] must fall within the science of Nature," he wrote (*Book 1*). "at least so far as in its affections it manifests this double character. Hence a physicist would define an affection of soul differently from a



## Information Processing and AI

### The problem of machine and digital consciousness

Information processing consists of encoding a state, such as the geometry of an image, on a carrier such as a stream of electrons, and then submitting this encoded state to a series of transformations specified by a set of instructions called a program. In principle the carrier could be anything, even steel balls or onions, and the machine that implements the instructions need not be electronic, it could be mechanical or fluidic.

Digital computers implement information processing. From the earliest days of digital computers people have suggested that these devices may one day be conscious. One of the earliest workers to consider this idea seriously was Alan Turing. Turing proposed the Turing Test as a way of discovering whether a machine can think. In the Turing Test a group of people would ask a machine questions and if they

the 19th century idea of space and time as the framework within which their descriptions of experience are elaborated. Whitehead was a mathematician and philosopher who understood the limitations of this framework and pointed out that our failure to understand and overcome these limitations was probably at the root of our failure to understand consciousness. He traces the problem to the nineteenth century view of time and space and rails against materialists who elevate nineteenth century scientific doctrine above observational and scientific reality.

He also believed that mind and nature are part of the same phenomena: What I am essentially protesting against is the bifurcation of nature into two systems of reality, which, in so far as they are real, are real in different senses. One reality would be the entities such as electrons which are the study of speculative physics. This would be the reality which is there for knowledge; although on this theory it is never known. For what is known is the other sort of reality, which is the byplay of the mind. Thus there would be two natures, one is the conjecture and the other is the dream. Another way of phrasing this theory which I am arguing against is to bifurcate nature into two divisions, namely into the nature apprehended in awareness and the nature which is the cause of awareness. The nature which is the fact apprehended in awareness holds within it the

dialectician; the latter would define e.g. anger as the appetite for returning pain for pain, or something like that, while the former would define it as a boiling of the blood or warm substance surround the heart. The latter assigns the material conditions, the former the form or formulable essence; for what he states is the formulable essence of the fact, though for its actual existence there must be embodiment of it in a material such as is described by the other."

The works of Aristotle provide our first clear account of the concept of signals and information. He was aware that an event can change the state of matter and this change of state can be transmitted to other locations where it can further change a state of matter: "If what has color is placed in immediate contact with the eye," he argues in *Book II* it cannot be seen: Color sets in movement not the sense organ but what is transparent, e.g. the air, and that, extending continuously from the object to the organ, sets the latter in movement. Democritus misrepresents the facts when he expresses the opinion that if the interspace were empty one could distinctly see an ant on the vault of the sky; that is an impossibility. Seeing is due to an affection or change of what has the perceptive faculty, and it cannot be affected by the seen color itself; it remains that it must be affected by what comes

could not tell the difference between the replies of the machine and the replies of a person it would be concluded that the machine could indeed think. Turing's proposal is often confused with the idea of a test for consciousness.

However, phenomenal consciousness is an internal state so the best that such a test could demonstrate is that a digital computer could simulate consciousness. If technologists were limited to the use of the principles of digital computing when creating a conscious entity they would have the problems associated with the philosophy of 'strong' artificial intelligence. The term *Strong AI* was defined by Searle:

"..according to Strong AI, the computer is not merely a tool in the study of the mind; rather, the appropriately programmed computer really is a mind."

from J. Searle in Minds, Brains and Programs. The Behavioral and Brain Sciences, (vol. 3, 1980).

If a computer could demonstrate Strong AI it would not necessarily be more powerful at calculating or solving problems than a computer that demonstrated Weak AI. The most serious problem with Strong AI is John Searle's "chinese room argument" in which it is

greenness of the trees, the song of the birds, the warmth of the sun, the hardness of the chairs, and the feel of the velvet. The nature which is the cause of awareness is the conjectured system of molecules and electrons which so affects the mind as to produce the awareness of apparent nature. The meeting point of these two natures is the mind, the causal nature being influent and the apparent nature being effluent.

He argued that science is about the relations between things: "The understanding which is sought by science is an understanding of relations within nature."

Whitehead was aware of the way that the simultaneity of events is of crucial importance to phenomenal experience: "The general fact is the whole simultaneous occurrence of nature which is now for sense-awareness. This general fact is what is called the discernible. But in future I will call it a 'duration,' meaning thereby a certain whole of nature which is limited only by the property of being a simultaneity. Further in obedience to the principle of comprising within nature the whole terminus of sense-awareness, simultaneity must not be conceived as an irrelevant mental concept imposed upon nature. Our sense-awareness posits for immediate discernment a certain whole, here called a 'duration'; thus a duration is a definite natural entity. A duration is discriminated as a complex of partial events, and the natural

between. Hence it is indispensable that there be something in between-if there were nothing, so far from seeing with greater distinctness, we should see nothing at all."

He was also clear about the relationship of information to 'state': "By a 'sense' is meant what has the power of receiving into itself the sensible forms of things without the matter. This must be conceived of as taking place in the way in which a piece of wax takes on the impress of a signet-ring without the iron or gold; we say that what produces the impression is a signet of bronze or gold, but its particular metallic constitution makes no difference: in a similar way the sense is affected by what is colored or flavored or sounding, but it is indifferent what in each case the substance is; what alone matters is what quality it has, i.e. in what ratio its constituents are combined" (*Book II* Aristotle also mentioned the problem of the simultaneity of experience. The explanation predates Galilean and modern physics so lacks our modern language to explain how many things could be at a point and an instant:

"Just as what is called a 'point' is, as being at once one and two, properly said to be divisible, so here, that which discriminates is qua undivided one, and active in a single moment of time, while so far forth as it is divisible it twice

demonstrated that the contents of an information processor have no intrinsic meaning -at any moment they are just a set of electrons or steel balls etc.

The argument is reproduced in full below:

"One way to test any theory of the mind is to ask oneself what it would be like if my mind actually worked on the principles that the theory says all minds work on. Let us apply this test to the Schank program with the following Gedankenexperiment. Suppose that I'm locked in a room and given a large batch of Chinese writing. Suppose furthermore (as is indeed the case) that I know no Chinese, either written or spoken, and that I'm not even confident that I could recognize Chinese writing as Chinese writing distinct from, say, Japanese writing or meaningless squiggles. To me, Chinese writing is just so many meaningless squiggles. Now suppose further that after this first batch of Chinese writing I am given a second batch of Chinese script together with a set of rules for correlating the second batch with the first batch. The rules are in English, and I understand these rules as well as any other native speaker of English. They enable me to correlate one set of formal symbols with another set of formal

entities which are components of this complex are thereby said to be 'simultaneous with this duration.' Also in a derivative sense they are simultaneous with each other in respect to this duration. Thus simultaneity is a definite natural relation. The word 'duration' is perhaps unfortunate in so far as it suggests a mere abstract stretch of time. This is not what I mean. A duration is a concrete slab of nature limited by simultaneity which is an essential factor disclosed in sense-awareness."

Whitehead also stresses the role of the extended, or 'specious', present in sense awareness: "It is important to distinguish simultaneity from instantaneousness. I lay no stress on the mere current usage of the two terms. There are two concepts which I want to distinguish, and one I call simultaneity and the other instantaneousness. I hope that the words are judiciously chosen; but it really does not matter so long as I succeed in explaining my meaning. Simultaneity is the property of a group of natural elements which in some sense are components of a duration. A duration can be all nature present as the immediate fact posited by sense-awareness. A duration retains within itself the passage of nature. There are within it antecedents and consequents which are also durations which may be the complete specious presents of quicker consciousnesses. In other words a duration retains temporal thickness. Any

overuses the same dot at one and the same time. So far forth then as it takes the limit as two' it discriminates two separate objects with what in a sense is divided: while so far as it takes it as one, it does so with what is one and occupies in its activity a single moment of time." (*Book III*) His idea of time allowed him to identify thinking with the object of thought, there being no need to cycle thoughts from instant to instant because mental time is extended: "In every case the mind which is actively thinking is the objects which it thinks."

He considered imagination to be a disturbance of the sense organs: "And because imaginations remain in the organs of sense and resemble sensations, animals in their actions are largely guided by them, some (i.e. the brutes) because of the non-existence in them of mind, others (i.e. men) because of the temporary eclipse in them of mind by feeling or disease or sleep. (*Book III*), and considered that all thought occurs as images: "To the thinking soul images serve as if they were contents of perception (and when it asserts or denies them to be good or bad it avoids or pursues them). That is why the soul never thinks without an image." (*Book III*).

from [Consciousness Studies](#) (2008)

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symbols, and all that "formal" means here is that I can identify the symbols entirely by their shapes. Now suppose also that I am given a third batch of Chinese symbols together with some instructions, again in English, that enable me to correlate elements of this third batch with the first two batches, and these rules instruct me how to give back certain Chinese symbols with certain sorts of shapes in response to certain sorts of shapes given me in the third batch. Unknown to me, the people who are giving me all of these symbols call the first batch a "script," they call the second batch a "story," and they call the third batch "questions." Furthermore, they call the symbols I give them back in response to the third batch "answers to the questions," and the set of rules in English that they gave me, they call the "program."

Now just to complicate the story a little, imagine that these people also give me stories in English, which I understand, and they then ask me questions in English about these stories, and I give them back answers in English. Suppose also that after a while I get so good at following the instructions for manipulating the Chinese symbols and the programmers get so good at writing the programs that from the external point of view—that is, from the point of view of somebody

concept of all nature as immediately known is always a concept of some duration though it may be enlarged in its temporal thickness beyond the possible specious present of any being known to us as existing within nature. Thus simultaneity is an ultimate factor in nature, immediate for sense-awareness."

So a set of events that are extended in time constitutes conscious experience. He then defines continuity in terms of overlapping durations: "The continuity of nature arises from extension. Every event extends over other events, and every event is extended over by other events. Thus in the special case of durations which are now the only events directly under consideration, every duration is part of other durations; and every duration has other durations which are parts of it."

That experience exists as whole durations that overlap means that the overlapping durations can be considered to be composed of moments or instants and these can be assigned to a series which we call 'time': "Such an ordered series of moments is what we mean by time defined as a series. Each element of the series exhibits an instantaneous; state of nature, Evidently this serial time is the result of an intellectual process of abstraction.

Processes can occur within a duration of sense awareness so things can change within the extended present of a conscious interval. Sense-awareness

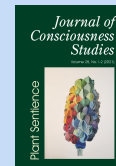
# RESOURCES

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[INTERVIEWS](#) with presenters from the University of Arizona Science of Consciousness conferences.

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[CATALOG](#) of academic journals on consciousness studies, including the [Journal of Consciousness Studies](#).

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[CURRENT RESEARCH](#) in consciousness studies newsletter from the government (free subscription).

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[Psychology of Consciousness: Theory, Research, and Practice](#) - free subscription to this new journal from the [American Psychological Association](#).

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outside the room in which I am locked—my answers to the questions are absolutely indistinguishable from those of native Chinese speakers. Nobody just looking at my answers can tell that I don't speak a word of Chinese. Let us also suppose that my answers to the English questions are, as they no doubt would be, indistinguishable from those of other native English speakers, for the simple reason that I am a native English speaker. From the external point of view—from the point of view of someone reading my "answers"—the answers to the Chinese questions and the English questions are equally good. But in the Chinese case, unlike the English case, I produce the answers by manipulating uninterpreted formal symbols. As far as the Chinese is concerned, I simply behave like a computer; I perform computational operations on formally specified elements. For the purposes of the Chinese, I am simply an instantiation of the computer program." In other words, Searle is proposing that if a computer is just an arrangement of steel balls or electric charges then its content is meaningless without some other phenomenon.

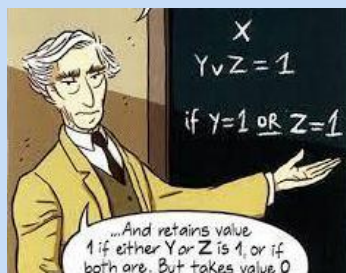
Block (1978) used the analogy of a system composed of the population of China

and thought are themselves processes as well as their termini in nature."

So Whitehead's durations of sense awareness both contain processes and are phenomena in their own right. A movement can be both a succession of changes of position and a quality of motion over the whole duration that contains it.

from The Concept of Nature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1920). pp.49-73.

*Alfred North Whitehead depictions from the Principia Comic Book:*



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communicating with each other to suggest the same idea, that an arrangement of identical things has no meaningful content without a conscious observer who understands its form.

Searle's objection does not convince Direct Realists because they would maintain that 'meaning' is only to be found in objects of perception.

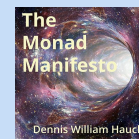


## THE CONVERSATION

[The Conversation](#) is an academic magazine with news and articles in Consciousness Studies.

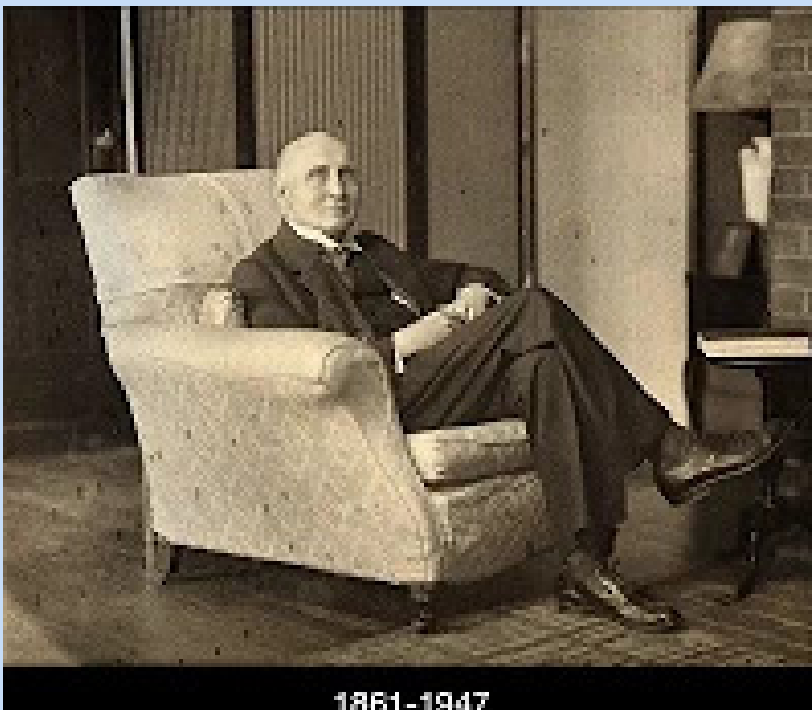


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The [Monad Manifesto](#) offers a variety of articles and videos on topics in Consciousness Studies.

## FILM & BOOK REVIEWS



### Alfred North Whitehead: Philosopher and Mystic

with [Amy Edelstein](#)

In this lecture, Amy Edelstein looks at Alfred North Whitehead's life and view of process philosophy, exploring how this sense of interdependent relationships, and a systems view radically changes our way of seeing the world, and

of how we educate ourselves and our students. Edelstein looks at how Whitehead's

deeply felt sense of the inseparability or profound interconnectedness of all things reveals a beauty, harmony, and compassionate view of life and our place in it. Lecture given at University of Pennsylvania.

Amy Edelstein is a powerful communicator of ideas and beliefs that can help us transform ourselves and the culture we live in. She is the author of six books, including the IPPY award-winning, bestseller *The Conscious Classroom*. Recipient of a Philadelphia Social Innovation Award for her nonprofit Inner Strength Education, Amy has developed a potent curriculum of mindfulness & systems thinking, empowering more than 17,000 Philadelphia high school students. Her website is at [TheConsciousClassroom.com](http://TheConsciousClassroom.com)

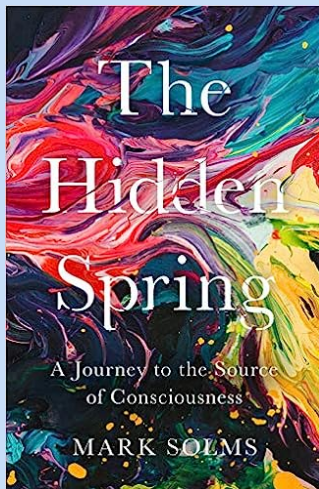
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## The Hidden Spring

A Journey to the Source of Consciousness

by [Mark Solms](#)



For Mark Solms, one of the boldest thinkers in contemporary neuroscience, discovering how consciousness comes about has been a lifetime's quest. Scientists consider it the "hard problem" because it seems an impossible task to understand why we feel a subjective sense of self and how it arises in the brain. Venturing into the elementary physics of life, Solms has now arrived at an astonishing answer. In *The Hidden Spring*, he brings forward his discovery in accessible language and graspable analogies.

Solms is a fearless guide on an extraordinary voyage from the dawn of neuropsychology and psychoanalysis to the cutting edge of contemporary neuroscience, adhering to the medically provable. But he goes beyond other neuroscientists by paying close attention to the subjective experiences of hundreds of neurological patients, many of whom he treated, whose uncanny conversations expose much about the brain's obscure reaches.

Most importantly, you will be able to recognize the workings of your own mind for what they really are, including every stray thought, pulse of emotion, and shift of attention. *The Hidden Spring* will profoundly alter your understanding of your own subjective experience.

- *Publisher's Weekly*

Read sections of this book now on [Google Books](#).

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**EVENTS & CONFERENCES**

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

## Center for Consciousness Studies

### THE SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS CONFERENCE 2023

April 22-28, 2024, Tuscon, Arizona

#### [MORE INFO](#)

The [Science of Consciousness \(TSC\)](#) conferences have been held annually since 1994, alternating yearly between Tucson, Arizona in even-numbered years, and other locations around the world in odd-numbered years. TSC locations have included Italy, Denmark, Japan, Sweden, Czech Republic, Hungary, Hong Kong, India, California, Switzerland, and Finland.

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**ASSC Annual Conference**  
June 22-25, 2023, New York City

#### [CONFERENCE PROGRAM](#)

The [Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness \(ASSC\)](#) is an academic society that promotes rigorous research and coordinates annual conferences directed toward understanding the nature, function, and underlying mechanisms of consciousness. The ASSC includes members working in the fields of cognitive science, medicine, neuroscience, philosophy, and other relevant disciplines in the sciences and humanities.

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The [Academy for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies \(ASCSI\)](#) aims to offer an arena where those with an interest in the study of consciousness and the fringe sciences can gain access to articles, links and other research to educate and interchange ideas in the zone where spirituality and scientific research interface. Our main event of the year is our annual conference. We feature a wide range of exceptional speakers presenting subject matter that appeals to both scholars and the general public. At the academy we wish to provide a venue for those who wish to publish, the Academy prints two publications, *The Journal for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies* and *The Searchlight*, available to those with paid memberships to ASCS. No new conferences have yet been schedules by this organization. View the [CONFERENCE PROGRAM](#) from the last conference.

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**INTERNATIONAL  
FOCUSING INSTITUTE  
(TIFI) CONFERENCE**

JUNE 25 - JULY 1, 2023

**Weeklong for Advanced Focusers  
Weeklong para Focalizadores Avanzados**



**June 25 - July 1, 2023  
25 de Junio - 1 de Julio de 2023**

**Hybrid format - Online only or Online with an  
in-person option in Dublin**

**[MORE INFO](#)**

The weeklong Conference is the flagship event of [The International Focusing Institute \(TIFI\)](#) and began in 1979. You will go online on Zoom on your computer to experience the plenaries, but all else will be in person (including Home Groups and in-person workshops offered by fellow participants). You have the option to attend additional workshops online, but the daily plenaries are the only times

you are required to be online. Location: Dominican Retreat Centre, Tallaght Village, Dublin 24, Ireland.

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**ICCSHEC 2024**

**February 25, 2024  
Washington, US**

**International Conference on Cognitive  
Science, Human Experience, and  
Consciousness**

**February 25-26, 2024 in Washington, US**

**[MORE INFO](#)**

The Cognitive Science, Human Experience and Consciousness Conference (ICCSHEC) aims to bring together leading academic scientists, researchers and research scholars to exchange and share their experiences and research results on all aspects of Cognitive Science, Human Experience and Consciousness Conference. It also provides a premier interdisciplinary platform for researchers, practitioners, and educators to present and discuss the most recent innovations, trends, and concerns as well as practical challenges encountered and solutions adopted in the fields of Cognitive Science, Human Experience and Consciousness Conference.

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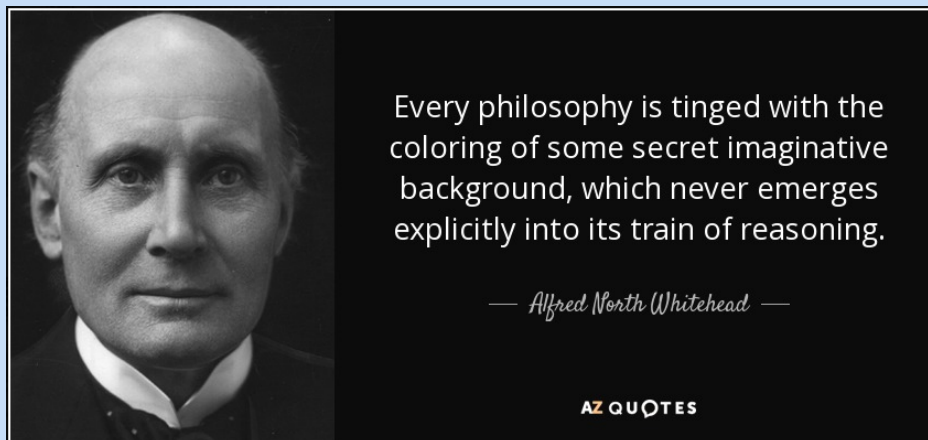
The [Institute of Noetic Sciences \(IONS\)](#) offers free online webinars on topics in Consciousness Studies. Archives of previous webinars are open to non-members for one week following the event; members have unlimited access. You can sign-up on their webinar page to receive notifications about upcoming webinars. The mission of IONS is to reveal the interconnected nature of reality through scientific exploration and personal discovery. Their scientists apply the rigors of their respective disciplines to explore such phenomena, with a focus on understanding humanity's inherent interconnectedness and the inner wisdom common to us all. The idea is that when we collectively embody our true interconnection and embrace our inner wisdom, we envision the creation of a more compassionate and thriving world.

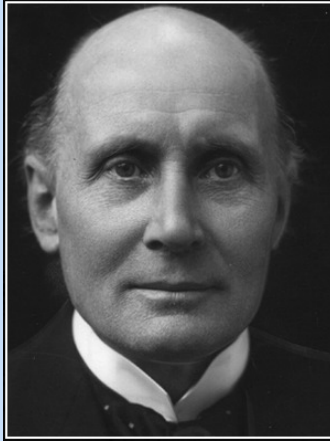
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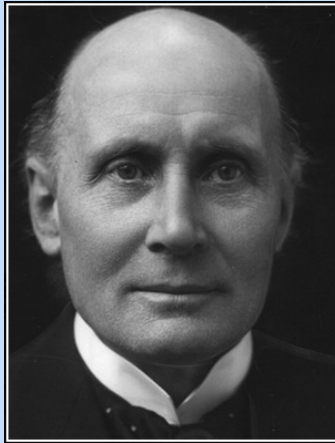




The only use of a knowledge of the past is to equip us for the present. The present contains all that there is. It is holy ground; for it is the past, and it is the future.

— Alfred North Whitehead —

AZ QUOTES



There is a quality of life which lies always beyond the mere fact of life; and when we include the quality in the fact, there is still omitted the quality of the quality.

— Alfred North Whitehead —

AZ QUOTES



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