**LOOKING THROUGH THE TELESCOPE**

*David Lorimer*

**AN END TO UPSIDE DOWN THINKING**

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Speaking about this book at our meeting in Italy, Mark gave a riveting talk summarising his thesis that the idea that the brain produces consciousness is in fact a myth, and our thinking about mind and body needs to inverted, hence the title. Mark’s background is in fact investment banking, and he tells the story of how he became interested in consciousness and began in the summer of 2016 listening to podcasts and reading literature on psi. This contradicted everything he thought and had learned, but he was struck by the fact that individuals he studied were independently arriving at similar conclusions, suggesting that consciousness is much more fundamental than generally recognised in scientific circles. It gradually dawned on him that materialism is in fact an unverifiable belief system. His book is exactly how he describes it, namely a comprehensive summary of the field written for a general audience.

Mark invites readers to consider two contrasting frameworks or perspectives, where the first is based on matter, and the second on consciousness, which he illustrates in corresponding diagrams. He asks why sceptics should not be sceptical about their own belief system, and points out that the basic tenet of materialism is an inference or leap of faith. He introduces the reader to a summary of his findings and also to the nature of resistance to these same findings. I think that a lot of this resistance has to do with perceived internal self-consistency or consilience based on materialistic premises. He summarises this debate in a two-column table where sceptics like Sean Carroll state that current physics rules out ESP for ever and Lawrence Krauss claims that there is no scientific evidence for extrasensory perception. Against this, Mark quotes Dean Radin’s recent book where he shows that experiments on remote viewing, telepathy, precognition and psychokinesis have achieved six sigma statistical results under controlled experimental conditions - so the odds against chance are over 1 billion to one. Against this, it is clear that Carroll and Krauss are simply ignorant and prejudiced, however distinguished as scientists.

The next two chapters analyse the unproven assumption that the brain creates consciousness and the proven and accepted science of quantum physics that defies common sense. The third part reviews the scientific evidence for remote viewing, telepathy, precognition, psychic abilities in animals and psychokinesis, covering some of the same ground as Steve Taylor above. He includes findings from the CIA Stargate project released in 2017. He then moves on to near death experiences, communications with the deceased, and children’s memories of previous lives as evidence for survival and reincarnation. Much of this will be familiar to seasoned readers, but it is covered very clearly and thoroughly, with excellent chapter summaries at the end.

In the final part, Mark asks how can this be, and what does it mean – could mainstream science actually be so wrong? Here he uses a simple question and answer format, summarising the previous chapters and characterising the brain as a self-localisation of consciousness. Moreover, and counterintuitively from a materialistic perspective, ‘when the brain is less active, the filter is less strong, which allows for a broader spectrum of consciousness to be received’, including in cases of terminal lucidity (p. 217). He rightly asserts that conclusions should be based on evidence rather than belief and suggests four possibilities with respect to the research he has been covering: either the scientists are lying, delusional, using poor scientific or statistical methods, or they are correct. If one is to uphold any of the first three possibilities, then evidence needs to be produced to back such accusations. Comprehensive reviews such as those by Dr Jessica Utts, President of the American Statistical Association, conclude that such robust effects would no longer be questioned in mainstream domains. Even Nobel laureates like Brian Josephson come under attack - he was actually disinvited from a conference owing to his research interest in ESP. This is a good example of an observation quoted from Bernard Haisch that ‘facts can be overturned by evidence, whereas dogma is impervious to evidence.’

The last chapter discusses the implications of this new view for everyday life. As I also argue in my own books, this extended understanding of consciousness indicates a deeper meaning to life and either the primacy of consciousness or a theory whereby mind and matter emerge from a deeper implicate order. This is not panpsychism, an increasingly popular option, whereby matter has consciousness. Mark quotes insights from David Hawkins, Rupert Spira, Anita Moorjani, Nassim Haramein and Eben Alexander, inviting the reader to conduct a thought experiment in relation to consciousness and our experience of space and time. He concludes that ‘I’ is unlimited, self-aware, infinite and eternal, the one universal mind expressing itself through many centres, as New Thought thinkers were formulating 100 years ago. Mark reaches the same conclusion as Steve, namely the primacy of oneness and interconnectedness over finiteness and separateness, a belief that he identifies as the core symptom of virtually every contemporary problem. This is a highly informative, well-argued and engaging read, a valuable contribution to the emerging post-materialist worldview.