



ABSTRACTS

Note: Included alphabetically by author's last name.

Nondual Awareness and Epistemic Freedom

John Dunne

Our encounter with the world begins, it would seem, with awareness structured for survival, yet as humans, those structures exhibit a form of flexibility and complexity that could only come through the multigenerational transmission of what is generally called “culture.” The heritage of our biology for survival imbues cultural structures with the inevitability of reality, and it drives especially the intuitive—but deeply confused—sense that our models of reality are simply reality itself. The seemingly objective status of these models, paradigmatically represented by “science” writ large, obscures the possibility of seeing through them to alternative realities, perhaps not unlike those that intelligent beings with entirely different biologies might inhabit. If we are ever to engage with these other perspectives, those that we would characterize as truly “alien,” then we need some means to step outside the seeming objectivism of our cultural and scientific paradigms. We need, in other words, some means to achieve epistemic freedom and free ourselves from the apparent facticity of the epistemic structures that we have inherited. Nondual awareness is one such means.

Traditional Knowledge, Perspectives and Consciousness

Sutton King

The Eagle and the Condor, an Indigenous ancient prophecy, described the Americas splitting into two paths. The Eagle people of the west, and the Condor people of the south. The path of the Condor has been described as the path of the heart, intuition, and feminine, seen as Indigenous knowledge and ways of being and knowing. The path

of the Eagle has been described as the path of the mind, industrial, and masculine – often seen as the western lens. It was said that in 500 years (1990) these paths would have the potential to come together to create harmony and unlock a new level of consciousness for humanity. Achieving a new consciousness for humanity requires the act of decolonization and indiginizing. As the western world begins to recognize the validity of Indigenous worldviews, and begins to center our traditional ways of healing through plant medicines, we have begun Indiginizing. As psychedelics make their way into the mainstream, we must recognize how imperative it is that we center decolonization. Our ability to create a new paradigm is directly proportional to our ability to decolonize. Decolonization is our responsibility to dismantle structures that perpetuate the status quo and address unbalanced power dynamics. As we look to achieve healing, how do we uphold Indigenous principles, sovereignty and repair the harm that has taken place, so that we can reimagine the mental health paradigm for our collective?

In my talk, I will share my experience as an Afro-Indigenous woman from the Menominee and Oneida nations of Wisconsin. The teachings of my ancestors that have guided my voice as an Indigenous rights activist and social entrepreneur. And last, share innovative ways in which health equity is being centered for Indigenous communities during the Psychedelic Renaissance.

Altered States of Consciousness and Sound: The Auditory Pathways of Binaural Beats

Elizabeth Krasnoff

Ultimately, to study hearing or any of our senses, is to study the human nervous system and its magical complexity. The nervous system is our interface with the sea of vibrations that both surround us and emanate from within us. It interprets this data for our survival and meaning, through a process we can call becoming conscious through arousal and awareness of the world around us and within us. The world around us transforms our nervous system—and we in turn transform the world. How does understanding the power of sound allow us to use this tool of transformation? What can we learn about how we interface with our reality?

In a time when the pursuit of altered states of consciousness is both leading edge science and a mainstream pursuit, the spotlight is on all available methods of consciousness alteration. Elizabeth investigates the power of sound to transform our states of consciousness, specifically the auditory pathways of binaural beats. Current theory in the Sound Healing field hypothesizes that binaural beats filter through our Reticular Activating System, presenting consciousness altering data to the auditory brain. Binaural beats are a difference tone created by two slightly different pitches. Electrical brain wave patterns respond to these precise frequencies and appear to impact correlative states of consciousness. The Reticular Activating System is a neural

network located in the brainstem responsible for modulating our three basic states of consciousness, awake, light sleep and deep sleep. Clinical studies continue to show positive outcomes in the leading edge field of binaural beats research, and the evidence is mounting for a powerful musical healing technology—music embedded with binaural beats. Elizabeth will present data from her recent pilot study and several examples of the therapeutic use of binaural beats music.

Opening the Archives of the Impossible: Some Thoughts on Consciousness, the Paranormal, and the Further Reaches of the Imagination

Jeffrey Kripal

This talk will describe how I came to help host at my home university a major archival collection of the private papers, correspondence, and case files of major researchers and experiencers around the UFO phenomenon, contact and abduction events, physical mediumship, near-death experiences, precognitive dreams, and other related anomalous phenomena. I will theorize such “impossible” experiences as collapsing the subject/object distinction and the structures of space-time that defines our ordinary daily lives, but also our sciences and the present reigning order of knowledge in the university. I will suggest that one of the main reasons that we have failed to take seriously these common but also extremely provocative expressions of human consciousness is because we lack a sufficient theory of the imagination. I will suggest a way forward in dual aspect monism and the deeper structures of meaning.

The Galileo Project: In Search for Technological Interstellar Objects

Avi Loeb (KEYNOTE SPEAKER)

The search for extraterrestrial life is one of the most exciting frontiers in science. First tentative clues were identified close to Earth in the form of the extraordinary interstellar meteor CNEOS 2014-01-08, the unusual interstellar object `Oumuamua and Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP) near Earth. The recently announced "Galileo Project" ushers the new frontier of "space archeology" in search of extraterrestrial technological relics.

The lecture will feature content from the book "Extraterrestrial" and textbook "Life in the Cosmos", both published in 2021, as well as material from recent commentaries.

Medicinal and Spiritual Use of Ayahuasca

Paulo Roberto Silva de Souza

The talk will cover the history, identity, visionary experience and the expansive force of the medicine. As well as the expansion of consciousness; enhancement of quality of awareness in sensing and perception, memories and imagination, thinking and feeling,

creativity and creative will power; intuition, discernment, intention, action and realization.

Also the true religions experiences and its consequences: unconditional love and peace of spirit; trust and hope; confidence and safety; spiritual joy and compassion; reconciliation and self-realization; an ascended state of higher consciousness; and the "Four Why's Theory."

As below, so above: the deeper the roots, the stronger the branches

Rosalind Watts

This talk will cover nature metaphors and visualizations as a powerful tool for altering our consciousness and providing a framework for transformational practice.

We will focus on a community integration approach to this work, ACER Integration, and how strengthening our mycelial connections to each other can help us grow.

The ACER community follows a process called the twelve trees, where each month focuses on a different tree teacher. In this talk we will briefly meet the acer tree and the hazel tree.

The acer tree will be introduced as a metaphor for a process of transmuting our suffering into growth. At our roots we encounter our darker aspects, intergenerational trauma, and all the rocks and boulders we have had to grow around. At our branches, which are a mirror image of the roots but reaching up to the light, we find our purpose, how our unique struggles shape our offering to the world. The trunk of the tree, our body, is the place of transformation and alchemy where pain at the roots, if lovingly held and processed, can become growth at the branches, new fruits.

The hazel tree is the tree for September and teaches us of harvesting the sweetness from the year we have had. We will all be invited to reflect on the previous 12 months of our lives and savor the moments of connection experienced.

Concepts of Space, Concepts on Self

Margaret Wertheim

In the 16th and 17th centuries Western science made a leap in thinking about the cosmological scheme in which humans are embedded. From seeing humanity at the center of an angel-filled cosmos with everything connected to God, we shifted to seeing ourselves as inhabitants of an insignificant planet in an infinite void. In this talk Margaret Wertheim will trace the history of Western ideas about space from the Middle Ages to today and argue that concepts of space and concepts self are inextricably entwined. How we see our selves is bound up with the question of how we understand where we

are in space. Indeed, what we think the 'self' is reflects our views about what we think is the spatial scheme of the cosmological whole. Other cultures have very different concepts both of self and space. Finally, Wertheim will discuss 'cyberspace' and ask how this new techno-social development is again changing our understanding of human personhood. Here we are witnessing a return to a kind of dual notion of self, where one self exists in the physical world and a potentially other self, or selves, exist in the digital domain. The talk will draw parallels between this emerging cyber-dualism and the older concept of a person being composed of a body and soul.