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## CHAPTER 18

### Why Has the West Failed to Embrace Panpsychism?

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When I was invited to write this chapter, I thought I would summarize, and hopefully extend somewhat, my main arguments-to-date for panpsychism. I do have something of a store of such arguments, for I have been developing a philosophy of nature along panpsychist lines, basically in the context of environmental philosophy, for the last twenty years. (I would call it a *naturphilosophie*, if that term were not so encumbered with historical disdain.) Moreover, I have spent my entire philosophical life proclaiming, to anyone who might be listening, the need for metaphysics generally (Mathews 2008b). I have been an ardent defender of metaphysics against the historical and contemporary onslaughts that have for two centuries almost stymied metaphysical inquiry in favor of explorations of logic, truth and language or, more recently, in deference to phenomenological and postmodern scruples about ontology. Now that metaphysics is back on the academic agenda, and even panpsychism is obtaining a small following, thanks to challenges posed by contemporary philosophy of consciousness, I could have welcomed the opportunity to try out my metaphysical arguments on a wider circle.

At just this moment however I find myself, not exactly having doubts, but undergoing a certain re-orientation towards the project of metaphysics. This is a result, not of being persuaded at last by Western critiques, from Kant to A. J. Ayer to Rorty, but rather of a pervasive though gradual transformation of consciousness accruing from my long-time engagement with Chinese thought. Under this influence I find that questions about truth are becoming important for me after all, though not in the way they were for Kantians or for philosophers of language and logic. From the Chinese perspective, truth can no longer be seen as the taken-for-granted goal, and theory the taken-for-granted vehicle, of cognition. Yet truth and theory are indeed the taken-for-granted presuppositions of the project of metaphysics. Questioning these presuppositions turns out to have implications not only for the project of metaphysics generally, but for panpsychism specifically: such questioning throws light, I think, on why panpsychism, though recurrently surfacing in Western thought (Skrbina

2005), has nevertheless invariably so far failed to take root in the Western philosophical imagination. So, rather than detailing metaphysical arguments for panpsychism, as I originally intended, I have opted instead to use the present chapter to examine obstacles to panpsychist thinking that I take to be endemic to the Western philosophical project.<sup>1</sup> After all, if the world really is invested with mental or psychic presence, as panpsychism avers, why have we in the West so resolutely turned our backs on it? How can we have continued to be so blind?

### 1. *Theoria*: the Perspective of the West

In order to identify obstacles to panpsychist thinking, we need to go back to the beginning—where for us in the West this means, of course, going back to the Greeks, to the origins of philosophy.

All human societies ponder fundamental existential questions—why are things as they are, how did the world originate, what is the place of human beings in the greater scheme, and such like—but the Greeks are generally taken to have been the first to separate out a secular approach to these questions from the usual mythopoetic approach. So, amongst the pre-Socratic philosophers for instance, Thales suggested that everything is really made of water: beneath the flux and diversity of appearance there lies a kind of unity, an order, a uniformity or universality of process. Anaximenes construed this underlying, unifying substratum as air, and Anaximander went one step further in the direction of abstraction and rendered it a boundless substance, *apeiron*, without specific empirical characteristics (and in this respect unlike water or air) but nevertheless regulated by a principle of ‘justice’ that ensured that each element of reality would play its allotted role and then give way to its contrary.<sup>2</sup>

Underlying and structuring this secular approach was a new and sophisticated notion of truth—a notion that there is, in addition to the world itself, the truth about the world, a truth that we as knowers can discover. The seeker after truth engages in a particular mental or cognitive operation: he holds a mirror up to the world; he duplicates the world mentally, and when he finds in that mental double a picture which he regards as accurately reflecting the nature of things, he has found truth. The truth about reality, or some aspect of reality, is permanent. It is in fact eternal: the world changes, but the truth about the world does not change. Things arise and pass away, moment by moment, but the truth about things is timeless. The goal of thought is to grasp truth, and the grasping of truth is an end in itself, a form of epistemological satisfaction peculiar to the intellect, where intellect itself comes into existence with the advent of this kind of epistemological activity.<sup>3</sup>

Such a notion of truth had not crystallized in other ancient societies in quite the same way as it did amongst the Greeks. In other ancient

societies thinking was still inextricable from agency: humans thought in order to act in some way. Apprehending the world, via animistic stories, was inseparable from invoking its divinity or tapping into its agency. In thinking and knowing in these old ways one remained, first and foremost, an agent within the world negotiating one's way around it, rather than a spectator, a looker in an inner mirror that reflected reality. For the Greeks however, approaching the world through this mental operation of doubling, of reproducing the world in this inner mirror, reality appeared under a peculiar disembodied, untouchable, abstract aspect, reflective of what-is but inert, unable to act upon the observer or be acted upon by them. While this inertness of the ideal duplicate of reality that was the object of knowledge was not accomplished all at once, and traces of the older mythopoetic animisms lingered in the philosophizing of the pre-Socratics, it did become dramatically explicit in Plato, in the shape of the Theory of Forms. The Forms were the abstract, eternal, perfect and unchanging images to which any actual, concrete, perishable world must conform. The goal of thought was to access this abstract realm and apprehend reality under a timeless rather than an ever-changing aspect.

Although the Theory of Forms seems a little bizarre or metaphysically florid to us today, Plato was really, in positing the Forms, no more than making explicit the ontological implication of the Greek discovery of truth. This reification of thought, this extraction, from fallible and temporal experience, of abstract and eternal mirror images of the world which then became the proper objects of the epistemological quest, resonates down through the Western tradition. It is the origin of theory: in projecting a mental reflection or re-presentation or idealized picture of the world onto a kind of abstract screen in an inner theatre, the mind is constituting theory. These mental processes have left their trace in etymology: the word, 'theory,' is derived from the Greek, *theoria*, a looking at, thing looked at; *theoros*, spectator; and *thea*, spectacle.

Achieving such an ideal re-presentation or doubling of the world constituted the act of knowledge. Moreover, in making knowledge its goal, the human mind subtly removed itself from reality and became reality's spectator, an observer of the drama—an observer invisible from within the constructed drama itself and in this sense invested with a status different from the elements of that drama, the elements of a re-presented reality. The drama itself, the spectacle, was constructed via extrapolation from and idealization of experience. The mind constructed a map or model that was intended to reflect the immediate world of experience but also to complete it. This map or model—*theoria*—was both pictorial, in that it conveyed an image of the world, and propositional, in that it abstracted from the unfinished and immediate particularity of things in favor of a completed totality, a totality which nevertheless, as something created by the knower, could not include the knower amongst its contents.

This knower who could not be included in its own ideal representation of reality was, I would suggest, the original subject, and the world as ideal projection, or re-presentation in the theatre of the subject's mind, the original object. It was, in other words, via the subtle reification involved in *theoria*, the introjective act of contemplative knowing, that the world first became an object for the human mind, inert and untouchable and completely devoid of real presence or agency of its own. This separation of active, world-constructing subject from the merely acted-upon, constructed object, was, I would further venture to suggest, the origin of the famous dualism that has systematically inflected Western thought. This dualism is a function of the subject-object bifurcation that inevitably occurs as a result of the mental operations involved in that form of knowing that I am here calling theory or *theoria*. Qua active knower, the subject is categorically different from the mere after-image of the world that it projects onto its mental screen, and as a result it inevitably feels the sense of apartness from, and aloofness to, the world that we witness in the history of dualism. Indeed there is a built-in autism, or radical self-centrism, in the standpoint of the subject, in the sense that the subject is developmentally disposed to fail to recognize, in any deeply felt way, the subjectivity of re-presented others. This will make self-other relations problematic even at the most immediate personal level. It will effectively block an outlook, such as panpsychism, which attributes subjectivity to the world at large.

Much further down the track, when the initial objectification of reality for purely explanatory purposes had led to a more accurate, detailed and comprehensive form of theorization—the body of knowledge known to us as science—humanity would be enabled to exercise its agency, which had initially been bracketed in the search for truth, on an unprecedented scale. But this was a new form of agency, the agency of a subject no longer negotiating the world from a standpoint of immersion within it but objectifying it in the ‘mirror’ of *theoria*, then reflexively premeditating and rehearsing action before carrying it out in actuality. This calculated form of agency turned out to enslave undreamed-of efficacy, and this efficacy, combined with the autistic tendency of dualism, has in time enabled the wholesale transformation—and degradation—of nature in the service of human ends.

Although the consequences of *theoria* have thus been in certain crucial respects sad and sorry, the developmental significance of this epistemic break-through was of course inestimable for human consciousness. For *theoria* brought with it not merely a powerful new way of organizing experience, by re-presenting it, but also a powerful new way of explaining what was re-presented. It is for this reason that theoretical knowledge serves a contemplative purpose: it purports to tell us not merely that the world is so, but why it is so. Even to wonder why the world is so is to embark on a course that is richly generative of meaning and therefore of culture. The significance of this question for opening up the Greek mind can

hardly be underestimated. But we can also note that the structure of explanation in Greek thought followed a particular pattern. This was the pattern of inference from universal to particular. This pattern is discernible in the proto-theories of the pre-Socratics: reality was re-presented by them in terms of specific universal principles or essences: water in Thales' case, air in Anaximenes', the *apeiron* governed by a principle of justice in Anaximander's, the ungenerated, indestructible, unchanging, indivisible and eternal plenum in the case of Parmenides, and atoms and void in the case of Democritus. In all these cases, a universal, law-like and unified somewhat is posited to underlie the flux of empirical particulars and the behavior of empirical particulars is understood in terms of it.

This pattern of explanation—Involving inference from universal to particular—seems natural and obvious to us in the West, but this is because it informs the whole structure of thought that we have inherited. On closer inspection it actually turns out to be rather odd. How are we supposed to discover the kinds of universals on which such explanation depends, given that we never have access to the whole of reality? The ‘completed totality’ that *theoria* requires turns out to be unavoidably speculative. And even if we could truly discover such universals, why should we find them explanatory, since they are themselves generally contingent.

Consider, for instance, Newton's laws of motion. If we are given Newton's second law then we can indeed predict that a billiard ball will accelerate in proportion to the strength of the force applied to it, but if we have no idea why force and mass and acceleration are related in the way the law describes, we will not really understand why the ball behaves as it does. In other words, since this model of explanation leaves universals themselves unexplained, it ultimately begs the explanatory question. The illusion of explanatory power that attaches to this structure of inference from universal to particular emanates not from ontology but from logic, and reflects the fact that ‘the world,’ as it is re-presented in *theoria*, is organized not by innate ontological necessity but by the rules that govern propositions. These are rules of predication, consistency and inference, first and foremost inference from universal to particular. So the structure of *theoria* subtly follows the structure of mental doubling or re-presentation via the mirror of picture-propositions; in conformity with this, *theoria* orders these picture-propositions in accordance with the laws apposite to them, namely, the laws of logic, rather than discerning in reality itself the contours of any innate ontological necessity. In this way the world takes on the aspect of a rational order: in characterizing it as rational however we are in fact identifying the logical structure of the mental mirror rather than the structure of the world itself.

In the evolution of Western thought from the time of the Greeks, this theoretical model of intelligibility prevails: intelligibility is assumed to reside in a set of universals from which the behavior or form of particulars may be inferred. The universals may be pre-Socratic substrates or

Aristotelian essences, which fix the form of instances in advance, or they may be the kinds of ‘laws of nature’ postulated by the mechanical science of the 17<sup>th</sup> century—or indeed by the post-classical science of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Aristotelian essences could indeed lay claim to a certain kind of necessity, but this was generally necessity of the ‘opium induces sleep by virtue of its soporific power,’ tautological kind. After more than fifteen hundred years of this kind of ‘explanation,’ thinkers were understandably impatient, and when the grip of medieval Christian dogma (which had subsumed Aristotelian teleology under theology) loosened somewhat at the time of the Renaissance, thinkers started to look for a more empirical kind of universality in nature, and found it in the laws of motion finally established by Newton. Here were universals of a genuinely substantive—non-tautological—kind. However, the problem of guaranteeing their universality—and hence the explanatory power of the new science as a whole—remained. Their universality could not be established by observation, since the universe as a whole vastly exceeds the reach of our observational capacity, both in space and in time. Even if we discounted our limitations as observers, these ‘laws’ would still be patently contingent: enormous experimental ingenuity is required to discover them in the first place, and once discovered, we can see no reason why they have to be as they are. The proportions of mass to force to velocity and so on seem arbitrary. They could apparently be otherwise. Certainly they are not self-evident. So the riddle of explanation—of why things are as they are—remains.

To solve this problem of contingency or arbitrariness, and hence this failure of intelligibility, at the heart of science, the postulate of causality was tacitly assumed. The universals of science were underpinned by causal necessity. The forces posited by physics were vectors of a causal power that simply made things that were otherwise entirely arbitrary happen. Physics was a theater of force, of coercion, because otherwise there was no way of accounting for the fact that things happened as they did. But Hume of course exploded this device, by revealing that the principle of causation is neither logically necessary nor detectable by observation. The whole edifice of science is held in place by it but it is, in fact, a metaphysical fraud or sleight of hand. Kant famously ‘resolved’ this epistemological scandal by acknowledging the ‘transcendental’ status of causation; that is, although the postulate of causation is not anchored in reality, it is required for explanation, and hence is part of the organizational structure of the mind itself. Kant’s recognition of this transcendental status of causation led him to assert the transcendental status of explanation generally: it is via the innately mind-imposed or mind-constructed categories of thought that raw experience is organized into a comprehensible order, but this order remains a mental construct; it tells us nothing directly about reality as it is in itself. In light of the present conjecture regarding the origins of theoretical thought in the mental operation of re-presentation, with its bifurcation of

consciousness into subject and object, however, we might perhaps view Kant's 'transcendental structure of thought' as the transcendental structure of *theoria*. That is to say, we might see Kant's inventory of the categories and the forms of intuition (in his special, technical sense of these terms), together with his analysis of the 'transcendental unity of apperception,' as a very precise dissection of the mental operations whereby mind constructs the idealized mirror of reality that constitutes *theoria*. There may be alternative modes of thought, and indeed of explanation, which do not share this structure—the structure of *theoria*—and do enable us to see both how and why reality itself hangs together.

Before introducing an example of such a mode of thought, I would like to spell out in a little more detail how the conundrum of causation at the heart of science is a consequence, at a subtler level, of the mirroring maneuver at the base of theory. In this mirroring maneuver the mind, as we have seen, projects 'the world' as an idealized totality onto a kind of mental screen and in the process differentiates itself, in just the kind of way Kant detailed in his analysis of the transcendental unity of apperception, into a knowing subject, on the one hand, and the world as object or known, on the other. Since this object is, despite its world-content, mentally a passive construct of the subject, it will be understood by the subject to be, in an ultimate sense, inert. In the explanatory scenario of *theoria*, self-activity, and hence motive power, will always be intuited to lie outside the object. The object by definition, qua object, lacks the power of self-creation or self-animation. It will for this reason seem intuitively natural, from the perspective of the subject, to posit an external source of motive power for the world, a Prime Mover or, as secular substitute for such a Mover in science, a principle of causation, which is, as we have seen, a principle of coercion or force. The laws of nature are held in place by the arbitrary but coercive force of causation.

So, to continue the recapitulation, science, the ultimate expression (so far) of *theoria*, is inevitably a physicalism or materialism. In its representations, *theoria* is faithful to the subject/object bifurcation on which it rests: it portrays the world as an inert realm of object-nature, which is best figured as a manifold of object-stuff in object-space, where the stuff partakes of object-nature in the sense that it is devoid of subjectivity and its correlates, the power of self-movement, self-activation, self-structuration, self-increase. Lacking the motive-power that resides in subjectivity, this object-world has to be activated by an external agency (Prime Mover or principle of causation), where such an agency is proxy for the 'transcendental' subject who originally constructs the object.

Clearly then, *theoria* is deeply and subtly biased towards accounts of the world that reflect its own bifurcated or dualist origins: either materialist/physicalist accounts like those of science which render the world a fully externalised object, or omnipotent forms of idealism, like Kant's,

which acknowledge the merely constructed and hence ideal status of ‘the world.’ In this sense, *theoria* is deeply antipathetic to accounts which attribute subject-nature to the world considered both real in its own right (not merely a mental construct) and knowable. In other words, since panpsychism has precisely such a realist orientation and ascribes subject-nature to the world, *theoria* is an inimical vehicle for panpsychism. This is not to say that panpsychism cannot be theorized. It manifestly can, and often has been, historically and in the present, as the present book attests. It is rather to say that panpsychism cuts against the transcendental experience, so to speak, from which *theoria* arises, the mental experience of subject/object bifurcation. For the subject born of this bifurcation—the subject engaged in *theoria*—some form of either physicalism or idealism will remain its natural and plausible metaphysical default position.

## 2. The Strategic Perspective

It was a brilliant and arresting article by Francois Jullien (2002), “Did philosophers have to become fixated on Truth?”, that first sensitized me to the possible contingency of truth as the goal of cognition. And it was the meta-level contrast Jullien drew between the figure of the Greek philosopher and that of the Chinese sage that somehow made this contingency of truth as a goal plain. Jullien’s arguments were different from those I have offered here; he did not posit *theoria* as a distinct category of cognitive process nor did he, accordingly, seek to demonstrate that dualism originated in such a process. But his aim was, like mine, to show that truth, the goal of the Greek philosopher, was an historical and cultural discovery. In seeking truth, the Greek philosopher was seeking a kind of final solution to the riddle of existence, an account of the nature of things that was fixed and eternal despite the perishability of things themselves. Truth in this sense, Jullien emphasized, was exclusive: if a view were true it necessarily excluded all competing views. It was in this respect that the Greek philosopher stood in marked contrast to the Chinese sage, who, Jullien observed, set out not to explain the world but to adapt himself to it. The sage sought to identify the tendencies or dispositions at work in particular situations in order to harness those tendencies or dispositions to his own best advantage. To this end he remained open to all points of view instead of insisting on a single viewpoint (‘truth’) exclusive of others. In describing the sage as seeking ‘congruence’ with reality, Jullien seems to be implying that the thinking of the sage remained inextricable from agency rather than becoming, like the thinking of the Greeks, an end in itself.

The contrast between the Greek and the Chinese approaches to cognition is instructive, for as I remarked earlier, it can be difficult for us as Westerners to imagine alternatives to the founding presuppositions of our

own modes of cognition. Yet, as I have already intimated and shall argue further in due course, it may be these founding presuppositions that are shaping the project of metaphysics in such a way that it subtly and systematically renders the idea of panpsychism untenable. For this reason I want to develop the contrast between Greek/Western and Chinese approaches further, and show that the Chinese approach, characterized by Jullien as “accommodation,” is part of a very different project from that of *theoria*, and yet leads ultimately to its own model of explanation, one that is much more conducive than the Western model to an outlook that could be described as panpsychist. (The Chinese themselves wouldn’t describe it as panpsychist however because such metaphysical categories are not, as we shall see, their terms of reference.) In speaking about ‘the Greek’ and ‘the Chinese’ approaches, I am of course constructing these as ideal-types, with some degree of historical purchase, at a very general level, but without any pretension of doing justice to the great variability of Greek and Chinese thought in actuality. The purpose is merely to highlight defining characteristics of *theoria*, and to conceive of alternatives to it.

The project which I am here attributing to the Chinese, and to which Jullien’s art of accommodation belongs, is, I would suggest, a strategic project. Where the Greek approach could be described in terms of *theoria*, the Chinese approach could be described in terms of strategy. As strategists, we are concerned, not, like the theorist, with the world as a completed totality projected by the subject onto an ideal screen, where that totality is then perceived as external to and independent of the subject; we are concerned rather with the immediate field of influences in which we are immersed and the way in which that field impacts upon our agency. That is, we are concerned not with an idealized ‘world,’ conceived under its universal aspect, but rather with our own immediate situation and how the influences at play in it are impinging on us, corporeally and tangibly, in the present moment. Our focus has shifted from the world as an inner but nevertheless external-to-the-subject object of observation to the immediate field of active influences in which we are agentically immersed. We do not need a theory about the nature of reality in order to respond strategically to this field: we can feel the environmental pressure increasing and decreasing as we respond now this way, now that. There is no sense of this world as a completed totality; it extends just as far as the range of our own sensitivity, and as we move around in it this range is constantly changing. To train the strategic faculty, one does not teach reason, which is to say, the rules of logic and abstraction, but rather one sets exercises or practices which cultivate sensitivity and responsiveness. This is why Chinese sages typically received their training in martial and other Daoist arts rather than in discursive inquiry.

Strategic consciousness then, unlike discursive consciousness, is inherently nondualist, not because it is unself-consciousness but because it

doesn't project 'the world' into an abstract space of re-presentation beyond the agency of the self, where it can be grasped as a bounded totality. Rather, the strategic self remains immersed in a fluxing field of immediate pressures which are registered not 'objectively,' as part of a totality at an epistemic remove from the subject, but in terms of their immediate impact or influence on the agency of the self. Etymology is helpful here, as it was in the case of the term 'theory': 'strategy' is derived from the Greek *strategia*, 'office or command or art of a general,' from *stratos*, 'multitude, army, expedition' and *agein*, 'to lead, guide, drive, carry off,' from Sanskrit *ajirah*, 'moving, active.' In light of this, strategy may be understood as concerned with the coordination of collective or individual agency. Cognition is required for such coodination, but this is not the kind of cognition involved in *theoria*, which abstracts from the empirical agency of the subject in order to attain a more 'objective' rendering of the world. In *strategia*, cognition remains in the service of agency.

However—and this is the important point—it is not as though the sage, by staking out his epistemological standpoint within the terrain of his own agency and cultivating sensitivity to the immediate and particular influences impinging on him, does not discover anything about the nature of reality. What he discovers is that *strategia* calls for accommodation. The best way of negotiating the field of influences and conativities in which one is immersed is generally to adapt to them, which is to say, to make one's own ends as consistent as possible with them, rather than seeking to force those influences and conativities into compliance with one's own will. This is self-evident inasmuch as he who achieves his goals in ways best calculated to conserve his own energy will be most fit to continue to preserve and increase his own existence. *Strategia* then points to *wu wei*, the way of least resistance, which can be understood not simply as the giving up of one's own ends in deference to the ends of others but rather as tailoring one's ends to those already in train in one's environment, and using the energies already at play therein to further one's own goals.

The sage discovers the wisdom of *wu wei* not, as we have seen, through the ideal objectification of nature, as in science, but through strategic trial and error, with his own agency as the terrain of experimentation. By cultivating his sensitivity to immediate environmental signals, and responding to them now one way, now another, he learns that generally he does best when he does least. He learns that if one can yield to pressure without being harmed, it is best to yield, rather than to resist or try to overcome. If one can use the energy, including the energy of ambient conativity, already available in one's environment to attain one's goals, it is, again, best to use that energy, rather than drawing on one's own. The less energy of one's own one uses, the less one will deplete one's own resources; the less depleted one is, the greater one's fitness. If one cannot yield, or harness ambient energies, without being harmed or diminished, then one

might have to fight or contend—one might have to draw upon one's own resources and exert oneself strenuously. But even then (indeed particularly then), principles of *wu wei* will apply to the methods one adopts for fighting or contending.

In discovering this strategic principle, the sage is not of course discovering something that applies uniquely to himself. Having discovered it he can simply see that it must apply generally, other things being equal, to everything in nature, since things are by and large naturally or necessarily selected according to fitness. This way of least resistance, or *wu wei*, is in fact the Way, the Dao, which, unlike the arbitrary universals of the pre-Socratics or indeed of modern science, is a self-evident ontological necessity, built into the fabric of being. So, starting only with the strategic imperatives of his own being—the motive power of his own conativity on the one hand and the efficacy of least resistance on the other—the sage discovers, incidentally as it were, the Way of all nature.

But this is not all. For the strategic approach not only reveals the Way of reality; it also yields, incidentally in effect, a particular model of explanation. This is a model of explanation that delivers intelligibility in a way that the theoretical-causal model failed to do; that is, it delivers not the illusory intelligibility of inference from contingent universal to particular, but the genuine intelligibility of self-evidence. Here is how it works. As strategic agents we are, firstly, imbued with a conative imperative, the imperative to preserve and increase our own existence. (This is Spinoza's definition of conatus, and it is not accidental that it figures here, as we shall see below.) We learn, through strategic experimentation, that the optimal way of preserving and increasing our existence is the way of least resistance, of *wu wei*, adapting our ends to those of others in our immediate environment and harnessing processes already under way to achieve our ends. This may mean free-riding on winds, rains, solar radiation and natural geometries and topographies, for instance. But it might also mean more subtle strategies, shaping ourselves to our environment in ways that involve a reciprocal effect.

Through cultivating our sensitivity to the conativities already acting in our environment, we can engage those conativities, joining them with our own to create new ends which transcend the ends of each of the participants, including ourselves, but which nevertheless remain true to each participant's conative dispositions. I have elsewhere called this engagement of conativities, by which new and larger forms, continuous with the existing conative dispositions of the participants, come into being, synergy. Through synergies, in this sense, new form, new possibility, is continuously brought into the world, without the need for one party to impose itself on, or violate the conativity of, another. New form is continuously generated out of the conative energy of that which already exists. In the biological realm this principle of synergy is expressed as reproduction, and its essentially creative

function is identified as fertility. But the scope of this principle—of synergy, in the present sense—is wider than this. It points to a basic ontological necessity: things are optimally preserved to the extent that they fit with their environment and allow the energies of their environment to carry them to conatively appropriate goals. The sage, cultivating sensitivity to the field of influences and conativities in which he is immersed and experimenting with strategic possibilities, learns not only how to fit into the world himself, but how everything fits together creatively in nature.

It is this fitting together that provides the key to explanation, to the intelligibility of things. When he wants to know why a thing is as it is, he looks, not for some arbitrary ‘law of nature’ from which it might be inferred, but for the way the thing in question has been shaped by and with other things in its immediate environment. He looks at a pea and sees how it has been shaped by the contours of the pod. He looks at the honey-eater’s beak and sees how it has adapted itself to the flower’s throat. He looks at the Blue Whale and sees how its form is dictated by the great baleen structures that have been shaped to sieve the waters for krill. He sees a jigsaw world, everything shaped by and shaping everything else, an Escher world of birds contoured exactly to fish, fish to other fish, fish to waves, waves to rocks, rocks to other rocks... The sage needs no theory to understand why things are as they are in such a world; once he understands the way things are shaped by and shape the things around them, he can see why they have to be so.

How different this piecing-it-together, or as I shall term it, conformational, way of looking at the world is from the way of science! It makes no assumptions about a ‘fundamental level’ from which phenomena observable by us are built up, in accordance with arbitrary but universal laws. It does not even posit fundaments. It looks instead for instances of mutual morphology or mutual functionality amongst the appearances, just as these appearances are given in perception. From these clues it seeks to piece together the jigsaw of a larger pattern. Starting from the phenomenal in this way, and with the pieces of the jigsaw that are nearest to hand, it doesn’t assert, at the outset, metaphysical categories such as ‘mind’ and ‘matter’. Notions such as these pertain to the ‘fundamental level,’ to which the strategic approach, with its interest in conformation, has no recourse. Rather, it is taken for granted from the strategic perspective that human consciousness, like everything else, seeks self-expression and receives its particular shape, or function, from internal relations with other elements of a larger pattern. The terms of reference required to describe the larger pattern will therefore have to be as encompassing of the ‘psycho-’ as of the ‘physico-’. Not that the Chinese would put it this way. From their viewpoint, this great fitting-together of things cannot be anticipated by preconceived and fixed metaphysical categories: the Dao cannot be named. It is not a law, a specifiable universal. This is not because it is a mystical somewhat beyond our ken, but rather because it is merely a continuity of

unfolding, whose outcome cannot be prefigured, though the principles for strategically negotiating it can be discovered.

Let me expand on this latter point a little. As I have already explained, the strategic principle of *wu wei*, disclosed in the very person of the sage himself, does give a clue to the dynamic of this unfolding: it is a flow-dynamic of conative striving for self-existence and self-expression on the one hand, and of accommodation or least resistance on the other, where least resistance also expresses itself through the highly creative processes of synergy. Although there are no predetermined universals assumed to be at work in this scenario, the sage can still seek to explain why things are as they are in any particular instance. He will do so by discovering the pattern whereby the things in question fit together in that instance. If the pattern happens to include a pattern of meaning—if the things in question seem to fit together in a synchronistic or poetic or other meaningful way, and not merely in morphological or functional ways—then meaning will figure as part of the pattern. In other words, there is no hard and fast distinction made at the outset between organization according to meaning and organization according to physical structure. It is, to adapt Gregory Bateson's famous dictum, 'the pattern that explains,' and the pattern is metaphysically neutral with respect to Western categories, such as mind and matter. Viewed from this perspective, we can see how heavy-handed and reductive are terms such as 'materialism'/'physicalism' and 'panpsychism,' although we can also see that the conformational perspective, with its open-ness to the psycho- as much as the physico- in its search for pattern, is far more aligned with psychophysical outlooks than it is with any kind of physicalism or materialism.

This affinity between the conformational perspective and what we in the West might call a panpsychist or psychophysical outlook is reinforced when we consider that the whole tenor of reality as revealed through the strategic experience is far more mind-like than is any view of the world obtainable through science. When we experience reality, Escher-style, as a field of internal relations, everything fitting together, the identities of things porous and inter-permeating, everything fluidly pouring into and out of everything else, no rigid boundaries or hard edges, no intractable resistances, everything responsively seeking a space for itself in the moving jigsaw of others, then the world of outer sense has the same quality as the inner field of consciousness, in which thought and experience inter-morph and inter-permeate, resolve and dissolve, in just this fluid kind of way. The world of outer sense, in other words, has a character consistent with its being the outer expression of an inner field of subjectivity.

Indeed, one definitive question that can never be answered by physics, 'Why does the world cohere?', has an almost self-evident answer from the strategic perspective. Or rather, it has no more need of an answer than does the question, 'Why does the field of my own subjectivity cohere?'. The question arises for physics because when the world is

conceptualized in physicalist terms, as a manifold of logically discrete physical elements only externally and contingently stuck together by causal laws, then it is a mystery why these elements remain stuck together—why the ‘laws’ continue to hold. For, as we have seen, nothing can be shown to anchor those laws, ontologically speaking. Causality has been unmasked as illusory, at least insofar as it is supposed to confer natural necessity. There is therefore no reason why the universe should not simply fall apart at any moment. On the other hand, when we consider the nature of subjectivity, it is immediately self-evident that it is a field-like phenomenon. I can no more conceive of subjectivity as free-floating, un-referenced to a subject, or of a given subject’s subjectivity as somehow scattered or existing in discrete fragments, than I can conceive of thoughts and feelings having hard edges or clearly defined boundaries. The whole phenomenology of subjectivity is of a unified though unbounded field-phenomenon with shifting patterns of activation permeated with patterns of meaning that take their shape and coloration from the field as a whole. No segregation of thought or feeling can occur in this field, and every instance of experience is shaped by the larger meanings that inform the field and whose continual unfolding may drive change in the field as a whole. Cohering then is integral to subjectivity. If reality is experienced as cohering in similar fashion, this is good *prima facie* evidence, from the viewpoint of the strategist, unencumbered as he is with dualist presuppositions, that he and reality share a common nature. Reality coheres because it is, like him, inwardly constituted as a subject, as a field of subjectivity.

The strategic perspective then is deeply conducive to panpsychist or psychophysical attitudes even though it does not commit to panpsychism, or any other metaphysical absolute, in a fixed and predetermining fashion.

### 3. Western Anticipations: Spinoza and Goethe

Amongst Western philosophers there are two that I would like to pick out as prophets of the alternative way of knowing that I am here characterizing as strategic as opposed to theoretic or discursive. I say prophets rather than proponents, because their utterances in this connection are admittedly obscure. Both are, as one would expect, neither materialist nor idealist but panpsychist in outlook. The first is Spinoza, the second Goethe. I shall consider Goethe first because he offers a much fuller account of his alternative to science than Spinoza does.<sup>4</sup> But Spinoza offers a schema of the relation between knowledge of the scientific kind and knowledge of a broadly strategic kind that I think provides a promising and appropriate way forward for those of us committed to panpsychist-type perspectives today.

Goethe famously eschewed both rationalist metaphysics (of the kind taken up, even after Kant, by his Romantic contemporaries) and the

methods of classical or Newtonian science, while yet being an ardent student of nature, devoting himself throughout his life to detailed empirical studies of natural, particularly botanical, phenomena. Science was of little use in his endeavor to understand nature because, as leading Goethe scholar, Henri Bortoft, points out, Goethe regarded it, not so much as untrue, as misguided: it failed to capture what was intelligible in nature.<sup>5</sup> One of the principal ways in which it was misguided, according to Goethe, was in its reliance on analytical method. Working from an analytical perspective, the scientist seeks to explain phenomena by reducing them to their elements, to the logically discrete units out of which they are made. Insofar as these units are logically discrete, they are external to one another; the resulting order is an order of externality.

This was troubling on two counts. Firstly, to break phenomena down into discrete elements or units was to drain them of life. Life resides in wholes; when organisms are taken apart they are no longer alive. In order to understand the aliveness of nature we have to understand it in terms of its wholeness. Secondly, when nature is conceptually taken apart into discrete elements, it becomes necessary—as we have already observed—to postulate causal laws to stick the elements back together again. Causal laws are logically arbitrary ‘add-ons,’ discovered *a posteriori* rather than through any inherent intelligibility: Goethe recognized that we can never see why the causal regularities that we find in nature are as they are. In this he is concurring with our earlier arguments to the effect that nature as revealed by analytical science lacks intelligibility. Goethe found this situation unsatisfactory: we do not truly understand nature, he thought, unless we grasp why things are as they are.

To the analytical method, Goethe developed an holistic alternative that was uniquely his own. When studying natural phenomena—and it is his botanical studies which are best known—he looked for the inner principle that is manifested in the phenomenon. He called this inner principle the *Urphänomen*, or Ur-phenomenon—the primordial or “deep down phenomenon” (Roszak 1972: 331). The *Urphänomen* is the implicated whole that is manifest, though never exhaustively so, in any explicated particular. When studying the morphology of plants, it was the *Urpflanze*, or Ur-plant, that Goethe sought. The Ur-plant was to be understood not as a primitive ancestor-plant from which all later plants were descended, such as Darwin would propose. Nor was it a kind of Platonic Form of the plant, an essence or abstract universal which all particular plants instantiate. Rather, the Ur-plant was to be interpreted—and here I am again following Bortoft—as plant-life as a whole, considered as a single greater planetary life-form that propagates vegetatively into whatever niches are available, adapting to those niches in ways that result in the manifold variations of plant-form observable on earth.

To make further sense of this interpretation, at least in relation to botany, I would suggest that we consider the Ur-plant not simply as the

manifest totality of the plant kingdom but as the determining but inexhaustible impulse that articulates itself in that totality. This impulse may perhaps be understood—straying from Goethe's (and Bortoft's) terms of reference and reverting to my own—as the conativity of the plant kingdom, its impulse to seek self-actualization. This conativity, existing 'deep down' within plant-life, is an inner impulse to exist that has its own felt vegetative rhythms or patterns of flow, its own large-scale grain or texture of becoming. Within each individual plant, moreover, this rhythm is uniquely inflected. Each plant, in other words, has its own inner vegetative 'signature,' a particular style of vegetative being which is discernible in every aspect of its self-expression. A given plant assumes its distinctive morphology as a result of the unique pattern of its conativity adapting to the contingent environmental context of its existence.

What is true for plants is true for all the other entities in nature. In any manifest entity there dwells, 'deep down,' the Ur-phenomenon, the conative impulse which finds partial expression in that entity. That expression is always partial because the Ur-phenomenon itself can never be fully articulated; it is a potential for form rather than form itself. The aim of Goethe's nature studies was to discover the Ur-phenomenon in any given context of investigation. From close observation of the style or signature of an entity, one can sense the informing unity of potential, the indwelling meaning, that patterns its conativity. Goethe's method was a form of intuitive perception that focused on particulars: through a practice of patient attentiveness to the particularity of entities the inquirer could gain a feeling for their inner grain or rhythm, an inner grain or rhythm that was discernible through the style inflecting every aspect of their actualization, including their actions. As soon as the Ur-phenomenon is intuited in this way, the form the entity takes in a particular environmental niche becomes intelligible: this is the way that an entity with that style of becoming would actualize itself under those conditions. We can see why the 'Ur' of the plant world, for instance, introduced into a particular niche, develops the leaf and flower shapes, the hues and scents, the dimensions and habit, of the particular plants that occupy this niche. These shapes and hues are just the result of a particular vegetative tendency being placed in a particular jigsaw context of light and shade, moisture, wind, soil, insect-life, animals and other plants, and, like a pea to a pod, adapting its form to the contours of this slot.

In sum, to understand nature is, for Goethe, to intuit the generative, organizational impulse of the Ur-phenomenon—whether this be the Ur-plant or the Ur-animal or the Ur-planetary system. The Ur-phenomenon, I am suggesting, is the diffused but unified field of felt conative potential that informs the entity but is never fully articulated in it. In light of this it is clear why a Goethean intuiting of the Ur-phenomenon in no way results in a representation of nature in its actual, present dimensions, as science does; it in no way provides a mirroring of nature.

Rather, our intuiting of the Ur-phenomenon is tantamount, from a Goethean point of view, to our continuing or extending nature, or to nature continuing or extending itself through us. By this I take Goethe to mean that when we intuit the Ur-phenomenon our understanding itself actually becomes a further expression of the Ur-phenomenon. The organizational dynamics of nature which find expression in the efflorescence of the plant kingdom are actualized again at the level of thought in the mind that intuitively grasps the Ur-phenomenon. The thoughts of that mind are like ghostly tendrils arising from the very calyx of the Ur-plant, following the same organizational pathways already traced by leaf and flower and all the other phenomena of the natural world. Our thought, following the inner patterns of nature, is as much an emanation of the Ur-phenomenon as is the rest of nature. Nature can reproduce its organizational dynamics through the far-reaching tendrils of our understanding just as much as it can through the never-ending metamorphosis of leaf into stem into sepal into petal into seed-pod within the vegetative domain. Thought, properly channeled through Goethe's method of understanding, is leaf, in the sense that it is merely another emanation of the same inner organizational dynamics that are expressed as leaf.

For Goethe then the aim is not to reflect nature, to provide a discursive re-presentation of nature, as in *theoria*, but to become, in our knowing, a further elaboration of nature, a tendril escaping from the calyx of the Ur-plant and discovering a whole new plane of self-actualization. In this sense the mode of cognition explored by Goethe may be considered to a degree strategic: through such cognition the knower ties herself into the patterned conativities of nature, and thereby makes her knowing a part of the larger self-unfolding of reality itself. For Goethe this strategic opportunity exists only at the level of epistemology. In this respect his commitment to what I am calling *strategia* is more limited than that of the Chinese sage, for whom the possibility of human agency expressing the organizational dynamics of nature extends to the whole of life: in all our activities we can follow the conative rhythms that animate the rest of reality.

Now let us turn to the second of the two Western philosophers I have selected as offering alternatives to the dualism of *theoria*. This second philosopher is the pre-eminent panpsychist of the Western tradition, Spinoza. As perhaps the most rationalist and most determinist philosopher in history, one whose entire system seems to turn around the axis of causation, Spinoza might appear to pose a counter-example to my thesis that panpsychism tends to elude the theoretical and concomitantly predominantly causal framework of Western metaphysics. But it is worth remembering that Spinoza ultimately identified three kinds of knowledge, of ascending degrees of adequacy, and therefore that the overt epistemology of his presentation in the

Ethics might, as I explain below, be of a lower grade than the epistemology suggested by his ultimate findings.

This is not the place for a detailed exegesis of the notoriously opaque (but still glorious!) Spinoza. I bring him into the discussion only because I think his doctrine of the three kinds of knowledge provides a clue to the way the kinds of cognition I have dubbed *theoria* and *strategia* respectively might be positioned relative to each other: to posit *strategia* need not mean discarding *theoria*, but may rather be to situate *theoria* within a larger epistemological context. About Spinoza's panpsychist metaphysics I shall say no more than is needed to explain the doctrine of the three kinds of knowledge, nor will I attempt to justify the interpretations I rely on in this process. (It is not for nothing that Spinoza is named Spinoza: 'spinosity' means thorniness; the dictionary gives "a difficult argument or theory" as one of the meanings of spinosity, from Latin *spinosus*, *spina*, thorn. Spinoza made his argument difficult—bristling, like a hedgehog, with forbidding spikes, the better to protect the truth within. Indeed he is the ultimate hedgehog, knower of one big thing, as opposed to fox, knower of many things.)

First kind of knowledge: this is knowledge of what Spinoza calls *natura naturata* as opposed to *natura naturans*. *Natura naturata* is nature under its differentiated, explicated aspect, the Many, the manifold of particularized physical phenomena that we ordinarily observe around us. *Natura naturans*, on the other hand, is nature under its holistic aspect, the One, in which differentia are viewed not separately but through the lens of the internal relations that knit them seamlessly together into a cohesive unity. Reality itself is, for Spinoza, equally a Many and a One; it can be viewed under its 'modified' or conditioned aspect, as an aggregate of explicated elements (or modes, in Spinozist parlance) externally linked with one another in infinite causal chains. Or it can be viewed under its unmodified, unconditioned aspect, in which individual elements disappear, so to speak, into the internally self-organizing background structure of the whole.

Knowledge of the first kind is, as I have mentioned, knowledge of *natura naturata*, and corresponds to ordinary empirical knowledge: we receive impressions from the physical elements that surround us and observe contingent—causal—regularities amongst these elements. On the basis of these observations we arrive at our everyday opinions about the world and also posit the kinds of empirical universals that constitute science. What is definitive of the first kind of knowledge is that it consists essentially of information coming to us from the outside. We remain passive in the receipt of this information: it imprints itself on our senses and our understanding. There is no pattern in the information such that, in recognizing it, we grasp, in a genuine act of cognition, that the information in question make sense, that it must be so. For this reason Spinoza describes the ideas that make up the first kind of knowledge as inadequate ideas. They

are not inadequate for practical or even scientific purposes, but they are inadequate in respect of intelligibility. Adequate ideas are such that, in the very act of grasping them, we can see that they must be true. The ideas of common sense and science are clearly not adequate in this sense.

Second kind of knowledge: Spinoza calls knowledge of the second kind reason, thereby creating no end of confusion, since it implies that all that is required for such knowledge is abstract and logical thinking. This is patently not the case, since science is eminently abstract and logical, inasmuch as it rests on inference from the universal to the particular, yet science would not qualify as knowledge of the second kind. In other words, knowledge of the second kind requires much more than deductive inference. It is still knowledge of individual physical elements or modes, and in this sense is still knowledge of the explicate aspect of nature. But it is when we begin to notice the relations amongst these elements that enable them to compose themselves into larger unities that we are ushered into the second level of knowledge. In other words, our ascent to the second level commences when we start to understand the explicate order, or order of externally related elements, in terms of the internal relations which knit these ‘elements’ into larger, ‘conformational’ unities (to revert to my own earlier terms of reference).

Spinoza provides little by way of illustration of the second kind of knowledge, but today ecology affords a rich reservoir of examples of the kinds of conformational unities that I think he has in mind in this connection. Consider again the case of the Blue Whale and its relations with krill. By paying careful attention to any particular Blue Whale, we will notice that its sieve-like mouth is perfectly adapted for consuming tiny krill. As soon as we notice this, we can immediately grasp how krill have actually shaped, actually structured, the morphology of the whale. We don’t have to keep checking Blue Whales to see whether their relation to krill continues to hold as we do in the case of the empirical universals discovered by science. In this sense the relation between Blue Whales and krill is not like the relation between entities, such as billiard balls, which are only externally connected via causal laws. It is rather a relation whose necessity we can actively grasp. We can see, self-evidently, how whale and krill fit together. Once seen, this conformation cannot be doubted; in the very act of grasping it, we can see that it must be true. It is accordingly an adequate idea. (It is because of the essential intelligibility of knowledge of the second kind, the self-evidence of adequate ideas, that Spinoza describes such knowledge as reason: it shares the demonstrable and self-evident character of the propositions of mathematics, which also belong to this tier of knowledge.)

In knowledge of the second kind then, we begin to grasp the mutually structuring relations amongst things—the larger, conformational unities into which things fit. The explicate order of externalities that are only contingently—causally—connected with one another is starting to

merge into the seamlessness, the wholeness, of an internally self-structuring background order. In discovering such conformational relations, we are arriving at what Spinoza calls ‘common notions,’ notions of the specific internal relational structures of things. Spinoza emphasizes that common notions are discovered via individual instances; large-scale samples are not required. Common notions, unlike the notions of either common sense or science, are always adequate ideas. (My remarks here owe a lot to Deleuze’s understanding of the key significance of common notions in Spinoza.)<sup>6</sup>

Third kind of knowledge: Spinoza calls knowledge of the third kind intuition. The transition between the second and third kinds of knowledge is smooth and gradual. What shifts is not so much the mode of cognition as the goal of cognition. At the third level, the goal becomes, precisely, strategic, although Spinoza does not put it in quite this way. For as the world becomes truly intelligible to us, in the second-level sense, as we truly grasp it in an act of understanding, and are no longer merely receiving arbitrary information from without, as we do at the first level of knowledge, we ourselves become truly active. We become truly active in the sense that our cognition is now no longer merely a conditioned response to causal input, as it is when we register perceptual information or memorize rules or absorb lessons. It is no longer merely a matter of (as we might put it) neuronal determinism. In attaining adequate ideas, our understanding is released from its neural conditioning and actualizes a kind of sovereignty that pertains uniquely to it. Once it has understood why the angles of a triangle add up to two right angles, for instance, or how the pieces of an ecological jigsaw fit together, it can no longer be conditioned to see these matters otherwise. Its thinking is in this sense no longer merely the product of prior causes; it has risen to a new level in which it becomes relatively self-directing. The source of its self-directedness is its capacity to grasp the intelligible. In grasping the intelligible, we not only see how reality itself is internally self-structured; we ourselves become relatively internally self-structuring.

In the dynamics of conformation then the universe transcends the arbitrary necessity of causation and attains instead the active necessity of its own holistic nature. In grasping those dynamics we in our turn also transcend our conditioned status and move towards self-structuring in accordance with the self-activating power of thought. Since the task of all living things is, for Spinoza, essentially conative, and since he defines conatus as the will of each thing to persevere in and increase its own existence, we, as cognitive beings, fulfill our conatus by achieving true self-actualization through the self-activating power of thought, instantiated in the third kind of knowledge. In this sense the goal of cognition was, for Spinoza, self-actualization, and in that sense strategic, all along.

To follow Spinoza’s doctrine of the three kinds of knowledge then is to nest the first kind of knowledge, which includes what I am here calling *theoria*, in a larger, intuitive kind of knowledge in which the intelligible,

self-active and self-organizing aspect of reality is revealed. Spinoza is not very forthcoming as to how such a larger kind of knowledge is to be acquired, but at the second and third levels cognition is inextricable from agency: the knower discovers conformational relations amongst things, and thus arrives at ‘common notions,’ by actively entering into such relations with other particulars. That is to say, by entering into internal relations with particulars whose natures ‘agree’ with her nature, and avoiding relations with others whose natures ‘disagree’ with hers, she experiences at first hand the way the world is put together, the way particular elements are composed and discomposed by their internal relations with one another. Spinoza’s knower thus arrives at true knowledge—knowledge of the second-through-to-the-third-kind—not via the abstract machinations of *theoria* but rather via sensitive attunement of her agency to immediate environmental pressures and influences. Self-realization and true understanding are inextricable outcomes of this process. At this level then, the modus operandi of the Spinozist knower is strikingly comparable to that of the Chinese sage, bent as the latter is on honing his cognitive faculties through trained accommodation to influences in his immediate environment. Spinoza does not pretend that attaining knowledge of the third kind is easy; the way to it is as demanding as the way of the sage, and as few are called to it. But this doesn’t mean that it should not be recognized as the necessary context for the more ordinary registers of knowledge connoted by *theoria*.

Spinoza’s Ethics is presented strictly deductively and discursively, as an ideal totality, and in that sense as *theoria*; but that need not entail that this was the way in which he actually attained his central insights. Given his awareness of the ascending scales of knowledge, there is every reason to suppose that he did indeed arrive at his insights intuitively, by cultivating his agency in the manner prescribed by the third kind of knowledge.

#### 4. Conclusion

Philosophy in the West has by and large followed the approach of *theoria* in orienting itself to reality. *Theoria* represents an epochal developmental achievement of human consciousness and has demonstrated its enormous instrumental efficacy in the expansion of science and technology in the modern period. However, it is important also to recognize the limitations of *theoria* as a guide to understanding. In Spinoza’s terms, it represents only the first level of knowledge. It can identify external and causal relations amongst the nuts and bolts of physical reality—the elements of *natura naturata* suggestive of a materialist order. But its essentially dualist epistemology does not dispose it to reveal the conative inter-dynamics that mesh things into the kind of self-structuring unities that, I argued earlier, would typify a

psychophysical order. *Theoria* is not, in other words, disposed to reveal reality under the seamless psycho-active aspect of *natura naturans*.

In order for this aspect of reality—which is of course the aspect of interest to panpsychists—to come into view, a different mode of cognition may be required, one which is cultivated not merely through abstract ‘reflection’ but through specific forms of strategic practice, examples of which exist most explicitly and prolifically in the Chinese wisdom tradition. In this larger context of cognition the perspective currently described as panpsychist may come to seem natural, indeed self-evident, to practitioners. As long as our cognition is confined exclusively to *theoria* however, we can expect panpsychism to remain psychologically unconvincing and hence marginal to the imagination of the West, regardless of how rigorously it is theorized.

## Notes

[1] For readers who may nevertheless be interested in the naturphilosophie that has been taking shape through my various books and papers, I include here a little summary. My main arguments for panpsychism appear in my 1991 book, *The Ecological Self* and my 2003 book, *For Love of Matter: Towards a Contemporary Panpsychism*. The arguments developed in *For Love of Matter* rest on and presuppose foundations developed in *The Ecological Self*, and the two books really need to be read in conjunction. In *For Love of Matter*, the manifest world, as described by physics, is represented as the outward appearance of an inner field of ‘subjectivity,’ in an expanded sense of subjectivity. Reality is, from this point of view, both a unity and a manifold of differentia, a One and a Many. Viewed from within, it is a field of subjectivity, with a conativity (that is to say, a will to realize itself and increase its own existence) of its own and a capacity for communication; from the viewpoint of its finite modes, or those of them that are capable of acting as observers, it is an order of extension, as represented by physics. As a locus of subjectivity and conativity in its own right, the universe is capable of and actively seeks communicative engagement with its finite modes, the Many, or, again, with those of them that are capable of such engagement. Wherever this communicative engagement is actualized, it is manifest in a communicative order that unfolds alongside the causal order. This communicative order, or order of meaning, exceeds the causal order but in no way contradicts it.

[2] See R. McKirahan, “Presocratic philosophy.” In C. Shields (ed.), *Blackwell Guide to Ancient Philosophy* (2003; Oxford: Blackwell).

[3] See B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind: the Greek Origins of European Thought* (1982; New York: Dover (first published 1953))

[4] The next several paragraphs are adapted from Mathews 2008a.

[5] I am much indebted to Bortoft's wonderful book, *The Wholeness of Nature: Goethe's Way of Science* (1992), for my current interpretation of Goethe.

[6] See G. Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (1992; New York: Zone Books)