

The Living Energy Universe: A Fundamental Discovery That Transforms Science and Medicine by Gary Schwartz and Linda Russek. Hampton Roads, 1999. 320 pp. \$21.95 (hardback). ISBN 1-57174-170-4.

This book is written in the first person by Professor Schwartz, a graduate of Harvard University, who has held an appointment at Yale before his present position at the University of Arizona. His eminence in parapsychology is supported particularly by publications of impressive work on survival (2002). Linda Russek, cited as a co-author, actually features as she to whom the Senior author turns for discussion of his concepts and for the occasional ideas emanating from her.

A founding statement, which seems to have been the origin of many of the novel statements made in the book, originates in an experience of the Professor Schwartz. He is standing in the dark by a window. There is a full moon and it occurs to him that the reflected light from the moon must carry his image out into space. He adds that the image must exist there—in space—permanently.

Then comes Consciousness, normally discussed for living things but here, as the first of several challenging and very unusual ideas, belonging to inanimate as well as animate ones. Spreading from this and his vision of the projection of his body image into space, Schwartz maintains that the spreading image is equivalent to information spreading thus, and this, he thinks, infers that Memory must spread, too. He calls this the "Systemic Memory Hypothesis."

Another basic foundation to the novel ideas Schwartz expresses is Feedback. Most people have some idea of what this word means but in Schwartz' book it is laid out with great simplicity. If there are two entities A and B, and A sends a signal to B, B sends it back again but slightly changed. Of course, A responds, B replies (modifying the message once more), and so on. Then Schwartz makes one of his bigger leaps. He says this is the cause of evolution—not the evolution of animal species as famously suggested by Wallace and by Darwin, but a wider concept: Everything evolves. Ethyl alcohol evolves, bacteria evolve, etc. Moreover, he proposes that it might be reasonable to describe this alleged pan-evolution as a sign of life. Then, the reader comes to that part of this book which will undoubtedly lead to the one-sentence description by which many will describe it: The argument regarding feedback leading to evolution is taken to mean that Everything lives, not only the inanimate (supposed to evolve, too) but also energy, memory, and so on. (Hence, the book's title.)

Beginning in Chapter 5, Schwartz involves "The Grand Designer." But before we get to that we read that God evolves, too. The Old Testament God was a fearsome punishing figure, but a few thousand years later—in the New Testament—the God of Jesus Christ has evolved to become a loving God.

So far, these surprising propositions of entities, apparently inanimate entities which live, have been presented without the expected definition of "life." But

now, in Chapter 5, Schwartz tells us that a living entity must *do* certain things, achieve certain goals. This is conventional stuff and applies well to the lowest form of life—bacteria—but it is difficult to see a wooden table achieving a goal. However, some of the new concepts are better argued. The fact that those who have received heart transplants sometimes manifest the characteristics of the donor is taken to justify the claim that, e.g., the heart "remembers."

Another case which possesses an example involves tuning forks. Each tuning fork possesses a characteristic frequency, and the "everything evolves" suggestion which has spread from the universal feedback idea would lead to the expectation that an old tuning fork would no longer resonate at its original characteristic frequency. This strikes me as something easily tested—more easily than another expectation, that water will change its properties with age. Tuning forks that are 300 years old could probably be found, and it would be a stunning result were the resonance frequency to have indeed changed with time.

By Chapter 9, Schwartz and Russek make another leap and suggest that everything which exists—not merely the animate—is accompanied by a spiritual counterpart. This concept is not presented as springing out of the spreading into space of images but seems a separate suggestion made as a result of knowledge of near death experiences.

The last three chapters spread out from universal evolution and external memory of individual things to the Universe, and it is suggested (Cf. the classical concept of the akashic record) that all actions in the Universe go on record. Our every action is in storage. Going from the concept of accompanying spirit entities and the storage of their experiences, the authors tackle the phenomena of the paranormal. I was particularly interested as to how these parapsychologists would manage to fit in these peculiar events, many of which now have confirmation at a scientific level. However, here Schwartz and Russek do not stop to make a new hypothesis. Their argument is of the essence, simple. They aver that they have provided basis for the supposition that much of our activities are "connected" in space. We *share* this space, they say (acceptable), but then they break off and imply that, now, it is clear enough, paranormal phenomena can be expected.

Space is an elastic concept in this book, for by page 125 the authors point out that space includes a high energy density (resulting from radiation from the zero point vibrations in the surrounding universe)—tenable—but then (another leap) it is maintained that this means it is filled with *memory*. (Evidence: Gaia, and also Nelson's results is that his Random Event Generator is significantly disturbed away from random behavior if abnormal events attracting great attention occur in the world, albeit thousands of miles away.)

However, lastly, I was depressed by the authors' treatment of survival. Certainly, the present book was published before the presentation by the Senior author of experiments on the Afterlife. However, although I personally found this newer book particularly strong, there has been much which indicates

a continuance of personality published by others, e.g., Stephenson's re-incarnation studies. So what do Schwartz and Russek say? It is done by analogy. They quote gravity as a concept known to all but seen by none. This is the sole direct encouragement the authors give us for the acceptance of a spirit world which they insist belongs to all entities.

In summary, one cannot help feeling that the authors set out to invent a number of ideas which correspond pretty much to the religious picture of the world. There is Karma, Jesus, and love, then the not entirely new idea of a Grand Designer. It seems that the author wants to form hypotheses which would make religious concepts possible to believe in "on a scientific basis." The trouble is that the methodology is not scientific, i.e., it does not go from the observation of happenings through a hypothesis to a theory which can be tested, but rather takes a hypothesis, the systemic memory hypothesis, and then uses it to accommodate various happenings, though unsubstantially and briefly.

One can appreciate Professor Schwartz' wish to "get out ahead there" with the hypotheses. Schwartz provides hypotheses (everything is alive, energy is living, the memory of everything is eternal, etc.) for all these things we now hear about (the OBE's and the near death experiences, etc.) that are alleged occurrences which we cannot, at present, encompass in the present paradigm of Science. The trouble is that his hypotheses have little evidence to support themselves (particularly the living character of inanimate objects). One looks for a bridge to the paranormal phenomena that is more acceptable. For example, in respect to the concepts of survival and ghosts, it might be more acceptable to see Consciousness and "the soul" as the entity that survives the death of the body. Of course, such a hypothesis is still weak because it gives no picture as yet to see how this entity, the soul—"personal consciousness"—can carry with it all the memories that have come in the one life and allow one to see, etc. But one good thing about Schwartz and Russek's book is that it shakes us up by laying before us concepts which encourage us to look hard at reductionistic science and ask if it should not be re-interpreted and modified, to cover the many phenomena it tries to escape from by means of ridicule.

Looking back after three readings of this work, I allowed myself a moment for "ordinary thinking." If I am John Q. Citizen, without experience as to how Science develops, I might conclude that Gary Schwartz and Linda Russek have gone over the edge, and should seek the help of a psychiatrist colleague. Bricks and mortar alive, eh? But, then, think for a bit—recall how some of our greatest ideas came about. What about Louis deBroglie—he who took Planck's idea of energy quanta and opened up a pathway to quantum mechanics. Every particle is accompanied by a wave, suggested deBroglie. Did not deBroglie simply make a leap, strictly analogous to those Professor Schwartz is making? One can imagine the early reception of deBroglie in the Physicist's common room in the University of Paris. However, truly, if one were to seek a list of discoveries in the 20th Century, many would vote for deBroglie's leap as No. 1. So, dear

reader, have patience. There is no need to accept Schwartz and Russek yet (deBroglie's idea wandered about until electrons were found to have wavelike properties). Let us not reject them, but wait and see.

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Captain of My Ship, Master of My Soul: Living with Guidance by F. Holmes Atwater. Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Publishing Co. Inc., 2001. xxi + 226 pp. \$21.95 (paper). ISBN 1-57174-247-6.

I found this book by hearing its author, "Skip" Atwater, speak on its subject matter at the 22nd Annual Meeting of SSE at Kalispel, Montana, in 2003. His presentation was entitled, "Hemi-Sync@ and Remote Viewing Training". Following his address, I asked him if he had brought any copies of the book, which he had discussed as part of his address, along with him for sale. Conveniently, he had, and that is how I obtained my copy.

This is a 3-in-1 book, not to be confused with the household lubricant of the same name. First, it is a highly readable autobiography that draws you into its pages easily and comfortably. Atwater writes for his readers, not drifting much into ego-satisfying dissertations. In other words, as all good writers should, he writes "to express, not to impress".

Second, as Atwater hints, especially in the subtitle, the book also describes his personal spiritual journey and development at occasional well-chosen points in the fabric of the book's text. Further, it seems clear that he has found more complete answers for himself to the "big questions" about life and living than I have. However, in that quest, each of us must follow his own path, and at his own pace.

Third, and most significant to me, is the fascinating, step-by-step description of the convoluted path from the seminal idea that remote-viewing might have important benefits for U.S. Army counter-intelligence and intelligence-gathering, through the predictable "minefields" of selling the idea up the chain-of-command of a huge military bureaucracy, to the actual day-to-day tactical and strategic use of the technique by Army counter-intelligence personnel. Along the way, SSE members will recognize the names of several of their fellow members, besides Atwater.

Two features of the book especially appealed to me. First is its straightforward, narrative delivery, which makes for the pleasant, easy reading cited earlier. However, more importantly, the book's presentation of the practical use of remote-viewing by the U.S. military appeals to this mechanical engineer's appreciation of things that *really* work (even though no one yet knows exactly how or why). As a similar example, I do not know, beyond a very general