

New consciousness paradigms for a new Biology

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THE BIOLOGY OF BELIEF: UNLEASHING THE POWER OF CONSCIOUSNESS, MATTER AND MIRACLES, Bruce H. Lipton, Elite Books, Santa Rosa California, 2005, 224p, p/b ISBN 0-9759914-7-7, US\$ 25.00

The many positive pre-cover page endorsements signal this as a book well-worth reading. It is. Following a mid-life crisis Bruce Lipton, former University of Wisconsin School of Medicine Professor, came “full circle from a reductionist scientific take on life to a spiritual one.” The result of this epiphany is a short, direct and enthusiastically radical exposition on the shortcomings of the *Central Dogma* (genetic determinism and the primacy of DNA). With his infectious love for cell biology, Lipton practically turns the cell inside out. He stresses that the nucleus, and its DNA are not the brains that control the cell, but merely the gonads- an “understandable error” given the patriarchal nature of science! The membranes (mem-brains) and proteins are the real brains, interacting dynamically with the environment to produce the genes organisms need: an “inherent intelligence mechanism by which the cells evolve.” This “new science” of epigenetics empowers the organism to interact with the environment.

In a few concise arguments, backed by excellent sources, Lipton covers essential ground concerning the growing evidence for gene transfer, GM problems and inheritance of characters acquired in life (Lamarckism). Likewise he demonstrates the conceptual shift from competitive win-lose Darwinism to co-operative, win-win synergistic paradigms like the Gaia hypothesis. I enjoyed his clear exposition on the role of electromagnetic charges in the dynamic or vital sculpting of proteins. Likewise his review of the results of the human genome project, which show that humans do not gain their “undoubted complexity over worms and plants by using more genes,” is a model of simple clarity. His comparisons between triple unit membranes and bread and butter sandwiches are perhaps rather simplistic, but his description of receptor proteins, tuning into vibrational energy fields, like perceptive antennae evokes a powerful image and shows how dynamic invisible forces cause intelligent configuration and behavior changes in proteins and cells. In fact the cells can self-charge like batteries. Membranes have liquid crystal properties, also described by Mae Wan Ho (1996), and have the functional properties of silicon chips which are crystal semiconductors with gates and channels: i.e., they are receptive or *programmable* (Lipton’s emphasis).

Lipton considers the neglected implications to biology of quantum mechanics. Starting from the premise that the universe is *one indivisible, dynamic whole* he stresses universal *intercommunication* (his emphases) between proteins, cells and organisms and the system wide influence of chemicals (pharmaceuticals) and electromagnetic forces, the former causing nasty side effects and iatrogenic disease. I’m reminded of Zhang’s discussion of the importance of the electromagnetic versus the chemical body (Network, 81). Lipton is scholarly in noting that such biophysical/bioenergetics ideas are not new (Szent-Györgyi, 1960, McClare 1974)- simply too-long ignored or suppressed by pharmaceutical interests. In traditional medicine, non-invasive vibrational energy, although used in CAT scans and MRIs, for diagnosis, is only used for healing in rather simple cases like the breaking down of kidney stones.

Lipton next turns to the body/mind problem (ghost in the machine) citing the familiar example of how slime mold amoebas share “coordinating information” as an “elementary mind” and how Candice Pert shows that mind is distributed throughout the whole body not just the brain, as

proved by extraordinary cases of hydrocephalus which have little effect on intelligence. Lipton distinguishes between the self-conscious mind associated with the prefrontal cortex, which can be controlled by will power and positive thinking, and the subconscious which is not so easily controlled. (Although he advocates treatment pioneered by Rob Williams www.psych-k.com). From here discussion extends to how the body does yield to control signals (from the nervous system) more readily than those from other organs. In this context he discussed the placebo or "belief" effect which is effective some 80% of the time. Given the power of belief Lipton argues that fear responses (e.g., activation of the Hypothalamus- Pituitary-Adrenal axis) has opposite, negative effects, suppressing somatic growth, releasing stress hormones into the immune system and causing fatigue and damage.

Lipton echoes the message of Joseph Chilton Pearce (Network 83) that conscious pre- and post-natal nurturing is essential for a child's health, providing an essential antidote to genetic myopia (determinism) which threatens to absolve us of parental responsibility for love and nurture. Responsibility begins even earlier: genomic imprinting actually affects the maturation of sperm and egg before conception! Sonograms show that the fetus "arches its body and jumps up as if ... on trampoline when [parental] argument is punctuated with the shattering of glass." (Do Greek weddings convey a different vibe)?!

In the final epilogue Lipton turns to spiritual ruminations as to how the individual body is not the source of identity (self) but is a receptor that resonates with, or 'downloads' from, a "complex signature contained within the vast information that collectively comprises the environment." This view is supported by organ recipients who develop the very specific tastes of donors. Thus – "because the environment represents 'all that is' (God) and our self-receptor antennas download only a narrow band of the whole spectrum, we all represent a small part of the whole.. a small part of God."

Lipton clearly has supporters, as shown by the cover blurbs and Theodore Hall's endorsement which specifically uses Lipton's concept (www.Biofractalevolution.com) as a web site label (see book review in this issue). However, this fractal evolution concept, though a substantive and convincing new version of what previous generations have called *iterative evolution* is not much elaborated in this book. Lipton's naïve, adolescent ebullience and 'gung-ho' American expressions at times jar sedate sensibilities and he has yet to fully shed the mechanistic language he sometimes decries. But, I admit this latter is hard to do. Nonetheless for me the enthusiasm for his new biology paradigm was genuine and justified by the growing evidence that we are fast outgrowing the old biological consciousness.

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