

The Physics of the Mind

**New Perspectives for
Psychotherapists, Healers
and Seekers**

PHIL MOLLON



THE PHYSICS OF THE MIND



The noetic light of the unified field shining through the hologram of the universe.

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Phil Mollon



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About the author

Phil Mollon, PhD, is a psychoanalyst, clinical psychologist, and energy psychotherapist. He is well known as a writer and speaker on topics including shame, trauma, dissociation, self-psychology, and EMDR—and has pioneered the development of psychoanalytic energy psychotherapy. With fifty years of clinical experience, in both the British National Health Service and private practice, he has explored many different approaches, always seeking better ways of helping those who are troubled with mental health problems. His work remains rooted in psychoanalysis, while also incorporating neurobiological, cognitive, and energetic perspectives.

Note for the reader

The book is aimed at psychotherapists, healers, and anyone who might be interested in the interface of physics and the mind. Both are interesting topics—even more so when combined. I am not a physicist by training. My own primary knowledge is within psychology, but I have long felt this needs to be understood in relation to physics, particularly those areas that now place mind and consciousness in the foreground of how we might understand the universe and our place within it. I encourage the reader to dip into the book wherever curiosity and intuition lead, and I hope it will stimulate thought and awareness. There are many intriguing ideas here.

Introductory comments

Physics is the foundational science. It explores the nature of reality at the most fundamental level. Over the last century, the discoveries within quantum physics and relativity have brought about dramatic changes in our understanding of the structure, forces, and paradoxes in the very stuff we are made of and inhabit. Consciousness and the human mind have been found to be inextricable components of whatever reality we investigate. We cannot get behind or underneath consciousness. Most crucially, consciousness affects, and in a sense *selects*, our reality. It is deeply paradoxical that while consciousness and the mind are such inherent features of, and indeed determinants, of what we experience and observe, the field of psychology has remained almost entirely uninfluenced by physics. As a result, much of psychology, severed from material science, is dull, trivial, and frankly boring.

When we look deeply into contemporary theories of physics and cosmology, we find frameworks with profound and exciting implications. The following possibilities acquire strong theoretical support:

- The mind and consciousness are not confined to the brain.
- We access information from all manner of extrasensory sources, past, present, and future. This does not, however, mean that we

always understand or make accurate sense of this extrasensory information.

- Telepathic phenomena and knowledge of the future are normal and common occurrences. They occur frequently in the psychoanalytic situation.
- The mind and brain display quantum qualities. Although the brain influences consciousness, there is also a way in which consciousness *selects* brain states in both self and other.
- The individual mind is influenced by information in the larger collective mind of the group and the human species (Carington, 1945; Dossey, 2013). One person's mind can invade and control other people's minds.
- Our minds within our matter-based universe are subtended within a larger realm outside space and time—sometimes called the “unified field” (Di Biase, 2015). This is similar to Bion's (1965) psychoanalytic concept of “O” (standing for the ultimate origin).
- All phenomena in the universe are connected via the unified field.
- The unified field may be the true source of healing.
- Higher-dimensional fields, leading up to the unified field, are responsive to intention. This can bring about real effects in the matter-based realm.
- Research by William Tiller shows that the higher realms, responsive to intention, can be accessed via meditation and also via the subtle energy system of meridians and chakras.
- There are parallels between the mind and brain and the wider cosmos (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2011), with repeating fractals at every level, all of which organise information holographically.
- The holographic field of “self” is arbitrary. Attempts to sustain this too rigidly lead to destructive forms of narcissism, grandiosity, and covert despair resulting from the sense of being cut off from the collective and from the unified field.
- An analogy can be drawn between the speed of light and the speed of thought. Both are boundaries, one for the cosmos and one for the individual mind and brain—and both profoundly shape our experience and perception.
- Boundaries are fundamental to the structure of both matter and the psyche. The Pauli exclusion principle, at the quantum level,

and the Oedipus complex in human development, have analogous functions!

- Einstein's thought experiments are important contributions to the psychology of perception.
- Our lives are governed by the second law of thermodynamics—entropy (disorder) always increases. However, this is balanced against an opposite life-creating principle of syntropy. The interplay of entropy and syntropy has many far-reaching implications.
- Psychotherapy is often required to assist in rendering pathological informational order more entropic. If the old entropic information is not expelled, it may re-form.
- Just as we think of spacetime as shaped by gravitational forces and massive bodies, so we can conceptualise mind-space. The latter contains mathematical correlithms (correlated logarithms) of thought, emotion, and memory, whereby what is similar attracts more of the same in a manner analogous to gravity. These have effects within the mind and in the wider life-field. Severe and repeated childhood trauma creates the equivalent of “black holes” in the mind-space.
- There is a deep organising principle operating at all levels of the universe. It gives rise to life and is apparent within the human mind in dreams and creativity. This corresponds in part to the ordering concept of syntropy. There is also a powerfully destructive force within human beings that involves an identification with, and idealisation of entropy.

A new law of psychodynamics—conservation of libido

My own formal trainings have been in clinical psychology, psychotherapy, and psychoanalysis. The last of these has been a persisting influence for around sixty years since I was a young adolescent. It originates of course with the work of Sigmund Freud, a neurologist. His model of the mind, driven by clinical necessities, was shaped by his understanding of neurology. It was a body-based theory, taking account of somatic tensions, pleasure and pain. A key theoretical component was the concept of libido, a quasi-energetic quality existing at the boundary of body and mind. As psychoanalysis developed, it became progressively

detached from its somatic and neurological basis, as greater emphasis was given to human development within attachment relationships and the internal mental models and phantasies of these.

This abandonment of the libido concept is regrettable, in my view. Just as the first law of thermodynamics states that energy is neither created nor destroyed, but only changed from one form to another, so we can postulate a similar law of psychodynamics—that libido is never destroyed but changes from one form to another and will attach to whatever experience is available, even if that experience is painful or shameful. A great deal can be understood of unusual human desires and compulsions on this basis.

Energy psychotherapy

Having been extensively trained in psychoanalytic modes of psychotherapy, I was somewhat dismayed to discover that these were often not as helpful as needed, and sometimes even harmful, when applied to people with severe trauma-based forms of mental illness. This led me to an ongoing search for better ways of helping people resolve the impact of adverse experiences during childhood and adult life. One of these methods was eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR), which incorporated various forms of bilateral sensory stimulation and attention to the body as well as the mind (Mollon, 2005). From EMDR, I moved to an exploration of energy psychology, a field of therapeutic inquiry that has been my passion for the last twenty-five years.

The modalities within this genre usually combine a mindful attention to the body, activation of a specific “thought field” of emotional memory or dynamic conflict, while the subtle energy system is stimulated in order to dissipate the pattern. Words are used with great care, paying close attention to the client’s own language and metaphors, as well as somatic sensations. Stimulation of the subtle energy system might involve simple tapping of specific acupoints or holding of relevant chakra energy centres. There can also be use of the breath and specific imagery. What is remarkable about such methods is not only their effectiveness, now well documented with research (ACEP, 2024), but also how commonplace are benign phenomena that would generally be regarded as odd or anomalous. These include shifts in state and resolution of problems that are often astonishingly rapid,

remote healing, transpersonal transmissions of information, deep body wisdom, and a mind-body-energy system that appears (at times) profoundly responsive to intention.

Subtle energy

The word “energy” in the generic name for these modalities is a physics term, referring to the capacity to carry out work. In this context it refers to *subtle* energy, a concept developed initially by materials scientist William Tiller—although it has been known by other names traditionally, including Chi, orgone, and *élan vital*. This subtle energy is recognised as having the curious quality of being neg-entropic. Whereas the general trend of our material world, in accord with the second law of thermodynamics, is progressively towards increasing disorder and entropy, subtle energy brings about order and life. It forms information, contrasting with the entropic unforming of information that follows the second law of thermodynamics.

What is this subtle energy? We can observe its effects, but its nature is somewhat elusive. In his book on subtle energy, physicist Claude Swanson (2009) describes an experiment where a beam of laser light was shone into a vacuum chamber to illuminate a sample of DNA. This changed the qualities of the vacuum, creating an informational pattern. Invisible and massless particles were formed, which lingered long after the DNA was removed. This patterning deflected laser light and “gave evidence that a new vacuum state had been created that is unlike anything known to Western physics” (p. 559). Subtle energy appears to be intimately associated with life, has an informational (form-creating) function, and is activated when DNA is stimulated by certain forms of energy. In the experiment, the DNA was stimulated by photons, but the more mysterious and hidden dark energy may also be a candidate for interacting with DNA to produce the *élan vital*, as Bergson (1911) termed it.

The universe is made of information

Information—defined as whatever an agent, whether a person or a subatomic particle, can observe, interact with, or manipulate—appears to be the basis of the universe. It seems to be more fundamental than

particles or waves. Informational patterning in the zero point field gives rise to particles and waves and ultimately matter. Our minds, organs for observing and processing information, can interact with this level of reality, creating new information and intentions that are carried through into observable reality. This has been well demonstrated through the experiments with meditation and intention by William Tiller (2007). Similarly strong evidence for mind effects on external reality is provided by the extensive experiments by William Bengston (2010) which demonstrated that positive states of mind in a healer, induced by a simple technique, can have marked effects on cancer cells in mice and in vitro.

In the case of Tiller's experiments, a verbally expressed intention was directed into a plastic box containing an electrical circuit. The box could then be placed in a laboratory setting perhaps thousands of miles away and it would bring about the intended measurable effects on physical and biological processes. Bengston's method involved the healer making a list of pleasurable activities and experiences and cycling through these in his or her mind. Both these procedures involved information, in one case a verbal intention and in the other a series of pleasurable memories and imaginings. The information in the mind, in both cases, had some kind of energetic effect—it carried out work (the definition of energy) that had an effect in the external world.

Information is stored holographically

Where is information stored in the mind, brain, and in the universe? Westlake (1970) presented an early theory of a link between optical and neural holography, but it was Karl Pribram who became most known for his proposal that the brain stores information in some kind of holographic form, as neuronal wave interference patterns. This theory was developed to account for the findings with his colleague Lashley that memory did not appear to be localised in any part of the brain. A holographic storage means the information is distributed across the brain and that each part of the storage contains a representation of the whole.

Later, in the very different field of cosmology, exploring the puzzling question of what happens to information that falls into a black hole, it was proposed by Susskind and 't Hooft that the information is stored

holographically on the two-dimensional surface of the black hole. This arose because Jacob Bekenstein had calculated that if one unit of information enters a black hole, for example in the form of a particle, the volume will increase by that amount, but also the area of the horizon will increase—just as would the area of a balloon. One bit unit of information will increase the area of the horizon by one Planck unit, which is the smallest size conceivable within the limits of the laws of physics. We may also note that, in the case of a black hole, Einstein's theory of relativity indicates that time and space will become so transformed by the immense gravitational field that any object falling towards it will appear smeared out in space across the horizon and suspended in a seemingly timeless state. Susskind (2008) comments:

Somehow hidden in the principles of Quantum Mechanics and the General Theory of Relativity, there is a mysterious connection between indivisible bits of information and Planck-sized bits of area. (p. 154)

This then led to Susskind's radical idea, known as the holographic principle, that in any volume of space, the maximum number of bits of information that can fit into it is equal to the number of Planck units that can fit onto its two-dimensional horizon boundary. Thus, it can be said that information concerning the content of any volume of space is represented on a holographic boundary—and that the information regarding the entire universe is stored on its ever-expanding horizon. The horizon of the universe has to keep expanding to accommodate the ever-increasing entropy within required by the second law of thermodynamics. Similarly, as the complexity of information processed by the human brain has increased, evolution expanded the cortical horizon by means of folds and fissures. Thus, the actual structure of the brain follows a holographic pattern, the cerebral cortex functioning something like a horizon that contains an instructional map of the whole brain.

The unified field activating the hologram

In a conventional hologram, the information on the two-dimensional film, organised as a light-wave interference pattern, is transformed into a three-dimensional image by the application of a coherent laser.

How does this principle apply to the universe, and to any volume of space within it? Obviously, the universe is not constructed on the basis of some fellow on the outside shining a laser at a photographic film! The holographic principle must be taken as a metaphor. In their model of a holographic multiverse, Richard Amoroso and Elizabeth Rauscher (2009) postulate a higher unified field that provides information encoded in the zero point field, and this in-forming of the field creates energy, matter, and antimatter. We cannot see the unified field, nor the zero point field, since we and our capacities to observe are embedded in the world of matter that the holographic process gives rise to. In relation to our matter (and antimatter) universe, the unified field carries an analogous function to the laser in optical holography.

The mind as a hologram

Since the entire universe appears to be organised on a holographic basis, we may presume this is the case with the mind, as well as the brain. What is the mind? It may be regarded as a self-referencing flow of information, partly conscious and partly unconscious, which Dirk Meijer (2014, 2018) describes as residing in toroidal spiralling electromagnetic waves. A toroidal shape allows for a maximum holographic surface, which can flow in many different shapes and also can self-reference—a key feature of human consciousness. The holographic principle indicates that information is stored on a spherical boundary around any volume of space. Therefore, we can understand that the mind constructs somewhat arbitrary holographic boundaries around itself, determining what is regarded as self and not self. If there is a prevailing cultural assumption that mind is confined more or less to the brain and its sense organs, then that is where the holographic boundary will be experienced. On the other hand, in cultures where mind is believed to be more extensive, or in sleep or meditative or psychedelic states, where boundaries are dissolved, the holographic horizon may be much farther out (as the hippy slogan aptly conveyed). In the holographically expanded mind, information is accessible from all manner of non-local and non-sensory sources, and from past, present, and future time.

Memory is inherent in the universe

In his book *Chasing Memory*, Carl Gunther (2024) argues that all events are recorded in the history-memory of the “growing block Universe” (an expanding “block” of the present and the past). As the three-dimensional physical world moves forward in time, it leaves the entirety of its past still existing in its wake. The memory function of our mind and brain essentially accesses (albeit with potential errors and distortions) this information recorded in the fabric of the universe. Each living organism has a world line in the block universe, containing every moment of its past. Through the evolution of life forms, vast networks of memory are accumulated, providing the biological, behavioural, and perceptual patterns characteristic for each species. This is a similar concept to Rupert Sheldrake’s (1988) morphic fields and to that of the Akashic records (Laszlo, 2007). For Gunther, time is the structuring principle of the universe—always moving forward but leaving the past in a continued existence.

However, in contrast to Gunther’s well-argued position, there are also indications that information is available from a flexible future and that the equations of quantum physics run backwards in time as easily as forwards. It seems that all information is potentially available in the universe, limited only by our capacity to access and understand it, and to differentiate signal from noise, suggestion, and wishful thinking. Moreover, there are also viable theories that at each moment we are selecting our present from a range of possibilities in the “handshake” of the entropic waves of the past and the syntropic waves from the future (King, 1989; Swanson, 2003, 2009; Vannini, 2005).

We “quantum select” our reality

A key lesson from quantum physics is that consciousness and the human mind are inextricably involved in the emergence of what we can observe and experience of our matter-based realm. The behaviour of the quantum realm is shaped by our observation of it. We cannot observe it without radically influencing what it does. Consciousness is primary and, in certain respects, we select our reality from a range of quantum possibilities. Moreover, it is argued later that one person’s mind can “quantum select” potentials from another person’s mind, thereby

influencing what they say and do. This can occur in relationships and interactions, including the psychoanalytic context. In this way, a person may tend to confirm another person's image of them if that image or prejudice is held strongly. Our minds are being continually informed and influenced by other people's minds, often in ways of which we are not conscious.

In the psychoanalytic situation, it is helpful to aim to listen from a stance of "superposition", allowing the evolving wave function of the analysand's mind to unfold without premature collapse into a particular form that fits the analyst's preconception. If the analysand is training to become a psychoanalyst, there may be a tendency for a shared quantum selecting of elements and meanings that are congruent with a prevailing theory. Such processes are not conscious.

Density, order, and entropy in the mind-space

In our contemporary perspective, we think of spacetime as the realm in which we dwell—the combination of space and time which contracts and expands in accord with Einstein's recognition of relativity, and which is shaped by the presence of gravitational fields formed by massive objects, which are themselves formed on the basis of gravity. In a similar way, we can conceive of a mind-space that is shaped by quasi-gravitational fields, mathematically organised, formed by dense concentrations of cognitive, emotional, and memorial constellations. These attract more of mental contents that are similar, whether these be emotionally painful and traumatic or positive and pervaded by gratitude. While attention to the traumatic past may be a necessary component of psychotherapy, dwelling on it excessively may imprison the person in negative correlithms of thought and emotion. By contrast, a focus on gratitude for what is positive can set a person on an accelerating path of well-being, no matter how tentative and uncertain the beginning point.

In the realm of matter, the second law of thermodynamics prevails, entropy/disorder always increases. It is a source of great anxiety and horror for human beings. No matter how we try to escape, we are prisoners of the second law—entropy and disorder will always ultimately prevail. However, this is balanced against the syntropic energies of life, which work to create and sustain life, order, and organisation, both in

the body and in all the cultural and material activities of the human species. These syntropic trends are partial and temporary. Wherever we create order, entropy is created somewhere else. We simply displace or outsource the entropy—and in all manner of ways, the waste and disorder we create is a major problem for the human species and life on the planet.

Entropy is not inherently bad. It is a crucial aspect of life. Entropy can exist in a temporary state of balance with syntropy—just as Freud described the fusion and balancing of the life and death “instincts”. As we increase information and order in our system, the old, the waste, and the no longer needed material must be expelled. Any failure to expel entropic waste from the body will have highly deleterious effects. The same applies to the mind, and indeed to any information-storage system. Entropic waste, in the form of old and redundant information needs to be expelled. Otherwise, it will continually interfere with new information. This has profound therapeutic implications.

In the case of many states of psychopathology, the problem is partly one of too little entropy in the dysfunctional patterns. The correlithms of thought and emotion and habit are too dense and unvarying. There is a need to render them more entropic, to break up the entrenched patterns in brain and mind. Some therapeutic methods are effective in doing this, particularly energy psychology modalities and EMDR, but also free-associative forms of psychoanalysis. The mind and brain naturally attempt to digest emotional experience in this way, as is apparent in dreams, which tend to break up and recombine elements in novel ways. Sometimes the mind and brain get stuck in this process—states of mental indigestion, often resulting from trauma or toxic experiences. A toxic emotional experience is one that cannot be processed by the mind because it does not make sense, does not correspond to any known categories, or contains apparently incompatible elements. Certain forms of sexual abuse are of this kind (Mollon, 2002a). In such instances, the mind and brain need therapeutic assistance.

There are other states of mind that are, by contrast, too entropic. These include certain forms of psychosis, weak ego-functioning, manic states, and states of traumatic confusion and overwhelm. In such instances, caution must be applied to avoid exacerbating the entropy. Approaches that help the person to become grounded and calmer and able to think

are needed. Psychotic delusional states appear to be attempts to create order when the mind is in danger of dissolution into excessive entropy—perhaps following a shock that has challenged the person’s core beliefs, assumptions, and cognitive structures. Questioning the delusion may evoke intense anxiety.

The human predicament and the unified field

The human species faces multiple problems, and life contains much that evokes horror. Darker elements of humanity include destructive narcissism, manic efforts to deny our helplessness and ignorance against the vastness of reality, as well as pervasive greed and serving of self rather than the community. We also have the seemingly insurmountable challenge of managing our entropic waste. Perhaps the most fundamental and guilt-evoking affliction is that we are compelled to kill and consume other living creatures in order to live. Although the suffering of animals is obvious, there is evidence that plants also experience distress when cut or damaged (Khan, 2019).

Set against this grim perspective is the knowledge that our matter-based universe is subtended within an infinite unified field of intelligence and creativity. We are contained within a vast mind. The principle, observed by many who explore metaphysics, is that unlimited guidance and knowledge is available via meditation and intuition, requiring only that we seek. It is never thrust upon us.