



Title: 4 March 1988 Personal Correspondence on Alchemy and the History of Science

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Published by: Worldwide Indigenous Science Network

Publish date: 31 August 2013

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March 24, '88.

Dear Woody

The enclosed article by Evelyn Fox Keller talks about the Battle of the Sexes in which Alchemy as Feminine lost to Male-Mechanist Physics. The battle took place in England 1650-1670.

Since then Alchemy became "superstition". That Newton (1642-1727) was a secret practitioner of Alchemy meant that Alchemy went "underground". But Newton invented the "Gold Standard" and became the Director of Coinage. Perhaps, he understood the magical power of Gold over people better than any bankers then.

As to why Alchemy was considered "Female" and even dangerous, please see Jack Lindsay; The Origins Of Alchemy In Greco-Roman Egypt. [QD13 L54] Sample pages are included.

Another interesting source is C. G. Jung. ALCHEMICAL STUDIES. (Collective Works vol. 13. Princeton U Press. 1967.)

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It is noted that European Science was not much "advanced". It was from a religious reason that Atomism and Mechanism came out. Even after Newton, European scientists could not understand "Fire" (Heat, Energy) well. It was after 1850 that they came to realize "Fire" is not a substance. Energy concept emerged in 1850s. That is to say, Marx did not know "Energy".

I saw a transcript of a speech by Russell Means made at Black Hills in 1980. In the speech, apparently aimed at Marxists (and perhaps also for the political need of AIM to say he is not a communist), Means says (if Indians follow) "We will all be Industrialized Science-Addicts in a Marxist society".

In one sense, I am sympathetic to Means and understand why he said that. But I think Means overestimated the Intellectual Power of Europeans. Germany, in the time of Marx, was barely out of the "tribal culture". They had a hell of a time adjusting to "invasions" by "science", "rationality", "intellectualism" etc. from the "west". What Europeans and Means call "Rationality" is not "rational" at all --- it was an illusion, conceit, superstition, arrogance ---. Or at its best, it is a Language Game.

It may be disrespectful to say this. But Means was fooled by Europeans. He did not see through the superficial veneer of "rationality", "science" etc. It amounted to "surrendering before the fight". If Indians have such a weak intelligence that mere contact with Marxism or Science makes them "Industrial Science Addicts", perhaps there is no point in fighting. The "Feminine Scientists" have better guts in their declaration that they will make their own "science".

Of course, I do not know what was the context of the circumstance in which Means' polemics emerged. But I wonder if such is the pervasive attitude of Indian Braves. And if so, Pam has to do a lot to empower people.

The point is that every "Culture" is tribal. There is nothing superior about euro American tribes relative to others. If a Haida need not fear an Oneida, there is no reason for a Lakota to fear a Marxist or a Scientist. Means could have said that he can beat Europeans at their games, "intellectual games" included.

Interestingly, even Plato distinguished "Noesis" (intuition, intelligence) and "Dianoia" (Rationality, Reason). European Science is not "Intelligent". And if you ask for "Wisdom", you would be disappointed even by Plato --- Socrates was not "Wise", he was a skillful player of a fashionable Intellectual Game of Greece of his time ---.

The trouble is that, for survival, Native Americans need something beyond the level of collective intelligence that the European tribes have. For that, I would imagine every mistake European Science made is a good lesson for Natives to learn. Instead of being victims to the mistakes, Natives can become "healers" of the mistakes. This difference in "posture" would make a difference in the "overview" (Worldview). You might say you are not the savior of the World. I don't ask that. But, wouldn't you like to try the Vision?

Yours

Sam K.

Excerpt from “The Social Brain”; Chapter “On the Inevitability of Religious Beliefs”; Pp. 166-167. Underlining and red italics are notes by Sam Kounosu.

In religious beliefs, as with any other belief we again see the left-brain interpreter seeking an explanation for a series of life experiences. Just as it is charged with delivering a running explanation of the behaviors of all of our independent modules, it is similarly, charged with explaining real-life events and circumstances existing in the culture. It is seeking consistency, and the left-brain interpreter module, linked as it is to the special human inference system, works hard to construct theories about the causes of perceived events, That our brains accept the theories this system comes up with is also of interest.

But how did the idea of religion start? Why did our species generate the idea of deities? The nature and origins of religious beliefs has an intriguing and, I think, interpretable history that underscores the centrality of the brain-based psychological mechanism I have been describing. I will argue that religious beliefs were inevitable and had to start once the left-brain interpreter was fully in place and reflexively active in seeking consistency and understanding. Explanations were generated and institutions created to manage and deal with the issues of human existence and cosmic origin. Once launched, such institutions, given their intense coercive power, have a way of staying.

Alternative views like the ones now readily available from modern science and those made available by Aristotle have played and continue to play a subordinate role to beliefs involving revealed truths. And, in an effort to explain this fact, I will also argue that the acceptance of these not-of-this-world beliefs is due to another special capacity of the human brain, the capacity for magical thinking. Let me explain.

There is a region of the human brain that, when tampered with, causes profound changes in the human psyche. A lesion in that region, which can come about for a number of reasons, tends to cause a change in three behaviors. This "temporal lobe syndrome" was first described in detail by the late Norman

Implication is that “Intellectualism” is a brain malfunction.

Geschwind of Harvard Medical School. I would have been most skeptical of his account if I had not seen a case that exactly matched his description. This syndrome now has been reported several times. In its basic form, the brain injury causes a deepening of religious conviction, a desire to write extensively (hypergraphia), and the performance of bizarre sexual activity. There is no a priori reason I know of why affecting one of these behaviors ought to affect the other two!

The reality of the syndrome is not amusing. Of interest here is the religious behavior aspect of the syndrome. Not only is conviction deepened, but the form it takes becomes erratic and the person switches from one belief to another rapidly and without apparent cause. The brain process that allows for nonrational and magical interpretations of events that are usually implicit in stories of religious creation is readier than ever. It seemingly doesn't matter which belief is plugged into this process. In a way, the brain lesion frees the patients from their personal histories and prepares them for any set of beliefs. These clinical phenomena suggest that a dynamic equilibrium can be set up in the brain between systems that generate hypotheses and systems that accept such

explanations as meeting rational criteria. The normal state allows for a certain degree of nonrational and magical beliefs. The diseased and disinhibited state so lowers the criteria for acceptance that rapidly accepting and changing beliefs become the rule.

If there are brain networks in our modern brains that do tilt us toward magical beliefs, it would follow that there should be evidence for religious behavior in primitive humans, at least in all humans who possessed the same brains as those we possess. That means we could examine the prehistorical record back to approximately forty to sixty thousand years ago and, if clever enough, find evidence of religious practice. It turns out that the record is replete with such evidence.