

7. “*Open covenants, openly arrived at.*” Fleming said Wilson lied when he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he had not known of the other Allies’ secret treaties before he arrived in Europe for the peace conference. And the “open covenants” principle was immediately shunted aside when “the press... found themselves barred from all sessions of the Council of Ten (the Big Five and their foreign ministers)” at the peace conference.

8. “*A war to end all wars.*” The irony of the claim to be ending all wars is shown by world history since 1919, but it is enough to point to the fact, as Fleming does, that in early 1919 “there were no less than fourteen small wars in progress in supposedly pacified Europe” as “armies began shooting at each other over disputed slices of territory.”

There is much, much more in Fleming’s account. Although the book’s title speaks of “illusion” and Fleming refers to “derangement,” he does not bring out the points for separate discussion as we have done here. He presents them, instead, as parts of a vast tapestry. The history of World War I, its causes and consequences, is a matter of great importance about which all educated people would do well to reacquaint themselves. Almost ninety years have passed since that war began, and we are hopefully better able by this time to take an objective look at it.

Dwight D. Murphey

Cosmic Legacy:

Space, Time, and the Human Mind

Greg F. Reinking

Vantage Press, New York, 2003 ISBN 0-533-14027-7

In this truly remarkable book, synthesizing contemporary information on space, matter, time and the human mind, the author documents in highly comprehensible language what is known and what can be theorized about the origins and nature of the universe, time and mankind. Human neurological development and theories of consciousness, intelligence and human behavior are discussed against a backdrop of the vast powers at work in the Universe, the age of which was

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estimated as recently as February 2003 at 13.7 billion years, with a one percent margin of error, on the basis of microwave background radiation.

The author, Greg Reinking, is well equipped to attempt to enlighten us on these great mysteries. His academic career began in the field of electrical engineering, following which he conducted research in Molecular Physics at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and then studied medical physics at UC Berkeley. After training in surgery and radiology, he completed Harvard University fellowships with the Diagnostic Neuroradiology and Interventional Neuroradiology groups at Massachusetts General Hospital, and has authored numerous articles in scholarly journals in the areas of physics and medicine.

Pointing out that all terrestrial life is derived from star dust collected from the cosmos billions of years ago, the author is able to relate biogenesis, cognition and intelligent reasoning to final realities such as the nature of matter, time and space. To quote from his closing chapter:

The evidence clearly points to a Universe that began in a hot, dense form. We don't fully understand the properties in effect at the beginning – our current concepts of physical laws break down at the extreme conditions presumably existing the beginning, precluding our ability to describe those early moments. Thus we must assume that the Universe was in a completely different form at that time, which defies our ability to explain it. Several theories point to a linkage among matter, energy, space, and time, suggesting these ordinarily discrete properties may have (at the beginning of the Universe) been combined in a single form. In fact, the distortions of matter, space and time were so extreme that time may have lost its identify – blurring the meaning of a beginning in the conventional sense of time. Furthermore, the surprising complexity of the vacuum of space, once considered empty and dull, may in fact hold the key to unifying these properties. This vacuum, which surrounds us, permeates us, and occupies the vast majority of the Universe, is the realm of quantum particles and their forces – it acts as a medium that transmits the forces of gravity and electromagnetism. Hidden within this vacuum may be the infinitesimal remains of multiple dimensions of space, curled upon themselves since the genesis of our Universe. These infinitesimal dimensions may define the laws of nature, which govern everything that exists.

Organic life requires only a few elements, which are relatively abun-

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dant in the universe, but they must be organized in highly complex and consequently unstable compounds, and the conditions on the Earth which gave rise to the coordinated collective biochemical processes which we call life were very different from those of today. The Earth was then relatively cool and enveloped by a thick, damp atmosphere composed of hydrogen, methane, ammonia and water vapor, with very little atmospheric oxygen, this having been put into the atmosphere subsequently by plant life-forms. The primeval atmosphere also lacked ozone, so that the earth was bathed in ultraviolet radiation, which may have contributed to the formation of the earliest biomolecules.

The combination of conditions which permitted intelligent life to come into existence probably were the result of a chance “throw of the dice” when the dice were thrown multitudinous times. The idea that there may be a “great order in the Universe,” the product of some intelligent architect, is discarded by the author, who sees only a grand chaos.

Evolution took place along the lines that are now widely appreciated, but as Reinking points out, the evolution of humanity occurred amongst small groups of hominids widely dispersed under different selective conditions. Will humanity continue to evolve with the same rapidity? He thinks not, because as the increasingly large human population becomes homogenized into a single genetic mass future evolution will necessarily be slowed – unless further speciation is created artificially by conscious genetic manipulation. Advances in medical science offer the possibility of guided human evolution, otherwise known as eugenics, should the political will to accept such a path be present. Certainly susceptibility to genetic disease could be sharply reduced.

As for the possibility that Mankind may in the future successfully explore the boundaries of the Universe, the author warns that “the evidence suggests our Universe lies within its Schwarzschild radius – we are essentially inside a vast black hole, precluding any opportunity to explore what lies outside.” Indeed, our present knowledge implies the ultimate disappearance of all life forms anywhere they might exist in the Universe. It is estimated that in about one trillion years the stars will burn out, collapsing into either white dwarf stars or black holes. Black

holes will become more common than they now are, until they are swept into larger core black holes, while the universe continues to expand. Energy may again be released as the black holes themselves eventually disintegrate, “creating a fireworks finale lasting billions of years, marked by occasional flashes scattered throughout a vast abyss. As the Universe expands further, its temperature will continually fall as it approaches absolute zero, leaving the Universe infinitely large, completely dark, and absolutely cold.”

That remains a purely speculative forecast, of course, but it is a prophecy based on the evidence currently available to us.

All philosophers who pontificate on the nature, character and future of Mankind and human society should familiarize themselves with the latest findings of science. For the intelligent reader, Reinking’s *Cosmic Legacy* is a concise but graphic 390 page introduction (with a useful glossary for the lay reader) to the very latest that science can tell us about space and man’s infinitesimally small place in the Time and the Universe, whatever Time and the Universe might be.

J. W. Jamieson

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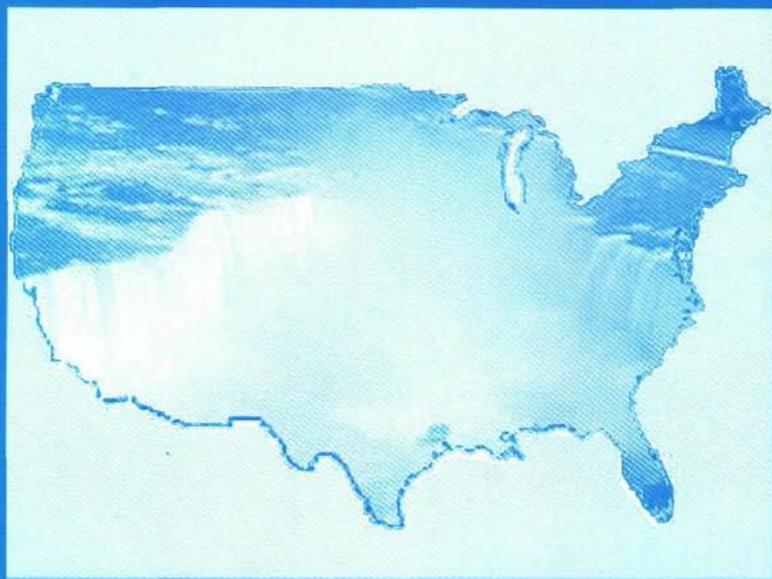
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