
Comments on Sheldrake

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Wim Kayzer *ontmoet* Oliver Sacks,
Stephen Jay Gould, Stephen Toulmin,
Daniel C. Dennett, Rupert Sheldrake
en Freeman Dyson



Science



Also science



Science too



Science again



And indeed...



Science: a disparate bunch



Materialism

Periodic Table
of the Elements

1 H																	2 He														
3 Li	4 Be											5 B	6 C	7 N	8 O	9 F	10 Ne														
11 Na	12 Mg	13 Al	14 Si	15 P	16 S	17 Cl	18 Ar							19 K	20 Ca	21 Sc	22 Ti	23 V	24 Cr	25 Mn	26 Fe	27 Co	28 Ni	29 Cu	30 Zn	31 Ga	32 Ge	33 As	34 Se	35 Br	36 Kr
37 Rb	38 Sr	39 Y	40 Zr	41 Nb	42 Mo	43 Tc	44 Ru	45 Rh	46 Pd	47 Ag	48 Cd	49 In	50 Sn	51 Sb	52 Te	53 I	54 Xe														
55 Cs	56 Ba	57 *La	72 Hf	73 Ta	74 W	75 Re	76 Os	77 Ir	78 Pt	79 Au	80 Hg	81 Tl	82 Pb	83 Bi	84 Po	85 At	86 Rn														
87 Fr	88 Ra	89 +Ac	104 Rf	105 Ha	106 Sg	107 Ns	108 Hs	109 Mt	110 110	111 111	112 112	113 113																			

* Lanthanide Series

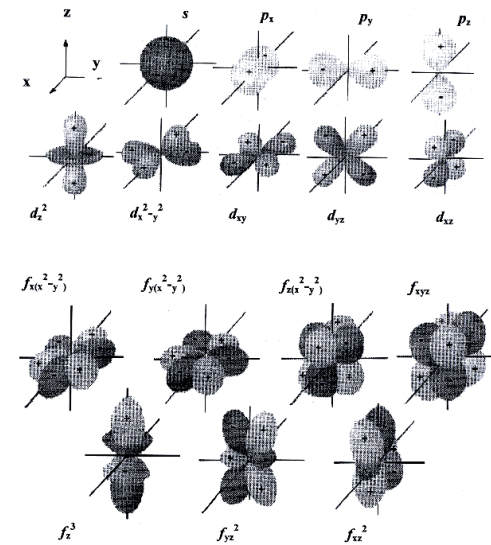
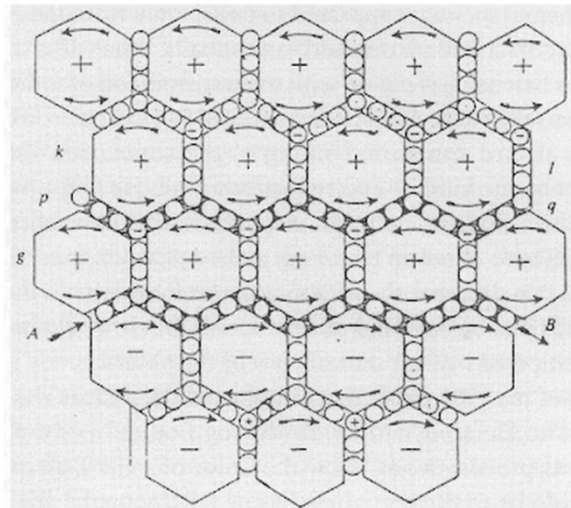
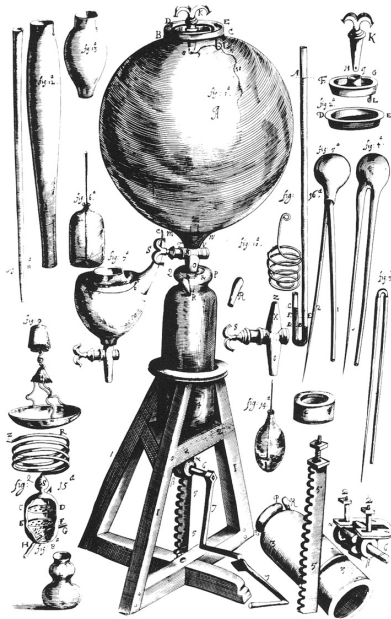
58 Ce	59 Pr	60 Nd	61 Pm	62 Sm	63 Eu	64 Gd	65 Tb	66 Dy	67 Ho	68 Er	69 Tm	70 Yb	71 Lu
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+ Actinide Series

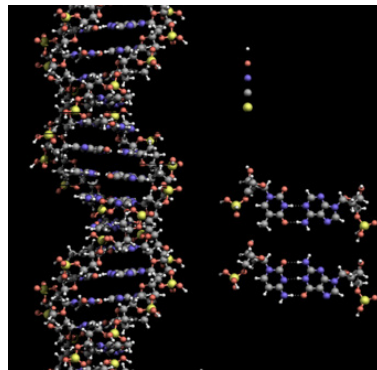
90 Th	91 Pa	92 U	93 Np	94 Pu	95 Am	96 Cm	97 Bk	98 Cf	99 Es	100 Fm	101 Md	102 No	103 Lr
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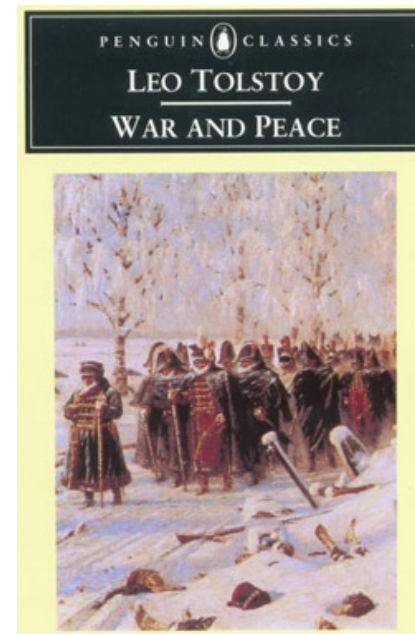
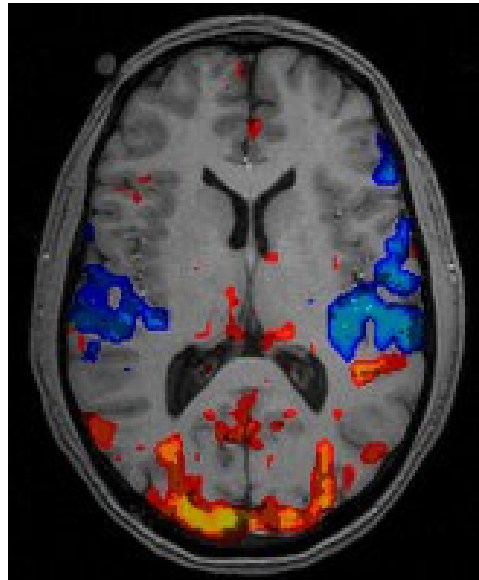
What is really there?



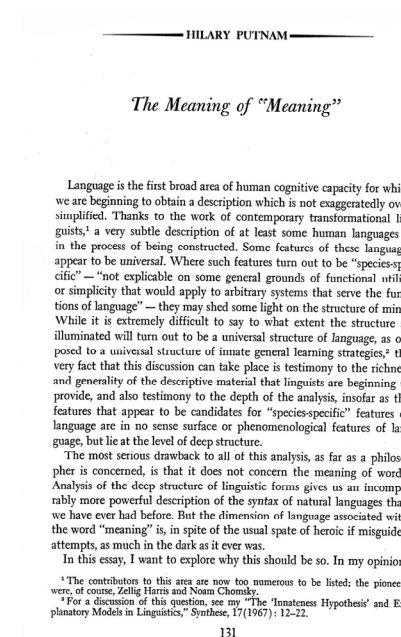
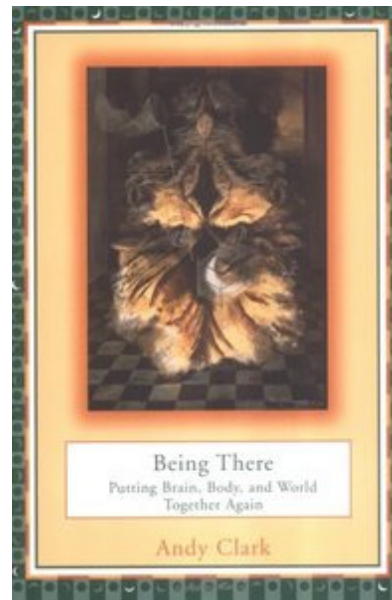
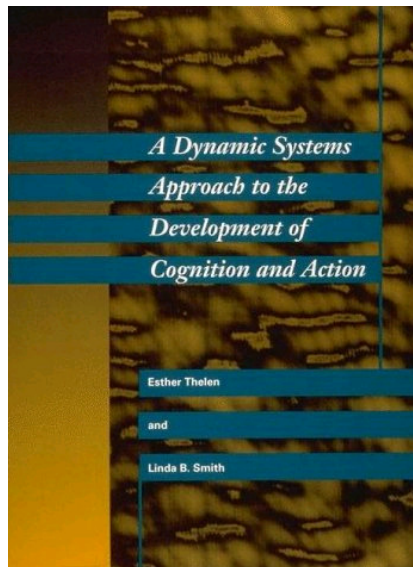
And how to talk about it?



Mind and brain



The extended mind



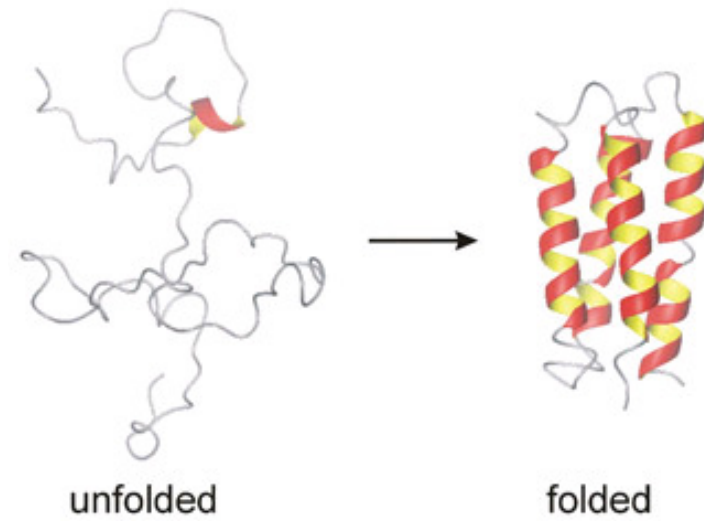
Language is the first broad area of human cognitive capacity for which we are beginning to obtain a description which is not exaggeratedly oversimplified. Thanks to the work of contemporary transformational linguists,¹ a very subtle description of at least some human languages is in the process of being constructed. Some features of these languages appear to be universal. Where such features turn out to be "species-specific" — "not explicable on some general grounds of functional utility or simplicity that would apply to arbitrary systems that serve the functions of language" — they may shed some light on the structure of mind. While it is extremely difficult to say to what extent the structure so illuminated will turn out to be a universal structure of language, as opposed to a universal structure of innate general learning strategies,² the very fact that this discussion can take place is testimony to the richness and generality of the descriptive material that linguists are beginning to provide, and also testimony to the depth of the analysis, insofar as the features that appear to be candidates for "species-specific" features of language are in no sense surface or phenomenological features of language, but lie at the level of deep structure.

The most serious drawback to all of this analysis, as far as a philosopher is concerned, is that it does not concern the meaning of words. Analysis of the deep structure of linguistic forms gives us an incomparably more powerful description of the syntax of natural languages than we have ever had before. But the dimension of language associated with the word "meaning" is, in spite of the usual spate of heroic if misguided attempts, as much in the dark as it ever was.

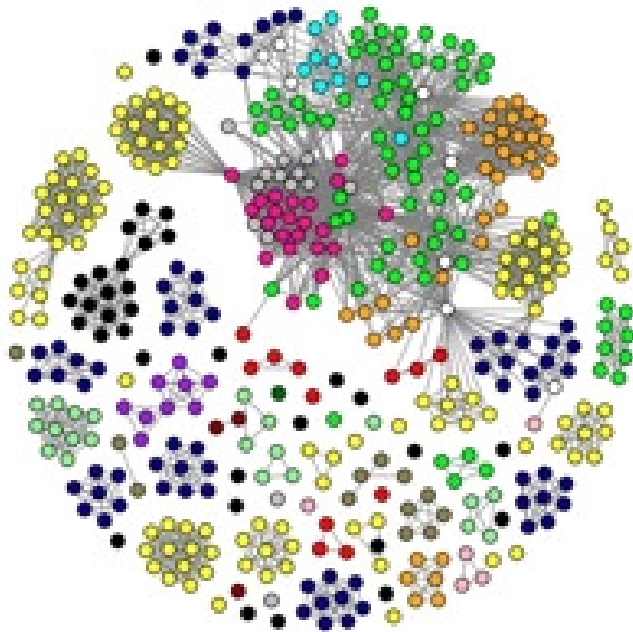
In this essay, I want to explore why this should be so. In my opinion,

¹The contributors to this area are now too numerous to be listed; the pioneers were, of course, Zellig Harris and Noam Chomsky.
²For a discussion of this question, see my "The 'Innateness Hypothesis' and Explanatory Models in Linguistics," *Synthese*, 17 (1967): 12-22.

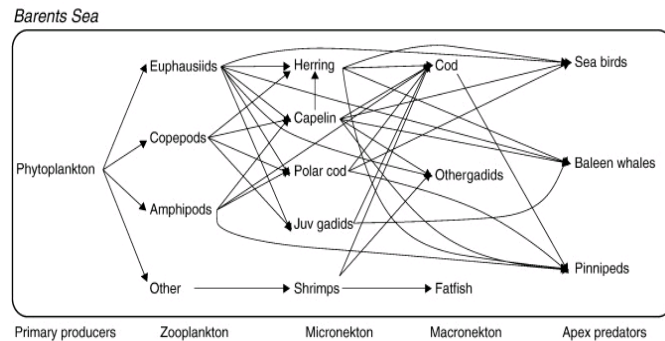
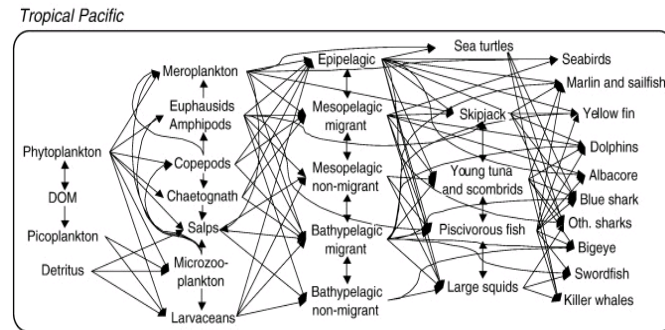
Causality



Equilibria and causal loops



Psychiatric disorders



Lake ecology

Unfinished science



Minimal metaphysics



The lure of the exotic

