

A Reply to Chandler (2003)

LANCE STORM

It is unusual for a scientific journal to accept an article by an author (in this case, Keith Chandler) that is basically a response to a book review (the book is titled *PSI: What it is and how it works* by Chandler, 2001). I was the author of that book review, which appears in a previous issue of the *Australian Journal of Parapsychology* (Storm, 2002). Perhaps, more unusual is my being given the opportunity to reply to Chandler's article. Nevertheless, in the interests of clearing up some misconceptions that appear to have been made by both of us, I have taken this opportunity to set the record straight. As much of Chandler's theory is driven by philosophical principles and speculation, I will add little comment, as my review covered my sentiments on these matters. So I will be brief, feeling as I do, that I have adequately expressed all I needed to express, and therefore, feel that not a great deal more needs saying, apart from some clarification.

First, I claimed that the universe is "all mind," but Chandler corrects me by saying that "the universe is *the thought process of a Cosmic Mind*" (p. 43). So saying, Chandler implies that Cosmic Mind is a Thinker, and that brings me back to my review statement that Chandler equated Cosmic Mind with God (now taken to mean Thinker and Architect). Chandler criticises me for implying this equation by first disagreeing with me, and then arguing that God is worshipful and "involves an ascription of supreme worth" (p. 52) whereas Cosmic Mind is neither worshipful nor supreme, but nevertheless "Wills" and "invents" like an All-Seeing, All-Present, All-Knowing Being. I am still not clear whether Chandler personally endorses the God concept (and his article did not help), but assuming he does (with or without its religious connotations), I cannot say what it might mean for him (or for anyone else) to accept these two overarching Principles as co-existing in the universe, let alone their sharing the responsibility of having created the world in the first place. That is, if the universe is "*the thought process of a Cosmic Mind,*" that same process cannot be taken away from God, and it might be simpler for Chandler to accept my equation. He otherwise pits religion against science. Whether God is more of a worshipful personality than is Cosmic Mind, he still steps on the toes of religious pundits and theologians. Yet, I do not think he is

combative in that sense, but is simply oriented towards explaining “PSI” [*sic*] in terms of a principle that could be widely accepted by believers and agnostics. That, I think, is a big problem for reasons just given. I can see only agnostics grasping Cosmic Mind with open arms. No further argument on this issue (and Chandler attempts that later in his article) can get us around this conundrum.

Second, I do not take serious issue with Eddington, Heisenberg, and Schrödinger, and their beliefs. But as men of science, driven by hardcore materialistic principles, they each must naturally face their own personal *enantiodromia* (a turning contrariwise) sooner or later. Jung (1966) talks of *enantiodromia* as a psychological process that compensates for a one-sidedness that has been maintained for too long. Psychodynamically, the process is meant to restore balance—it is homeostatic and therefore wholeness-oriented. It is only natural that mind stuff began to feature more strongly in the psyche of the materialist. The physicist then begins to realise that matter behaves *as if* it had the properties of psyche. From that equation, it is not an altogether monumental, intellectual leap to posit a mental universe, or cosmic mind, or even a merging of ancient and modern principles of both mind and matter, which is only implied in the sayings of the philosophers of old and modern physicists. Does this kind of *enantiodromia* mean these physicists’ statements are unreliable? Who knows? But what *enantiodromia* does suggest is that philosophical insight may be a psychological process *first*, and the expression of a universal truth *second*.

Third, and following up on the point just made, I have never meant to make “enigmatic” the concept of Mental Realism, but one cannot “jettison traditional habits of thought” (as Chandler demands) without replacing them with new habits that are equally impaired. And Chandler *does* imply an impairment of current thinking—this is possibly a gross overstatement on his part. ‘*Inference*’ (which Chandler criticises, p. 44) is, to my mind, only a slight improvement on philosophical induction, but it is an inescapable *part* (and part only) of how we think, and I see no way out of it. Unfortunately it can also be a flawed mechanism of belief-making, as philosophy has shown us—just because there is so-called ‘evidence’ that a thing is so *now*, does not mean it is so *tomorrow*. The ideas that have been around for thousands of years (and Chandler spends a lot of time on this issue—pp. 44-47ff) should not gain political weight in the mind of the ‘modern’ just because they are ancient principles. These ideas are merely expressions or representations of how we think—nothing more than the product of endopsychic processes projected onto our world. Nevertheless, I *do not say* that Mental Realism and Cosmic Mind, or God for that matter, are the products of flawed thinking—they must be truths of a particular

nature, but we must careful not to overstate their worth. In fact, my thoughts on this matter lead me to my fourth and final point.

Suffice it to say, I took up the position of Devil's advocate in my review, and do so again in this reply. I wrote a review that, for fairness, needed a suspension of my personal biases and prejudices. I may, *on principle*, sympathise or even agree with Chandler on some issues he raises because they speak outside the limitations of the scientific approach. I openly admit my empirical 'short-comings' (for want of a better word), which necessarily prohibit my open endorsement of issues that do suggest faith. While Chandler refutes my inferences of faith, and would like to think that faith is dualistic, and Mental Realism is monistic, one still has to accept a lot in Chandler's concepts (big changes don't come easy), and Chandler must agree that he can't possibly have all the answers. At that point faith must enter the picture.

REFERENCES

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