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A pattern is anything of which repeated instances can be recognized; patterns propagate in various ways: by direct copying, by accretion and growth, by repair and replenishment; by ramification and specialization; by adaptive complementation. patterns organize their environments as extensions of themselves; the distinction between prediction and anticipation; entangled causation in ecological systems; the use of simulation to anticipate ecological events; ecological relationships are politicious – simultaneously cooperative and in conflict. Koestler's holarchies: a world of recombinant holons, guided by each other's suggestions; the distinction between structure and system; toward a science of self-organizing pattern.

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The concept of personality; personality as a context for suggestion processing; as an ecology of re-suggestive structures; as a system of tectonic plates; as a shaping of affect into emoting cognition; as the encapsulation of a life history lived in a given culture; personality is not to be confused with temperament; the mind as a self-construing holarchy of re-combinant features; six levels of personality; personality "disorder" is more like an overly rigid order of re-suggestive structures that resist correction; emotional homeostasis of self-excitation and self-soothing; psycho-therapy as a training in specific skills.

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The notion of culture, in its usual sense, is circular, and cannot be used as a principle of explanation; a modern society is comprised of many over-lapping cultures, only partially accommodating to one another; culture resides primarily in material artifacts and in the brains of individuals, and is then negotiated between individuals in their relationships; we can think of culture in the first instance as a personal inventory – a system of memes, or re-suggestive structures, that guide an individual; James Gibson’s concept of affordance.

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Society is a politicious, open system: of prerogatives and power relationships; of stigmergic prompts; of child-rearing and education; of narrative; society as a “trading bloc” – hopefully, with a default culture of civility; society as a suggestion ecology defining a structure of relationships; primarily, people are neither role-players nor game-players but suggestion processors who live in playpens and playgrounds; the individual as negotiator; civil society as a default culture; the prospect of an integrated social science.

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The seeming paradox of government in a self-organizing system; government as a peculiar industry for the production of public goods; the free-rider problem; groups as “local publics”; the fractal nature of society; the addictive nature of government; government is a matter of arrogation and acquiescence, not contract; political entrepreneurship; the law of propagating wants; no separation between economics and politics; the concentration of wealth and power; scale of concentration is limited by the reach of government; technology has made war prohibitively expensive and greatly increased the reach of governments; government is a feature of human biology; government as a setter of contexts and as a buffer system.

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We need a story that gives our lives some meaning; kept within their spheres, science and religion do two different jobs; most conflict between religion and science could be avoided; religion per se need not be superstitious; Allport’s definition of religion; a self-organizing system needs no creator, but the task of finding a meaningful context for one’s life remains valid and urgent; religious people believe in a God whose commands provide a ground for moral choices, values and meanings; Darwin sets the challenge of transcending nature in a non-superstitious way; Darwinian Gnosticism; organized religion as a franchise operation.

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Taking the world apart; the eco-Darwinian paradigm and the context of life; no metaphysical self; mind is a biological phenomenon, not a supernatural add-on; much of what we are is unconscious; from Divine Mystery to insuperable complexity; Man is no longer the measure; we are beneficiaries and victims of human nature; the need for suggestive guidance; shifted concepts of autonomy and agency; the Baldwin effect again; a shifted concept of authenticity.

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Impact of the eD paradigm on society began with science itself; toward a “singularity” of human history where the rate of technological change is infinite and impossible to regulate; technological change is no longer just quantitative, but is becoming qualitative as well – changing what it means to be human; the eD paradigm plays a key role in many of these transformative technologies; the eD paradigm valorizes difference as the source of evolution and progress; the culture war around people’s attitudes toward science and technology as “progress”; the concept of redemption.

Talk #17 What We Don’t Know 313

Areas of Ignorance: questions that are still open: why is there something rather than nothing? what replaces the idea of cause for eco-Darwinian systems? Is life a kind of infection that some planets happen to catch, or should it be seen as a tendency of the universe, or both? How does an organism develop from a single fertilized egg? chance and necessity; relationship between cognition and emotion; how does the brain represent the different kinds of information? toward Bateson’s ecology of mind, and a science of humankind; the human animal needs guidance that science cannot offer; the future of scientific civilization and of humanity itself; personal philosophy.

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What lasts longer among the ripples of the random must last longer than those ripples that last not so long. That is the theory of natural selection in a nutshell.

– Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity, Gregory Bateson

Until at least relatively recent times, most human beings believed there was an essential difference between what went on in their own minds and went on in the rest of nature . . . Human beings had a reasoning soul, linking them to something divine, to something that is, above and beyond the principles governing the rest of nature.

– The Last Resistance: The Concept of Science as a Defense
against Psychoanalysis, Marcus Bowman

. . . in this book the provisional solution which we have reached must be the final word: the thoughts themselves are the thinkers.

– Psychology, William James, (1909)

The world will always be here, and it will always be different, more varied, more interesting, more alive, but still always the world in all its complexity and incompleteness. There is nothing behind it, no absolute or platonic world to transcend to. All there is of Nature is what is around us. All there is of Being is relations among real, sensible things. All we have of natural law is a world that has made itself. All we may expect of human law is what we can negotiate among ourselves, and what we take as our responsibility. All we may gain of knowledge must be drawn from what we can see with our own eyes and what others tell us they have seen with their eyes. All we may expect of justice is compassion. All we may look up to as judges are each other. All that is possible of utopia is what we can make with our own hands. Pray let it be enough.

– The Life of the Cosmos, Lee Smolin