

is perhaps ambivalent, as is some mainstream cosmology including consciousness studies. Is human self awareness inherently arrogant, seeing itself as the pinnacle of creation, or is it simply an incompletely self-aware 'organ' within a far greater superordinate biosphere / noosphere: the means [first step] by which the universe becomes self-aware? [Again not an 'either-or' proposition].

I would not recommend this book to most mainstream geologists. Even though they might find some parts intriguing, I suspect most would rebel. For one thing, despite beautiful illustrations, and many thought-provoking ideas, it is dense and difficult, in places, if not misleading. [I resorted to much consultation with anthroposophical friends, whose reactions were also ambivalent]. What I present here is what I understand with some confidence, and find plausible. Limitations of space save me from criticisms of nuances and notions I may not grasp. Bosse knows his geology, but I leave it to the judgement of the individual to evaluate how Bosse integrates the more arcane of Steiner's Earth-evolution pronouncements with the geological evidence. May you be 'grounded' and at one with the Earth.

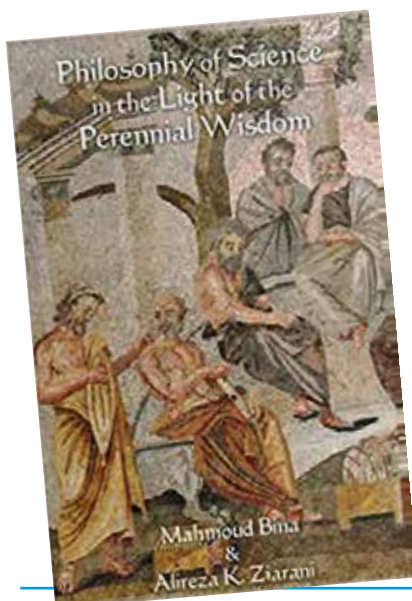
## DISCERNING MODERN SCIENCE FROM SACRED SCIENCE

Samuel Bendeck Sotillos

### PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE IN THE LIGHT OF THE PERENNIAL WISDOM

Mahmoud Bina and Alireza K. Ziarani

Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2020, 136 pp., \$15.95, ISBN - 978-1-936597-69-7



Modern science has become the sole arbiter or criterion of truth. It claims that it alone can know the truth and the nature of reality. This situation came to pass through a long historical trajectory of events such as the Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, and European Enlightenment. It is scientism purporting to be science that is the problem, for when science claims a monopoly on the truth, it trespasses beyond its own domain of knowledge.

This book delivers a powerful intellectual critique of the foundations of modern science, rigorously exposing its ontological and epistemological limits according to sacred science, metaphysics, and the spiritual principles that exist at the very heart of every sapiential tradition.

What can be known through the five senses pertains to the corporeal realm and cannot transcend it. Modern science by and large only recognises this way of knowing without realizing that "Empiricism ... refutes itself." (p. 4) Empiricism is unaware that it is limited to the relative order and knows nothing of the Absolute and that it is the unmanifest order that can fully know the manifest. No discussion can be had until it is recognised that "modern science condemns itself to fundamental errors. It is incapable of providing a sufficient view of the world, and yet lays claim to total reality." (p. 104) Its underpinnings are truncated due to being cut off from metaphysics, and thus "It is flawed ... in its very foundation, or rather in its lack of it." (p. 103)

Empirical means of knowing are only one way of knowing, just as reason is another way of knowing. With this said, "Reasoning alone cannot arrive at truth, because man would not be able to recognise the truth arrived at as truth if he did not possess the essence of this truth *a priori*." (p. 14) The authors explain that "Man can know things because their principal realities are imprinted in his very spirit," (p. 89) and point out that "The phenomena of this world are symbols of their divine archetypes, and can thus serve to lead us back to their source." (p. 65)

Each human faculty is connected to an interrelated level or degree of reality. Within both the human being and the cosmos there are in fact multiple degrees of being or reality. The authors write, "the traditional outlook always accounts for multiple states of being." (p. 36) Human faculties pertain to the horizontal and vertical dimensions as noted here: "There are not only degrees in reality, there are also modes; the former are in 'vertical' order while the latter are 'horizontal' and situated in the appropriate manner at each degree." (p. 47) The tripartite constitution of the human being and that of the cosmos, of

which the human being is a small mirror, consists of Spirit/Intellect, soul, and body or the spiritual, psychic and corporeal states.

The Platonic doctrine of *anamnesis* or "recollection" is conceivably the clearest epistemology of the premodern West, which corresponds to the epistemologies of all the religions. *Anamnesis* is the faculty of the Intellect that is synonymous with Spirit, sometimes known as intellection or intellectual intuition. The authors explain that "*Anamnesis* bases the possibility of knowing an object on man's having its knowledge potentially." (p. 31) They add the following about this doctrine:

For the Platonic recollection of the fundamental truths to become actualized in a man, a purification of the heart is necessary—in order that earthly shadows may awaken in him their principal realities. The aim of all the religions is to help man remember what he knew—to remove the rust that covers his heart, symbolically speaking—so as to enable him to reestablish his contact with the truths contained in his inner being. (p. 33)

Hence from a metaphysical point of view "Science ... is nothing but recollection." (p. 95) It is through this intellectual recollection that the human being can apprehend what is integrally human and the cosmos at large. Beyond the Cartesian bifurcation lies transpersonal knowing: "Total knowledge is situated beyond the bipolarity subject-object, because there is only one, individual Reality." (p. 116)

Modern science lacks an integral understanding of causes and its higher order in metaphysics. The ancients always applied the principle that "the greater could never come from the lesser." (p. 68) In the ancient world, "Traditional man knew that there is no end to the knowledge of phenomena." (p. 70) Knowledge and science for the ancients were inseparably connected to sacred science, metaphysics, and spiritual principles; however, this is not the case for modern science:

By ignoring epistemological foundations and metaphysical principles, modern science reduces man's intelligence to the lowest of his cognitive faculties, namely, his senses and reason, and reality to its most outward and contingent aspect, namely, matter. The perennial wisdom, or the *Sophia Perennis*, on the other hand, offers a full account of man's faculties of knowledge and a comprehensive description of the structure of reality. (p. 111)

By the same token the authors provide a very important point pertaining to "modern psychology...[where] reality is extended to the realm of the psyche, but not beyond it.... It ... contradicts

itself in its very principle.” (p. 50) There is a contradiction because the ego cannot know itself and requires a transpersonal dimension to know itself. In contrast, perennial psychology as found across the diverse cultures of the world includes Spirit, soul, and body and their corresponding degrees and modes of reality.

This book under review is a precious and remarkable work, which merits wide attention. It is unique in situating modern science in the light of the universal and timeless wisdom of the world’s religions and what can be gleaned from them. It offers the integral principles to return science to its origins in metaphysics so that the human being as the microcosm can rejoin with the macrocosm, opening science to truths of higher realities as known in all times and places as sacred science.

*Samuel Bendeck Sotillos is a practising psychotherapist who has worked for years in the field of mental health and social services, focusing on the intersection between spirituality and psychology. His works include Paths That Lead to the Same Summit: An Annotated Guide to World Spirituality, Dismantling Freud: Fake Therapy and the Psychoanalytic Worldview and Behaviorism: The Quandary of a Psychology without a Soul. He lives on the Central Coast of California.*

## PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

David Lorimer

### ■ TECHNOLOGY AS SYMPTOM AND DREAM

Robert D. Romanyshyn

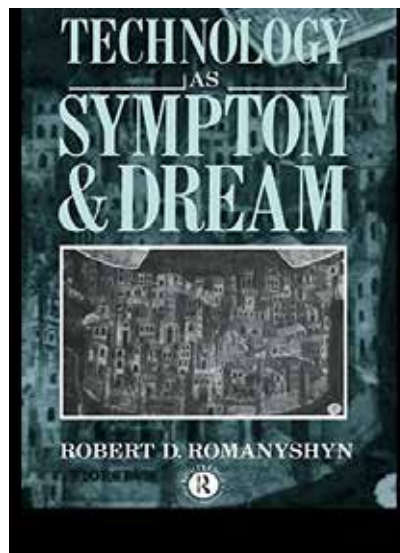
Routledge, 1989/200 254 pp., £31.99, p/b – ISBN 0-415-00787-9

### ■ VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN, THE MONSTER AND THE SHADOWS OF TECHNOLOGY – THE FRANKENSTEIN PROPHECIES

Robert D. Romanyshyn

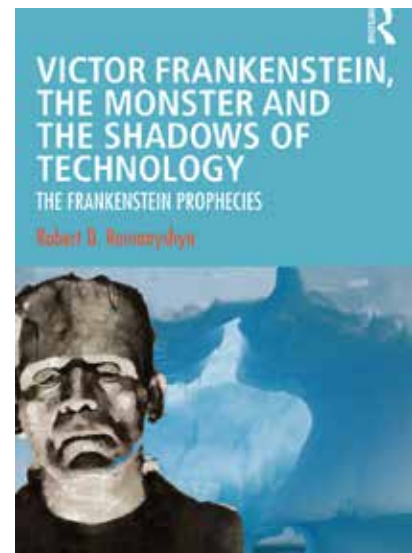
Routledge, 2019, 126 pp., £27.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-367-13732-8

As Jeremy Naydler also argues in the book reviewed in the philosophy section below, there is a sense in which the mechanistic outlook and its implications have colonised our minds, reaching even into the unconscious as it has unfolded historically into its present form. These two books were written 30 years apart and are studies of technological perception and indeed identity. They



enable readers to become much more aware of how our mentalities and even imaginations have been shaped and literalised, especially in relation to the hegemony of the eye and the visible, and hence of a linear vision ‘as a cultural habit of mind.’ Robert shows how this originated in 1425 when Brunelleschi invented the technique of linear perspective and its associated vanishing point to create a sense of distance where ‘the self becomes a spectator installed behind his or her window on the world... the body, now divorced from this self, becomes a specimen... and the world, as a matter for this detached and observing eye, becomes a spectacle.’ (p. 31) It is easy to see how this comes to be associated with objectivity, impersonality, quantification and measurement, separation from the body and nature, the focused anatomical gaze and mechanistic thinking in general. The window and the camera are continuous, and are represented in ‘maps and charts, blueprints and diagrams.’ The related notions of spectator, spectacle and specimen are associated with a loss of connection and eventually with technological disembodiment.

Descartes takes this one stage further with his separation of mind and body, also corresponding to the crucial distinction between primary and secondary qualities not in fact mentioned here but leading to what Blake called single vision (see chart on p. 55) as well as separation of humanity from nature. This dualism between culture and nature, intellect and emotion, spirit and matter characterised by Susan Griffin makes women the carriers of the negative side – ‘symbols of feeling, carnality, nature, all that is in civilisation is “unconscious” and that it would deny’ (p. 173) – hence the witch hunt and devaluation of the feminine. There is an interesting section on cubism and the photographs of Hockney as a means of eliminating the sense of distance inherent in the camera,



although it does reflect a fragmentation of perspective. Instrumental values of speed and efficiency are embodied in the standardised computer, where ‘efficiency wedded to indifference is a cold abstraction of a human being.’ (p. 93) The story now moves on to the body as specimen with the development of anatomy by Vesalius in terms of technical functioning – this anatomical gaze is later associated with the objectification of pornography. One comes to understand the connection between the corpse reanimated by Frankenstein, the body of the industrial worker after the division of labour, the body as machine, and the robot (p. 134). Frankenstein’s vision is one of mastery and re-creation of nature, while at the same time denying responsibility for his actions and their monstrous consequences – this is all taken up in considerable detail in the second book. Psychological distance is correlated with emotional retreat and the impersonal detachment of the spectator at a spectacle.

The more recent volume is structured as a series of questions, and both books conclude with the possibility of reconnection and a new beginning. Frankenstein, also called the modern Prometheus, has become a metaphor for the drive towards mastery and control as well as wealth through patenting nature. It elicits feelings of disgust and horror from the lunar shadows undetected by the masculine solar mind intent on growth and progress and unchecked by ‘the sense of the sacred that is a limit to the hubris of the Promethean mind’ (p. 81). We think that we can assume these Godlike powers without the corresponding responsibility for the fallout from our exploitative policies and actions. If we do not awaken from the self-destructive tendencies in this cultural dream, then the patterns of the past will be extended into the future with no pause for reflection, healing, forgiveness, reconnection, renewal, regeneration – in