

Language and / or Worldview Divide and / or Convergence in the Writings of Eric M. Weiss, Robert Moss, and Alberto Villoldo, with the Focus on Transphysical Worlds

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INTRODUCTION

The three authors bring three distinctive views on the transphysical worlds, from three different knowledge perspectives: Weiss as a philosopher at the California Institute of Integral Studies, Moss with a background in history and journalism, and having created the school of “active dreaming,” and Villoldo commencing with anthropology and then focusing on energy medicine as part of the work of the Four Winds Society.

Even if I did not get the chance to meet Weiss while he was alive, following the recommendation of Dr. Christian de Quincey, I read his book *The Long Trajectory*, and thus started to understand the complex philosophical construction that he managed to generate, to substantiate the thesis of the existence of transphysical worlds. With Moss, I spent more than three years with his school of active dreaming (i.e., thematic workshops, and the three levels of training for “dream teachers” in Barcelona and Prague); while in the case of Villoldo, I read most of his books throughout the recent 15 years, and I joined one of his workshops in Frankfurt, as I was interested to understand how his work in shamanism was connected to what I learned about the domain from Mircea Eliade’s books, and also to see the convergence between energy medicine of the Andes and that of Japan (i.e., Reiki).

When I am considering what their work brought to my understanding of transphysical worlds, I can say that Weiss’ structured and argued metaphysics that organically encompasses the transphysical worlds, plus the bridges that he created with previous consciousness work of Sri Aurobindo from India, and with process philosophy and

panpsychism worldview, for me represent a solid theoretical foundation on which myself, or anybody else willing to go further and more in-depth with the study of transphysical worlds, would feel confident to rely on.

On the other hand, Moss provides an encyclopaedia of consistent references about transphysical worlds as accounted by mythology, poetry, shamanism, or esoterism, and complemented by an extensive compendium of personal stories offered by his students throughout decades of active dreaming workshops and encompassing many angles and views on the matter of perceiving and acquiring knowledge about the transphysical worlds, through alternative states of consciousness.

Building on the Andean shamanism and healing practices, Villoldo translated and communicated them for our present times, systematising the information, adding correlations with medicine, anthropology, mythology, etc., and turning the knowledge into training programmes.

To pinpoint the aspects that I consider to be differentiators by comparison to other authors in the field of consciousness studies, as well as commonalities among the three of them, I am referring to:

- a. Their efforts to create a clear and systematic framework for the presentation and explanation of the nature, and functioning principles of the transphysical worlds;
- b. Their endeavours to bring out already existing evidence for the existence of the transphysical worlds, and for the experiences that humans before us went through and gathered about the subtle realms;
- c. Their extensive studies with the purpose to find and communicate key elements from existing bodies of knowledge (e.g., consciousness work in India, multidisciplinary angles combining history and arts, or neuroscience, and shamanism in the Andes);
- d. Their work in promoting consciousness work into mainstream knowledge, and into everyday life practices, and even habits (e.g., keeping a “dream journal of night and day,” or adopting a daily schedule that includes meditation);

- e. Their concern to embrace a mission, consisting in making available as many tools and guidelines as possible, so that we humans might have a chance to an evolutionary leap, or to a potential mutation of consciousness, as Jean Gebser titles it, by proactively and consistently engaging in explorations of the transphysical worlds.

TRIGGER POINT FOR THE FOCUS ON THE STUDY OF SUBTLE REALMS

It is interesting to observe the fact that two out of the three authors refer specifically to a moment in time when they experienced one or more events in their lives that led to their engagement in consciousness studies and practical work in relation to alternative states of consciousness. Thus, Moss accounts for a clinical death episode in his childhood in Australia, caused by a severe case of pneumonia, an event that marked his direct perception of subtle realms, and later motivated him to “re-trace” the steps into transphysical worlds, and to transform his experience of clinical death into a reference point for further studies about first-hand exploration of subtle realms. It is well known that the clinical death experiences change the lives of those who experience them, as the Romanian neurosurgeon, Dumitru Constantin Dulcan accounts with great detail in his book *The Mind from Beyond*¹, where he collected numerous stories of his patients who went through clinical death episodes, and where he managed to observe and describe a “pattern” of the stories (e.g., rejection of the apparent death, crossing of the “bridge of light,” meeting relatives and benevolent beings, embracing the “new life,” the shocking return to the perceptions of the physical world and the physical body, and eventually re-gaining the perceptions associated to the normal state of consciousness, yet with radical implications on their worldview and lives.)

Villoldo traces back to his meeting with shamans and energy healers from the Amazon, during his anthropology research, as the trigger point for his later dedication to the domain of energy medicine. Moreover, he refers to previous moments in his life where he was looking to attain a deeper sense of meaning in the world, and to embark on a far more gratifying quest here on Earth, maintaining a vivid perspective on subtle realms and how they positively impact our physical lives.

¹ Original title in Romanian – “Mintea de dincolo.”

As far as Weiss is concerned, I do not have knowledge about his motivation, nevertheless, his laborious work presented in *The Long Trajectory* reflects the urge to draw a philosophically valid foundation for the transphysical worlds, that could then be developed further, inclusively by, as he mentions “(...) a way to access transphysical domains that opens up vast and wondrous new worlds for exploration.”

WHAT THE THREE AUTHORS SAY ABOUT TRANSPHYSICAL WORLDS

According to the “transphysical” process metaphysics that Weiss is proposing, the universe consists of three domains: the physical world, the vital world, and the mental world. The last two belong to the transphysical world. The author further makes the point that the transphysical worlds already pervade our waking lives (the so-called “transphysical dimension of the waking world”), and, at the same time, clarifies the term “waking world” as the world as we experience it during our awake state of consciousness, throughout everyday life. Furthermore, the author provides a detailed description of the vital world (“life”) and of the mental world (“intelligence”), both belonging to the transphysical realm. We are focusing on his description of the vital world’s characteristics, as the practices proposed by Moss and Villoldo work with the characteristics of the “vital world,” i.e.:

- Perceived by us during dreams of the night, lucid dreams, OBE², and near-death experiences;
- Containing places and independent individuals, operating according to their own wills;
- More imaginative, complex, and varied in behaviour (e.g., biological cells);
- Higher-grade occasions in the vital world are involved in empathic interactions (e.g., our bodies are responsive to our feelings and thoughts);
- Vital occasions are “imaginal matter.”³

Moss opens his manual for “dream teachers” with references to the “dream” as being a generic name for alternative states of consciousness: “In the language of ancient Egypt, a

² OBE means out-of-body experience.

³ Personal note: This notion is similar to the “mundus imaginalis” defined by the French philosopher Henry Corbin, as “a world as ontologically real as the world of the senses and the world of the intellect, a world that requires a faculty of perception belonging to it, a faculty that is a cognitive function, a *noetic* value, as fully real as the faculties of sensory perception or intellectual intuition.”

dream (*rswt*) is both an *awakening* and a *place*. When we close our ordinary eyes, our eye of vision opens. When we go dreaming, we travel to other places —perhaps to other times or other dimensions — and/or receive visitations from other travellers. From this ancient perspective, dreams are not just things that bubble up from the personal subconscious when we sleep; they are places we go and experiences in which we awaken to realities that may be more, not less, “real” than everyday physical existence.”

All the three authors claim the fact that the transphysical worlds represent realms that are as ontologically real as the physical world, and that humans have innate capabilities to access the subtle worlds, and to draw information from this experience. Moreover, they mention that if we engage in the exploration of the transphysical worlds the gains are manifold, and that they surpass the individual, and bring benefits for the collective and for the cosmos.

Thus, Weiss maintains that the integral mutation of consciousness and embedding of the exploration of transphysical worlds into our everyday lives would potentially lead to a better world. Villoldo, on the other hand, states the same while referring to a “mission” that the energy medicine practitioners trained by the Four Winds Society take up, as a continuation of the ancestors’ work in consciousness studies, and within a community that he titles “The Earthkeepers.” Finally, Moss expresses the value of the information arriving to us in “dreams,” by recounting the true story of the members of the Andaman tribe that managed to save themselves from the most recent tsunami in the Pacific Ocean, by having perceived warning information during their dreams, the nights before the event took place. There is a sense of contentment that pervades all the writings of Weiss, Moss, and Villoldo, backed by the sentiment that the existence of the transphysical worlds and our interaction with them lead to deeper clarity, peace, sense of purpose, to a distinct “mood” while we are alive, to comfort and healing.

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE STRUCTURED BY EACH AUTHOR

Weiss provides a framework and a logical explanation, yet does not engage in exercises and techniques for first-hand perception of transphysical worlds. Moss and Villoldo do this extensively, and their practice is organised on levels and rituals and procedures. The idea is

to start gradually to explore transphysical worlds, and then turn this exploration into a practice that runs in synergy with the daily state of consciousness. They provide evidence for how this can be done, how it can impact us, and how it is an activity that goes on for millennia. As well, they refer to how access to the transphysical worlds potentially puts us in contact with other “intelligences” / entities throughout the cosmos.

Weiss – the construction of “actual occasions”

Weiss concludes that the human personality is “a society of high-grade occasions embodied in a society of medium-grade occasions, that are, in turn, embodied in a society of low-grade, inorganic occasions.” Furthermore, we are *material* beings that are not *physical* beings (i.e., not organic, low-grade occasions), yet we are actual occasions of a higher grade. Dr. Weiss sustains his argument by exemplifying that we are actual beings, as actual as any atom anywhere in the universe, but we are nowhere in the physical world. Instead, we are inhabiting the vital and mental worlds (i.e., which I shall explain later in the essay).

“Physical” does not equal “actual,” given that the actual world is both physical and transphysical. Furthermore, “no scientist has ever detected a living being per se,” but only complex systems of inorganic beings. While it is possible to locate and measure the physical atoms that compose one’s physical body, the qualities that inform the lives of living beings cannot be quantified, hence we are, in this sense, material beings that are not physical beings.

Moss – core techniques of active dreaming

From among the set of practical “exercises” constructed around dream experiences (i.e., dreams of the night, as well as dreams in the sense of experiences during meditation or lucid dreaming,) I shall refer in more detail to the dialogue titled the *Lightning Dreamwork Process*, which enables people to tell their dreams, receive feedback, and choose a follow-up action, everything in a systematic, quick, and fun way, using the following questions:

1. Give a title for the dream
2. Recount the dream

3. “Reality check” – does the dream trigger a memory from “real life,” or might the dream become a real event in the future?
4. What do you want to know more about the content of the dream?
5. “If it were my dream...” – as the technique is meant to be applied as a dialogue, the other person may offer feedback at this point;
6. What action will “the dreamer” take, with the purpose of transferring the consciousness associated with the dream to the “waking world.”

Besides the *Lightning Dreamwork Process*, there are other techniques involved in active dreaming, such as:

- Dream Reentry – experience within the imaginal realm, initiated by a chosen dream image.
- The Practice of Dream Healing by using dreams for diagnosis and as sources of imagery – e.g., “chakra journey,” during which one performs an imaginal “scan” through one’s own energy centers, in search of images that provide indications about the state of each chakra.

In the case of Villoldo, the body of knowledge revolves around Andean shamanism principles and practices, backed by neuroscience, and energy healing, with the purpose of achieving balance and harmony at physical, emotional, and spiritual level (i.e., working with the Luminous Energy Field).

WORLDVIEW

Weiss embraces panpsychism, and the metaphysics that he constructs to embed the transphysical worlds is substantiated by panpsychism. Moss apparently evokes idealism (“... here, everything is dreaming” is the title of one of his books), but also panpsychism (“we live in a speaking land,” we “travel” when we dream at night or when we engage in lucid dreaming, and our “soul” travels.) As far as Villoldo is concerned, the energy medicine practitioner acknowledges consciousness in the entire cosmos and he or she might engage in “soul recovery” for the benefit of a patient (panpsychism.)

LANGUAGE (TERMINOLOGY)

The differences of language are striking between the three authors, as Weiss is relying on the terminology of process philosophy, while Moss defines himself as “a poet of consciousness,” primarily involving the language of poetry and literature, and Villoldo browses between the language used in mythology, anthropology, and medicine. They approached the study of subtle realms by their backgrounds, and each of them made the choice to communicate about their conclusions of the study through the type of language employed by the domains they felt more at home with, and which they studied in more detail throughout years.

FOUR COMMON TAKEAWAYS

Regardless of the worldview and language variations, we might get the feeling that they speak about the same “things,” and even though they approached transphysical worlds from distinct angles of thought and knowledge, the concern about bringing as much information as possible about subtle realms represents a common thread of the writings of Weiss, Moss, and Villoldo. Furthermore, I would like to stress four “takeaways” from their work, consisting of the following facts:

- 1. All three authors attempt to draw maps of the transphysical worlds.*

Weiss is constructing the maps relying on the consciousness studies of Sri Aurobindo and Whitehead, while Moss and Villoldo are creating various scenarios for meditations, such as “journey back to the moment of conception,” or “journey to the blue lake of healing” (i.e., the word “journey” belongs to shamanism, and represents a metaphor describing the experience of subtle realms accessed through alternative states of consciousness.)

- 2. All three authors provide guidelines about navigating transphysical world.*

Weiss provides these guidelines in philosophical terms, so that one could refer to an already demonstrated knowledge background that substantiates the existence and nature of subtle realms, while Moss and Villoldo provide insights into how to access other states of consciousness, how to perceive and experience transphysical worlds (e.g., an image from a

dream of the night as a portal for further exploration of the information), and how to sustain the flow of information in between states of consciousness.

3. All three authors connect subtle realms with afterlife.

As Weiss maintains, two domains of the transphysical world (i.e., vital and mental) are integrated in the proposed new metaphysics, by stating that our physical body is the embodiment of a medium-grade vital personality, which is the embodiment of a higher-grade mental personality. Correlated with the previous argument of the (ontological) autonomy of the transphysical worlds, this statement leads to the conclusion that life after death is existence in the transphysical worlds without embodiment in the physical world. Since we already exist in the vital and mental worlds, our mental personality embodied in a vital body may continue its journey throughout the cosmos even in the absence of a physical body. Thus, the transphysical cosmology proposed by Dr. Weiss accounts, in a self-explanatory way, for the survival of bodily death, by accounting for a society of higher-grade occasions that remain an ongoing personality in the transphysical worlds, to which “they are native.”

Furthermore, Moss and Villoldo are implying that the laws of the transphysical worlds go beyond our perception of time and space within the physical world. This aspect represents a key element of the practices that work with the “vital worlds” (e.g., “timefolding,” time as a circle and not an “arrow,” meditation for mending the past, futures’ scouting, or preparations for the physical death through a “house on the other side,” or “dying consciously” etc.).

4. All three authors are heralding the next mutation of consciousness.

Weiss is looking forward to the integral man, Moss to the “new human,” while Villoldo mentions “homo luminous.” Regardless of the name, the references point towards a mutation of consciousness that would encompass the transphysical worlds.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Even though there is divide in terms of language used by the three authors, there is convergence in the way that subtle realms are mirrored in their writings. Interestingly

enough, the “reader” is invited by all three authors to engage with the presented content, to create his or her own understanding of the transphysical worlds, and to continue on the premises that they structured.