

Nondual Science

A possible nondual Renaissance within the Western Worldview

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Open Question

Is it possible to conceive of a Nondual form of Science within the Dualistic Western Worldview?

This is the question that we will attempt to answer in this introduction to the possibility of a form of nondual science. But first we need to establish what nonduality means in this context. Nonduality means a state which is Not one! Not Two! It is something that David Loy talks about in his book Nonduality which is elusive in the Western Worldview but has been developed into sophisticated ways of looking at the world in many non-western spiritual or religions and philosophical traditions. The best way to look at nonduality is as a heresy of Dualistic or Monistic ways of looking at the world or the things in the world. Our Western Tradition is Dualistic tending toward Monism based on Aristotle's Metaphysical assumption of non-contradiction but evolving out of the neo-platonistic concept of the devolution of the One into the Many things of experience. In

dualism one of the duals tends to try to stamp out the other dual and that gives us an attempt to instate a monism on top of a dualism. But for the most part we start from the point of view of dualism and attempt to find a way to achieve monism. But there are some attempts that start with monism and try to explain our experience of dualism or manyness in experience. However, there is a heresy in which one comes to believe that the actual state of things is neither Onefold nor Manyfold. This something else that is hard to pin down and describe determinately is named *nonduality* after the usage of Loy and others. There are several of these nondual traditions that have appeared in the history of human thought and spirituality. One is the heresy of Buddhism that has in the past extended itself out of the monistic Hindu tradition and then been reincorporated back. Another is Taoism as a heresy of Confucianism. Yet another is Islam which is a heresy of the Western dualistic tradition. These various heretical traditions that have stemmed from either originally monistic or dualistic traditions are mostly defined in their differences from their original traditions, because it is extremely difficult to define a dogmatic position of nonduality except in difference from the conceptually definite starting point of monism or dualism. However, despite this difficulty in defining nonduality many such traditions have been formed in human history and have led to very elaborate spiritual traditions with their philosophical and religious elaborations.

Our position today is that many of these nondual religions or spiritual paths have become popular in Western countries where many people are searching for a way to improve their spiritual lives. There has developed a mostly nihilistic spiritual marketplace of elixirs of enlightenment. But within this market place there are many genuinely nondual imported traditions attempting to gain a foothold and a following among Westerners who have rejected the traditional religions options that are offered by our culture. However, people in the West who take up these various nondual traditions for

spiritual reasons are normally schooled in Western Science. Many wonder whether the edges of Western Scientific discovery and these nondual traditions might perhaps be in harmony rather than at odds. For instance, Capra's book *Tao of Science* opened up the exploration of analogies between recent scientific discoveries and the wisdom of the east in its various forms. The problem is that there are many nondual traditions that are being adopted by Westerners and there is no agreement among these practitioners as to which version of nonduality is correct. And then too there is no agreement how to combine the spiritual insights derived from practice with the requirements of hard science in order to produce what might be termed a nondual approach to science which serves as a bridge between Western Science and nondual perspectives on phenomena. Many, such as Jung for instance suggested that we should stick to spiritual perspectives that are western because it is difficult to see how to bridge the cultural chasm between eastern spiritual practices and the insights that they lead to and Western science. In fact, the only good example of a nondual position within the western tradition is Meister Eckhart, because even though his view was branded heretical he was not brought before the Inquisition. Many claim that Gnostic sources within our own tradition were nondual but these claims are hard to sustain except perhaps for the Gospel of Thomas. Islamic Sufism is the only coherently nondual heresy to grow out of the Western tradition but because of the Crusades and Orientalism this heresy has been effectively segregated from the mainstream of the tradition and rendered artificially Eastern, by defining a region called the Near and Middle East as the radical Other of the Western Tradition. A case could be made that Plato's works were in fact based on nonduality, but that is difficult to sustain against a neo-Platonist tradition of interpretation of Plato in the light of Aristotle. So as things stand the resources within our Western Tradition that would allow us to claim this nondual position is part of our own tradition are few and difficult to marshal in

such an argument. So we are left with not just a philosophical gap but a cultural and religious gap between Western Science and the various nondual traditions that represent good examples of this heresy in full bloom. For the most part we will tend to only mention four sources, Buddhism, Taoism, Islamic Sufism and Advaita Vedanta or Shivaic Hinduism. Many spiritual traditions claim to be genuinely nondual. We will not pretend to be able to adjudicate these claims. However, we will stick with traditions that have a long and respected tradition of nondual thinking just so we don't confuse the issues at hand. Nondual thinking is nonconceptual and nonexperiential in a very peculiar way which seems to move such traditions not just beyond testability, which is the benchmark for science, but beyond the limits of philosophy and religion as systems of beliefs or tenants. Our position is that there are many possible nondual viewpoints and that there is wisdom in their differences. We believe that there should be a conversation among these nondual adherents to discover the differences and similarities of their practices and their traditions ways of formulating the nonconceptual and nonexperiential core of the nondual approach to existence. But the question here is whether nonduality as such can handle the extreme case of Western Science considered as a dualism. The dualism in question is normally formulated as the mind/body, or consciousness/matter, or in other ways that point out the fundamental dualism that Western Science is built upon using as its foundation the concepts of noncontradiction and excluded middle. Therefore if Western Science and the Nondual heresy (of what ever specific form) are fundamentally opposed does this not produce a new duality? If nonduality is consistently seen as a middle way between all extremes then it cannot reject thought, reason, or even Western Science which is a construct of thought using reason and experiment. So there is a paradox that needs to be explored of how nonduality can handle even the extreme case of Western Science. But we can go beyond that seeming paradox to further ask whether there is a possibility of *nondual*

science, which is a transformation of Western Science which supports the approach to things championed by nonduality. It is one thing for nonduality to encompass Western Science as a limiting case and another thing all together to construct a positive science that is at once rooted in the nondual perspective on phenomena. But getting to the point where we can posit such a transformation of science itself, we must attempt to answer some fundamental questions about the nature of nonduality and the nature of Western Science and understand what a bridge between the two might be like. Of course, we are talking about a bridge that is not just an ad hoc connection between disparate elements that otherwise would not have anything to do with each other. Rather we are talking about a bridge that connects and unites Western Science transformed into Nondual Science with the nondual perspectives that flow from spiritual traditions without any travesty of those roots. That Western Science must be transformed for such a bridge to be built is clear. Western Science is based on a foundation of duality. Within Western philosophy there have been monisms that have been put forward, but science itself always has differentiated between observer and observed as a fundamental opposition that makes science possible. Nonduality denies this opposition just as it does all monisms. So nonduality will have to provide a fundamentally different view of Science itself in order to produce a view that allows us to circumvent the need for this basic opposition. However, it is possible that we will also need to consider deeply the nature of nonduality itself in order to make this bridge a reality. Western Science has given us a deep appreciation of some aspects of the reality of the universe which were never known before and which should be taken into account when we present our nondual approaches to existence. There are many forms of nondual expression as a philosophical position of various levels of sophistication. Some are very simple as in Taoism, and others much more complex as in Buddhism. Some are merged with other forms of worship in a vast confusing array of practices as in Hinduism.

Some are rooted in interpretations of revelation such as Islamic Sufism which builds on foundations also claimed by the Judeo-Christian tradition that are normally considered dualistic, contrasting a monotheistic God to his creation. So a form of nonduality that can connect to Western Science to produce a Nondual Science might itself have to ask itself some very deep questions in order to support such a bridge.

But it is important for us to try to build such a bridge between Western Science and Nondual approaches to phenomena at this time because of the peril that our species and the rest of our fellow species are in with the deterioration of our planetary environment. We do not want to be like the Neanderthals, an extinct species of homo sapiens in a world that has been stripped of the other species that are our help mates and charges on this small planet in the midst of a vast ocean of an inhospitable cosmos. It is our belief that the connection between nondual approaches to phenomena and Western Science might be part of the answer that is needed to avert disaster. Maybe such an enterprise is too little too late. But we need some sort of monumental transformation in our Culture with its parasitic science and technology in order to change the course of history, and nonduality is a untried resource as yet which just might do the trick, or at least contribute to the discovery of a solution to the problems we are bringing on ourselves and the other species that are quickly facing oblivion.

The actual building of this bridge can be a long and complex project, but I will attempt to describe the project in a way that will give a vision of what I see as a possibility inherent in our tradition such that this inherent possibility of nonduality can act in concert with the other nondual traditions that have been developed down through the ages. What is presented here is merely the blueprint of the bridge. The building of the bridge itself is a social project that can be undertaken by the practitioners of many nondual traditions who are interested in the relation of their tradition to science. So like David Loy I will not be privileging any

particular tradition, however I will be speaking out of my own nondual tradition which is Islamic Sufism for the most part when I talk about experiential aspects of the problem. Yet most of the discussion will actually use Buddhism and Taoism as the primary examples because they are such good examples of the extreme positions that can be taken on nonduality itself. There is a lot of background discussion that is necessary in order to lay the groundwork for our discussions of the possible relations between nonduality and science. The first questions that come up are: *what is nonduality?* and *what is science?* Both of these questions are very deep each in themselves. Thus we will skirt these issues and attempt to move directly to the heart of the matter by asking what nondual science might be like if it existed, and whether there are any candidate theories which might show us how the question should be formulated properly. In other words definition is often a way to actually destroy the possibility of bridging between two terms. Better to take a wider view and ask what the coalescence of the two terms might be like, and whether there are candidates that will help us think of that conjunction better, and then work back towards the question of what the terms represent that they may come together in that way.

Nondual Science?

What would it be to have a nondual science and can we find any candidates that would give us some clues as to what a nondual science might look like?

A nondual science would not answer the questions that Western science already avoids answering any better. Western science avoids answering questions that begin with the word *Why?* In a way nonduality is the same way, in as much as nonduality is an alternative that is nonconceptual and nonexperiential that can be seen to inform conceptuality and experience in a fundamental way. So nonduality like science is not good in answering the question that begin with the word *Why*. Rather nonduality

answers another type of question which is given our experience, and our concepts, where do these arise from. Science deals with theories built out of concepts and reduced experience called observation. Science connects these using mathematical models that are extended to describe, explain or prove the relations between structural aspects of the phenomena under study. But Western Science, except in a philosophical moment or two, does not ask where the experience comes from or the concepts that it uses to understand the experience. So nonduality causes us to move in a different direction from normal philosophy which like myth attempts to explain origins to understand the nonconceptual and nonexperiential grounds of experience which philosophy in the West does not touch either. Thus a nondual science would be built on a nondual philosophy which are different from both traditional science and philosophy. The nondual philosophy would attempt to explain the grounds of experience and concepts used by science as grist for its mill of theorizing, prediction, and experimentation. We are just using the term nondual philosophy for the moment as a tool, but nondual philosophy is very different from normal Western philosophy because the latter assumes that concepts and experiences exist and are distinguishable as a basis for philosophizing just as they are available for science. Nonduality itself questions this availability because the nondual ground has neither concepts nor experiences in it. Somehow these arise from the nondual ground which is neither one nor many but something else. The point of nondual science is that it is imagined that understanding the nondual ground, and how concepts and experiences arise from it is important for understanding the nature of the experiences and concepts themselves. Because Science starts with common sense and good sense about experience and concepts used by reason to build theories based on mathematics and limited by experiment then it is assumed that the underlying nondual nature of these would help us understand them better. Nonduality per se does not tell us anything about the ultimate *Whys* of experience or

conceptual comprehension. Rather, nonduality talks about the ultimate ground out of which the concepts and experiences arise. If we know something about these grounds then we are better able to understand what the concepts and experiences that we differentiate out of these grounds are telling us. In other words our idea of what the instruments (concepts and experiences) of our sciences takes for granted is vague. Nonduality seems to make these instruments even more vague, but in fact refine our understanding of the instruments so that we can understand our own experiences and concepts better, and thus understand better what science is telling us and what kind of credence to give these apparent outcomes of scientific research. A nondual science would be more self aware. In other words a nondual science would be aware of the way concepts and experiences arise from, schematize, and return to the nondual ground. Here the *nondual ground* is a way of talking only about the relation between the spectrum from one to many in relation to the orthogonal alternative of nonduality which underlies and informs conceptuality and experience. Right now science sees its instruments as ready made and permanent and the only change is what it knows through these instruments about the phenomena in question. But once we realize that just as phenomena arises, matures, and disintegrates, so to do our scientific instruments, which ultimately lead back to our concepts and experiences, which are our ultimate instruments. In this way we can see that nondual science is something deeper than normal Western Science because it takes into account the flux of our cognitive or conscious differentiations used in science, rather than just results which are presented as if they were static and did not have a lifecycle of their own by which the results were obtained.

We are faced with a problem in Quantum Mechanics that its measurements implicate consciousness. This kind of implication appears in Relativity theory in relation to the observation of clocks. In both cases there are what Deleuze calls *partial observers* that are invoked as the quasi-subjectivity interfacing

with the external instruments. But no one talks about the internal instruments of concepts and experience within consciousness and where they come from and how they operate. There is a threshold of subjectivity that is not crossed, just as there is a threshold of ultimate Why that is not answered. The same can be said for objectivity itself. Science prides itself on its objectivity, but it does not question the noumenal status of its objects. Rather it constitutes objects as what are held in common by the research community by Aristotle's common sense of the idealized scientific everyman. So objectivity is not really on the side of the object but is in fact an intersubjective bias. In effect Kant's three transcendentals of the Subject, Object and God remain in place for Science which although it claims to be a materialism holds the ultimate limits of idealism. This is because Science itself constitutes both idealism and materialism both. Kant was in fact trying to justify Newtonian theory in his Transcendental Philosophy. Empirical Materialism merely leaves unexplained the nature of consciousness, the social and life. Nonduality goes deeper than any of these philosophical positions by basing its understanding of mundane experience on meditative experience. Science is merely a reification of mundane experience. But it cannot ultimately understand its own results because it takes for granted mundane experience which it does not really understand. Philosophy in the West attempts to explain and understand mundane experience that Science assumes. But in the West philosophy does not base its results on meditative experience but instead merely assumes as its base mundane experience itself. Thus there is no basis on which to evaluate the nature of mundane experience. Nondual traditions are all meditative in some sense. They all try to understand the conscious body in its own terms first from the viewpoint beyond all viewpoints of bodymind or mindbody fusion. The object of nondual theory is the mindbody or bodymind fusion. It is the study of this that ultimately leads to the nondual heresy in all dualistic or monistic or mixed traditions. Nondual practice directed at

the bodymind or mindbody fusion gives us a basis for understanding mundane experience as it arises out of that fusion. We will speak of this as a fusion for the moment as a way of talking to simplify matters. If we understand the nondual state underlying the fusion of mindbody, then we can on that basis understand the mixture of duality and monism in mundane experience, and it is that mundane experience of the common man that is the basis of scientific conceptualization and experimentation. We are all common men before we become scientists. In fact, pragmatism is based on the idea that the view point of the common man is inherently scientific. Common sense is science to the pragmatist. The problem is that meditative techniques are myriad and states of consciousness produced by meditation are various. So not all meditation leads to an understanding of nonduality. And even if it does then the expression of nonduality in conceptual terms or the practice of it that provides experiences are of various levels of sophistication, and each school has its own vocabulary to talk about the results of its meditative techniques. So we have to be very careful that we use the most sophisticated views of nonduality that have been developed as the basis of our own understanding because some traditions are very long and have had time to refine these views in different ways. But the basic principle is that there are two types of objects of experimentation. One is differentiable things of nature which might include our own bodies or minds. The other is that there is a fusion of mindbody or bodymind which is the source of all concepts and experiences which needs to be treated differently from the normal objects of scientific inquiry. This fusion of mindbody or bodymind is the ground out of which the tools of scientific inquiry arise (concepts and experiences), it is even before the arising of mundane experience and thought which is reified into scientific experimentation and theorizing by our tradition. Explorers of the fusion of mindbody or bodymind have discovered all sorts of liminal states that are very heterogeneous. But among them there are

those who have discovered the heresy of nonduality, i.e. that it is neither one nor many but something else that is going on within our mindbody that is the basis of everything else. We clarify what this alternative is and we naturally clarify mundane experience and concepts and thereby we clarify scientific theory and experiment because the latter is built on the former which should in turn be built on the nondual foundational bedrock which is non-experiential and non-conceptual. However, saying exactly what this alternative is challenges our language capacity and our ingenuity. But at the same time it brings clarity to a dark and unexplored unconscious of Western science. Western Science just assumes mundane experience and leaves it to philosophy to clarify that. But philosophy assumes mundane experience too in our tradition and thus has no basis on which to draw any finer distinctions. It is only when we take meditative experience as our basis that we have a position from which we can critique mundane experience and conceptualization. But not all meditative experience takes us into the nondual, and so we have to be careful what we use as our grounds. This is complicated further by the fact that the nondual is essentially nonexperiential and nonconceptual itself and so is in some sense by definition out of our reach. Thus using the nondual which is invisible and undistinguishable based on normal mundane characteristics and determinations as a basis for critiquing both mundane and scientific ways of thinking and experiencing seems counter intuitive, especially within our own tradition. But what we have to keep in mind is that our own concepts and experiences are in some sense unknown and inexplicable to us otherwise, and that we take that unknown right into our science as an uninspected assumption.

So we can think of Nondual science as somehow deeper science, a deeper science that calls into question its basis on mundane experience. Nondual science questions both mundane approaches to phenomena and scientific approaches to phenomena both and uses invisible tools to sharpen our

understanding of what concepts and experiences, theories and experiments could possibly be. We have not thought this through well in our tradition. We need to think it though more deeply. Nondual science could be the way for us to do that rethinking of our tradition. We are led on by the paradoxes of the observer affecting the measurements and the observer reading the clocks. In a way it is a critique of the whole idea of a unification of science. Unification suggests a monism which is the dream of the dualism of Science. Rather than unification we need a nondual way of approaching the findings of science and the theorizing process. There will never be a complete unification of Science from dualistic grounds of its theorizing. When we suggest changing those grounds to the nondual bedrock then we change the dream, away from a monism that haunts the dualistic science of today, toward something else. Something synergistic yet complementary that is based on the strange and unaccountable fusion of mind/body/body/mind. It is the slash mark “/” in this formulation that indicates the nondual bedrock. What we want to do is set science on this new bedrock, which in fact is as old as human beings. Human beings have always discovered the nondual alternative to duality and monism. But this bedrock of existence has never been set under science before. To set this bedrock under science is to transform science radically, i.e. from below the ground up. This is our challenge. It means we must get to know ourselves better. It means we have to understand our own tradition anew. It means we have to grieve for the species and language and cultures already lost and do our best to save those remaining. Science without people to do it is nothing. People without animals to know their difference from are inhuman. Science that does not know its own foundations is a monster that gives rise to technology that has a life of its own, which destroys the earth as a place of habitation and dwelling for human kind. Other species of homo have vanished like the hobbit like Floresiensis man only 12000 years ago. The science of *homo extinctus* is no science at all. It is pure ignorance in the guise of knowledge.

Only the exploration of the nondual can correct this mistaking ignorance for knowledge. Nonduality means that there is something other than the duality between knowledge and ignorance, lets call it *wisdom*. From the viewpoint of wisdom a science and technology out of control destroying the earth through globalization of an out of balance Western culture is extremely unwise. Nondual science would be a wise science that knows itself, is no longer ignorant of itself, a mere reification of mundane concepts and experience into incomprehensible theories and experiments that harbors an unconscious that goes unrecognized. It is that unconscious that takes on a life of its own and has a death instinct that threatens our species tending to bring science itself to an early end before we see much of the universe to apply our science to. We fly by titan but that is only one of myriad worlds to explore, which we will not get a chance to explore if we destroy our own home planet out of our own ignorance in our pursuit of knowledge without the application of wisdom that comes from nonduality.

Indiscernability

The key problem that we need to approach here is that of indiscernability. The nondual is indiscernible. This is because we are geared to discriminate between one and many. This is a natural state of our bodily relation to the world. We naturally make distinctions and what ever distinctions you make they are undermined by nonduality. This is both in relation to conceptual and experiential discernment. So the question we need to confront is how the indiscernible can help us understand meditative concepts and experience, mundane concepts and experience and scientific concepts and experience. This is a fundamental question that relates to the usefulness of nonduality as a basis for our lives in general and for a recomprehension of both mundane and scientific ways of living in general. It gets to the question of how we can even know that the nondual exists if it is in fact indiscernible? And how can something indiscernible help us understand the

discernable? These are very delicate questions and we can only offer here at the outset approximations to their answers. But the answer lies not with the indiscernability of the nondual itself, but with the nature of what we do discern both conceptually and in our experience. In other words the key to understanding enlightenment is nonenlightenment. We need to study nonenlightenment very carefully and in depth and when we do we find that the existence of the indiscernible nondual is implicit in nonenlightenment itself. The only way to realize the nondual is through nonenlightenment per se. It is not something transcendental to the nonenlightened world. In fact, this is the fundamental problem with what might be called artificial or nongenuine expressions of nonduality, they see the nondual as something other than the mundane, i.e. as a transcendental. The difference between the transcendental and immanent is a duality and thus the nondual cannot be either one. This is the point that we need to drive home that what ever duality or pair of opposites you want to name, the nondual elusively escapes their grip, but without establishing a difference from them. As Meister Eckhart explains, if you have any experience in meditation, which is definitive in any way, this is not the nondual. As a corollary if you have any thought, even a thought about the nondual it does not capture it at all. The nondual is a closed door to conceptualization and experience, but at the same time is suffused with conceptualization and experience and is not different from them. The nondual is indiscernible in itself, but it is also indiscernible from the meditative states it suffuses, from the mundane states that it suffuses, and more poignantly for our purposes from the scientific conceptualizations and experiences that it suffuses. Indiscernability cuts both ways, in other words Nonduality is indiscernible as something separable from conceptualization and experience, but it is also indiscernible from them too, so it cannot be thought of as either transcendental or immanent but something else. It is the nature of this something else that we need to bear down upon and try to look in a more refined

manner if we are to establish the credibility of nonduality. What is the use of something that you cannot discern, you cannot think about, that you cannot experience?

To answer that question you need to consider the nature of the discernable itself. In meditative practices that leads to states of consciousness, in mundane life, in science we are continuously making discernments. But how often do we ask where these discernments come from and how we discern the discernments themselves? The fact is that all these arenas of spirituality, everyday life and science all have a basis on discernability itself without asking for the most part how discernability is itself constituted. In fact, there is a question where all these discernments come from and endure over time, and vanish away. The fact that there are myriad discernments both vague and distinct is assumed and is taken up in all types of life, the type of life where we concentrate on our own consciousness which is inherently self-conscious, as in meditation, the type of life where we are living in the everyday mundane world of things and people where we survive and make our lives work, and the type of life of science which pretends that experience can be reified into an objective view of things abstracted from the lifeworld. All of these types of life make discernments unquestioningly. But when we focus in on the making of discernments, realize that they have a lifecycle themselves, and understand that all discernments have the same source, then we begin to appreciate the possibility of the hypothesis of the nondual. The nondual is the background on which all discernments are made, it is what allows them to arise, it is what sustains them, it is what allows them to be replaced by other discernments as discernments continually pass away in the flux of existence. So when ever you are looking at a discernment you are looking at the nondual, because the nondual is the interspace between what is discerned and what is not discerned, and between all things that are discerned.

Let us consider a gestalt. We know from

gestalt psychology that there is a tension between figure and ground within the gestalt field. Gestalts are experiential but when we think of them conceptually then we have the complementary idea of a system. Systems are conceptual gestalts. But it is easier to deal with the perceptual case, so we will tend to talk about that. There is a tension between a figure and its ground in a gestalt. But gestalts are not all there are because we know that we continually look around at various gestalts and leap from one gestalt to another in our experience. This leaping from gestalt to gestalt is not given a name in psychology. We will call it the proto-gestalt and connect it with what Boehm calls Implicate Order, or what Polanyi calls Tacit Knowledge. The conceptual opposite of a System has also not been defined in the literature. We have in the past called that the Meta-system, but now tend to call it an Openscape, but recent academic usage has settled on the term Context. So we will use these various terms more or less interchangeably. The point is that there is a key difference between the gestalt and our tacit knowledge of the implicate order of the proto-gestalt which is the context that contains many gestalts of relevance to the individual or social group. Gestalts have a very different organization than Proto-gestalts. These are different emergent organizations of discernability in our phenomenological experience. Conceptually their complement is the System and OpenScape (or Meta-system). We call these different organizations, whether conceptual or experiential, schemas and we believe that there is a hierarchy of these schemas. Each holistic organization at the various emergent levels of the schematization give us a regime of discernability of things, events, stuff and times in the spacetime of the mindbody/bodymind. So in all this what we have said is only that there are various regimes of discernability, there is no pure discernability outside schematizing regimes either in conceptualization or experience. But then the question becomes what is the background to all schematization, That is the nondual! We only know when we are conscious discernability within schematizations. But there must be a

ground of all schematization out of which schematization as emergent regimes emerge, perdure and pass away in our living experience and conceptualization. That cannot happen except on a background of indiscernability. In fact, indiscernability suffuses all our experience in as much as what ever we do not discern, from each other remains part of the indiscernible. In that sense the nondual is immanent. But as the background to all schematization it is transcendent. But actually it is neither one nor the other nor both. It is something else beyond either the transcendent or immanent from which that distinction arises, within which it perdures, and into which it passes away. The nondual is the fourth item, i.e. the source from which arising occurs, against which perduring in spacetime is seen, and back into which all discernments vanish. The very fact that you see discernments arising, perduring, and passing away means that there must be such an source. Nonduality acts like a meta-system to all schematization. In other words if we consider all schematization as a "system" then the meta-system that is the complement to it must have a source, origin, arena and boundary. The nondual is the source beyond experience and conceptualization of this arising and passing away, that is why it cannot ever be captured by either experience or conceptualization. When discernments arise and pass away they have origins and sinks in consciousness. When they perdure in consciousness they appear within the arena of consciousness. And to the extent that the discernments are discerned themselves then they indicate the boundaries of the arena of consciousness. All four of those roles are played by the nondual to all of schematization. Yet the nondual is not different from schematization itself. Because until now few have asked the question as to what the matter of discernments are made up of in themselves. Discernments are made up of variations in the nondual substrate. It is not just that the nondual is the background of the schematization, they are the "system" of all schematization itself when we look deeply into its core. This is because schematization takes many forms providing emergent levels of

organization related to the experience and conceptualization of spacetime dimensionality. But all of what is organized are discernments of discernments. In other words we do not depart from discernment in schematization, Schematization is merely meta-discernment, because all discernments occur within schematizations. But all the elements of an organization of a schematization, are themselves only discernments, that means they only have their nature diacritically within their schemas, and also within the entire hierarchy of schemas, and that means within the nondual background of all the schemas. So ultimately the schemas are only an internal differentiation of the nondual from itself, which is indiscernible. That means ultimately all concepts and all experiences are indiscernible in spite of the fact they are apparently discernable. If this were not the case we could not connect experiences to each other, or concepts to each other. It is a single fabric whose warpings are both the “system” of all schematization and the background of the unschematized at the same time. But the single fabric is not continuous or discrete, but something else, something deeper, i.e. the nondual. When I say “the nondual” I am really naming something unnameable. The naming of the unnameable is not the same as the unnameable itself. Realizing that this name is a pointer to something deeper that is still not a phenomena, but gives rise to all phenomena as discernable out of the indiscernible is to begin to approach the meaning of the term “the nondual.”

In meditation, if we are persistent and have the right view we run right into the nondual. But many who meditate never realize it, because they are caught up in the experiences that they are having in the meditation process. Rather to notice the interaction of the experiences with the background out of which the experiences arise and to which they return and against which they are seen is to start to have a feeling for the nondual in meditation. The nondual is the entire context of meditation within which we have experiences. Meditation is a lot like science in as much as you have to think special

things and do special things in order to be meditating. In science you have to think special things and do special things to be a scientist. The only difference is that in meditation you are thinking and doing those special things to yourself, while in science you are thinking and doing them to other things, except in the special case where you are doing them to yourself as if you were something else. Thus we realize that between these two extremes of special conceptualization and special experience the middle is mundane living, everything that is not special, that is common to everyone. The nondual encompasses both the special practices and the general practices equally, but because the mundane are in the middle between these two extremes of specialty it is the mundane that is the closest key to the nondual. The mundane represents the unenlightened. The nondual is the secret within the unenlightenment of the mundane. Once it is found then it is raised to a special practice and thus becomes a meditative technique. But meditation per se is not needed to realize the nondual, in fact, meditation can be a hindrance to realizing the nondual because it produces special concepts and experiences that might be thought to be the content of enlightenment. But there is no content of enlightenment. Anyone who tells you that there is content to enlightenment is engaging in sophistry and should be avoided. Enlightenment has no special circumstances, because it is merely the realization of the nondual ground in all discernments whether conceptual or experiential. That is what the Buddhists call the trace of tracelessness. Taoists call it the great ultimate. All words are dependent on schematization in order to have a referent. What is not schematized cannot have a referent. So words that talk about the unschematized are empty. But it is precisely those empty words, like *emptiness* or *void* which are used to point toward the nondual. What happens in our search for enlightenment is this. We build our lives around a search for this elusive state, strive for it with all our might, encounter many wonderful experiences along the way, and some quite horrible experiences too, and think lofty thoughts using

empty words. And one day we realize that it was all an illusion. At that moment when we realize that the project of reaching enlightenment was all an illusion it is as if the ship of our project to find enlightenment sinks into the sea of the nondual, and that is enlightenment. We had associated all our ego and our whole selves with every fiber of our Being into that project and it suddenly vanishes along with everyone aboard including ourselves. That reversal between the ground of schematization and schematization itself, does not change anything except our realization that all schematization is only made up of that ground warped to appear as if it were something different when it is actually not different. Discernables sink into the sea of the indiscernible. But in that sinking we realize something important about discernables, they are really at their heart only the indiscernible. And that is an important realization for our understanding of the ultimate nature of all discernables whether they appear in the special cases of meditation and science or in the general case of the mundane lifeworld. Every trace is made up of the traceless. Every trace is the great ultimate. In Quran it says that every where you look, *There* is the face of your Lord. Indiscernibles are more refined than discernables. Thus when we understand the discernables through the indiscernibles then we refine our understanding of concepts and experience, and if those concepts are theories and those experiences are experiments then we refine those. It is like the relation of non-standard analysis to standard analysis. Nonstandard analysis uses infinitesimals. Standard analysis does not. Nonstandard analysis is an addition to Standard analysis that does not change anything about standard analysis except that you can solve problems that you cannot solve otherwise. Infinitesimals are rejected from Standard Analysis just because they are indiscernible. We can think of the relation of the Nondual to the “system” Discernable Schematization on this analogy. If there are infinitesimal indiscernibles then there is no way to tell the continuum from the things we discern from the continuum. Nonstandard analysis is just more comprehensive than

Standard analysis but dependent on an extra assumption that infinitesimals are discernable. Nonduality is a similar sort of addition to all systems of discernability. Its power is that it does not make blind assumptions about the nature of discernability, whether spiritual, mundane or scientific. Rather it incorporates into the realms of discernability an inherent knowledge about the nature of discernable itself, a kind of self-reflexivity that is more sophisticated than the normal blind assumptions. Since there is no nondual meditative and philosophical tradition in the West we have little access to this more sophisticated self-reflexive position. By giving ourselves access to it we increase the sophistication of our understanding of not just the various flourishing meditative traditions, but also our mundane lifeworld and the world of science.

Non-nihilistic Distinctions

There are many meditative techniques that yield myriad experiences and are understood with myriad conceptualizations. Nonduality gives us a way to make distinctions between these spiritual ways and discriminate between genuine and non-genuine spiritual ways with respect to their nonduality. Just because they are not nondual does not mean that they are bad, or good. Rather it only means that some ways approximate the nondual better than others. For instance, if one is after a particular kind of experience in practice, then it is less likely to be securely rooted in the nondual. If ones experience is conceptually understood by a dogmatic way of approaching meditation or other practices then it is less likely to exemplify the nondual. What the nondual allows us to do is make non-nihilistic distinctions between the various meditative ways with respect to their nonduality. An this ability to make non-nihilistic distinctions spills over into the ability to discriminate in our mundane lifeworld and in the scientific realm. It may be counter intuitive but the very fact that nonduality is rooted in indiscernability makes possible sharp clear discriminations. The fact is that life is full of things that appear

different and are really the same or things that appear the same but are really different. We discriminate between things all the time accepting some and rejecting others and allowing yet others to just exist without passing judgment. But if we know that every discernment is actually made up of indiscernibles then when we make a cut with discrimination then we are aware that we need to make a fine cut, and that cut should be along the lines indicated from within the phenomena or within the conceptual system being discriminated. As Plato says we want to cut through the joints not through the bones when we carve up the phenomena under inspection. That is to say we want to make discriminations that are motivated from the nature of the phenomena itself not just through the imposition of an arbitrary grid. Nonduality undermines our grids and allows us to see though them easier and therefore allows us to make finer distinctions motivated from the phenomena rather than imposed on the phenomena when we discriminate. Our discriminations can then be more like those of a surgeon with a scalpel rather than a woodsman with an ax. This leads to the ability to make non-nihilistic distinctions better. Our culture generates nihilistic extreme artificial opposites that seem to be at war with each other. It is the production of nihilism that is the heart of our worldview. Anything that increases our ability to make non-nihilistic distinctions is welcome in such an environment. Nonduality is one such resource that we should not abandon before we give it a good try. In science and technology the ability to make non-nihilistic distinctions is sorely lacking. It is because nonduality could inform our decisions and make them less likely to be nihilistic that we believe that nonduality could be a boon to science, because it could be a source to ground scientific and technical distinction making especially ethical distinctions. At least this is our hope. Nonduality does not depend on any ultimate source of meaning an authority for making distinctions. Rather it directs us at the phenomena without clouding our gaze with preconceived maps of the territory. We know

all discernments that appear in our maps are distortions of the territory. So nonduality allows us to see the territory itself most clearly and to make our distinctions based on the "realities on the ground." Distinctions motivated from these realities of the phenomena are more grounded and less likely to be nihilistic especially when one realizes that the artificial nihilistic opposites that are fighting over the results are ultimately in all probability just the same. Thus some other criteria that comes from the ground itself, not the competing maps of different parties fighting over the same turf should be used to decide the issue. Nonduality helps compensate for our desensitization to the phenomena and helps resensitize us to our world. It clears the ground of nihilism and restores natural opposites. But it also allows us to discriminate between invisibles, i.e. non-perceptually based non-nihilistic distinctions can be made based on the same sort of searching and exploring that allows us to make non-nihilistic distinctions between the visibles. In other words nonduality is neither visible nor invisible but something different which allows the distinction to appear. Making the distinction among the visible and the invisibles are ultimately the same in reality. The invisibles are merely a finer form of the visibles, the visibles are merely an exemplification of the invisibles. Making non-nihilistic distinctions is a fine art, which needs lots of practice, and ultimately is based on ones intuition put into practice. But all those things that Science now defers making distinctions about which have impacts on the lives of creatures of earth can on the basis of nonduality be non-nihilistically distinguished with the help of a practice that leads to the realization of the nondual within oneself for others.

A Science of the Nondual

Once we realize that the relation of nonduality to science is like the relation of Non-standard Analysis to Standard Analysis through the acceptance of infinitesimals, then we can see by this analogy how we might add nonduality

to science without changing very much but by doing so putting science in a more powerful framework for understanding the discernables on the basis of indiscernibles, and vice versa. But this brings the question of whether there can be a science of the nondual that complements the nonduality of science. And here we are really calling for an example of the realization of nonduality in science. We are calling for the building of the bridge that we mentioned in the beginning of this essay. This is because if we refine science by adding to it a realization of the importance of the nondual then we will by that produce a platform for the counter refinement of the concept of the nondual itself. This is because everything is ultimately nondual, and the more we know about everything, the finer appreciation we have of the nonduality that is exemplified by everything. So if we can produce a form of science which is specifically nondual then we can see what this means for the refinement of the concept of the nondual. Here instead of competing philosophical positions refining the nonconcept of the nondual we would have all of nature itself contributing to that refinement. And that is a powerful idea that nonduality itself might be further refined by harnessing what is good about Western Science, its discovery of myriad emergent phenomena that all ultimately point toward the nondual and indicate its character. Meditative schools by themselves are only half the story. Rather we see instead a Renaissance when science combines with meditative schools to attempt to refine the concept of nonduality even further. This provides a testbed for the conceptions of the various meditative schools for them do appreciate their mutual difference and contrast that with what Science discovers about nonhuman nature in the light of the human endeavor of understanding nature. Our position is that there is wisdom in the difference between the various genuinely nondual traditions, and that they have much to learn from each other. But there is also wisdom in making the non-nihilistic distinction based on nonduality between genuine and non-genuine meditative traditions, or even within various traditions between genuine and non-genuine

accretive elements. And there is also wisdom in the contrast between the specialization of meditation and the specialization of science in terms of what they learn about the self and about nature, i.e. non-self. And finally there is wisdom in the difference between these special approaches to the discipline of consciousness or nature and the non-special mundane lifeworld. All of these differences are sources of wisdom from a nondual perspective. And we need all the wisdom we can get in these trying times at the near of our time as a species and in the midst of the apocalypse we have caused for all the other species vanishing and experiencing their end of time. If we survive without other species we will be greatly impoverished, we will be what Nietzsche called *The Last Man* who merely blinks in his amazement and incomprehension of what he has done. It is not advent of the Uberman, but Nietzsche's vision of the Last Man that we should fear. The Uberman is closer to the earth than the declining man (who is declining because everything is declining around him) to whom Nietzsche's Zarathustra spoke on his way down from his cave. There is much in Nietzsche that is similar to the stance of Mahayana Buddhism. One way to understand the Uberman is as Nietzsche's distorted imagining of the Bodhisatva, or Taoist sage. We prefer a combination of the two like Stonehouse. The Uberman is closer to the earth than we are. Getting closer to the earth is a matter of getting the veils that blind us out of the way. The royal road to that is to admit the possibility of nonduality into our worldview and allow it to transform our worldview, and thus our science and technology. Nondual Science will lead to a more refined Science of Nonduality which in turn will lead to a deeper Nondual Science. This is a positive spiral which we would like to substitute for the negative spiral of Globalization we are now caught within in which Science and Technology as the unwilling and willing servants of the overwhelmingly dominant Western Worldview spread corruption and death across the face of the earth while espousing Freedom and Democracy. *Nondual Science* is our hope for the future in which *The*

Science of the Nondual becomes the source of our reality rather than the dark unconscious of a supposedly neutral science and nihilistic technology which is enveloping everything in what Heidegger called *the enframing*. Only the nondual can stand against the appropriation of everything by *the enframing* by the nihilistic opposites fighting over the championship in the destruction of life.