

THE ENCHANTED UNIVERSE

While technology is occupying an ever-growing place in our modern world, an increasing longing is developing for a return to our roots in nature, to the enchantment and awe of existence, to the fantastic realms of imagination, to the symbolic richness of myth and fairytale.

Join us at the Pari Center in this journey through the forests of imagination, reclaiming a territory we once roamed, recovering the soul of the world.



"Enchantment is the experience of sheer wonder. It returns us to a state of mind, and condition of the world, as undivided concrete magic: equally natural and cultural, material and spiritual, inner and outer."
Patrick Curry

PARI, ITALY
AUG. 29 - SEPT. 5, 2022

with **Jessica Ball**
Bernard Carr, Patrick Curry,
Alex Gomez-Marin, Ruth E. Kastner,
Alison MacLeod, Hester Reeve

Chaired by **Shantena Sabbadini**

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August 29 – September 5, 2022 in Pari, Italy

With Jessica Ball, Bernard Carr, Patrick Curry, Alex Gomez-Marin, Ruth Kastner,
Alison MacLeod, Hester Reeve.
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reclaiming a territory we once roamed, recovering the soul of the world.

This will be an informal meeting with presentations by experts followed by
roundtable discussions. The cost of the event is 1700.00 euros. The event fee
includes a 7-night stay in private accommodation and all meals. It also includes
activities, materials, sessions, and workshops. The event starts on Monday August
29 at 19:00 with a welcome dinner and ends on Monday September 5 after lunch.

While technology is occupying an ever growing place in our modern world and the
predominance of abstraction gets us farther and farther removed from the living
world, an increasing longing is developing for a return to our roots in nature, to the
enchantment and awe of existence, to the fantastic realms of imagination, to the
symbolic richness of myth and fairytale.

We are meaning making animals, we are explorers and adventurers of the symbolic
dimension. We feel that our life is worth living only when our experiences speak to
us, when we live in conversation with the mystery, when we commune with it.

Participating in an event at the Pari Center means not only meeting with scholars
and experts but living for a week in a medieval village, mingling with the tiny local
population, eating local dishes and drinking local wines, appreciating the beauty of
the surrounding countryside, and participating in a very gentle way of life far from
the frenzy of work and city living. David Peat compared Pari to an alchemical
vessel—a place where transformation can come about—as well as an opportunity
to pause for a moment and re-assess one's life. It's a unique opportunity open to
everyone.

The Presenters

Jessica Ball

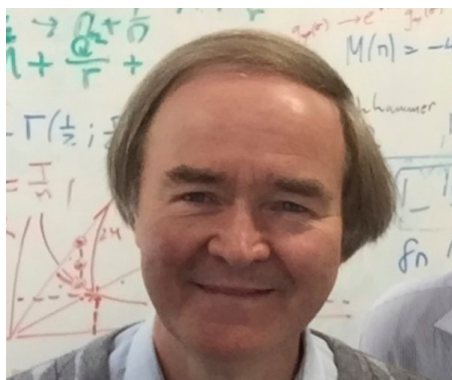
Jessica Ball is a creative facilitator dedicated to working towards positive social and environmental change through transformative learning, dialogue and the value of creativity. Jessica has worked with a diverse range of organisations across sectors from corporate and international development to education and charities. She is currently studying a PhD in ecolinguistics at the University of Gloucestershire, under the supervision of Professor Arran Stibbe, author and founder of the International Ecolinguistics Association. Jessica is researching 'the body, nature and dialogue', an exploration of ecological identity.



Presentation – The Body, Nature and Dialogue

This work explores the language and narratives of ecological identity – what an ecological identity is; how an ecological identity is formed; and how expanding one's sense of self to include the ecological could be of benefit, or bring about change to the individual, organisations or society. The work seeks to reveal emergent positive discourse on ecological identity; a language that can counter the dominant language and narrative of technology and the machine in relation to our human identity and ecological sense of self. Words such as reciprocity, gratitude and gift: from the very nature of the things they are describing, require an embodied, creative experience to truly understand their meaning. Experiencing language in an embodied sense supports the transformation towards something; a language that is both nurturing and activating; that can reconnect us to the web of life, and our interdependent relationship with nature and each other.

Bernard Carr



Bernard Carr is Emeritus Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy at Queen Mary University of London. His professional area of research is cosmology and astrophysics and includes such topics as the early universe, dark matter, black holes and the anthropic principle. For his PhD he studied the first second of the Universe, working under the supervision of Stephen Hawking at the Institute of Astronomy in Cambridge and the California Institute of Technology. He was elected to a Fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1975 and moved to Queen Mary College in 1985. He has also held Visiting Professorships at Kyoto University, Tokyo University, the Fermi National Accelerator

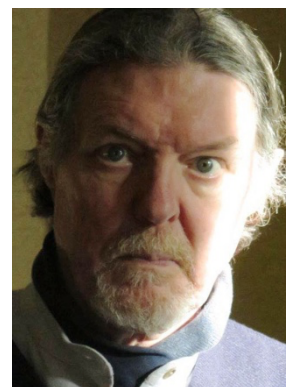
Laboratory and the Canadian Institute for Theoretical Astrophysics. He is the author of nearly three hundred scientific papers and the books *Universe or Multiverse?* and *Quantum Black Holes*. Beyond his professional field, he is interested in the role of consciousness in physics and in an expanded paradigm which accommodates mind. He also has a long-standing interest in the relationship between science and religion. He was President of the Society for Psychical Research in 2000-2004 and is currently President of the Scientific and Medical Network.

Presentation – The View Beyond: Magic and Enchantment at the Frontiers of Physics

The history of physics might be regarded as the expansion of our consciousness to ever larger and smaller scales, as illustrated by the enchanting image of the Cosmic Uroborus. At each stage in this expansion, the frontiers in both the microscopic and macroscopic domains reveal a world that is magical in that it deviates from common-sense reality and imaginal in that it is a creation of mind. Until empirical data emerges to support the model, it might therefore be regarded as bordering on philosophy and this usually engenders scepticism from more conservative physicists. We have now reached a special stage at which the micro and macro physics/philosophy frontiers have merged. This occurs at the top of the Cosmic Uroborus, where the very small (M-theory) meets the very large (the Multiverse) and the physical Universe itself originates (the Big Bang). So does this represent the completion of physics or the need for a new post-materialist paradigm, accommodating mind and the realm of imagination? I take the latter view and argue that a feature of the next paradigm must be a higher-dimensional perspective which radically revises our concepts of space and time. In this case, an even more magical and enchanting reality may be revealed.

Patrick Curry

Patrick Curry lives in London, England. He holds a Ph.D. from University College London and has lectured at the universities of Kent and Bath Spa. He edits an online journal, *The Ecological Citizen* (<http://ecologicalcitizen.net>). His most recent books include *Enchantment: Wonder in Modern Life* (2019), *Ecological Ethics: An Introduction*, rev. edn (2017) and *Deep Roots in a Time of Frost: Essays on Tolkien* (2014). He is a Companion of Ruskin's educational charity, the Guild of St George. More information and work is available on his website: www.patrickcurry.co.uk



Presentation – What is Enchantment, and What Follows?

We shall consider the experience of enchantment closely in two ways. One is through some personal accounts of deep wonder. The other is by exploring its chief

characteristics, dynamics and conditions. These include relationality, participation, wildness, metaphor and paradox, and 'concrete magic' (Max Weber). Although enchantment is a universal human experience it is also a highly distinctive one, so it is important as well to recognise what it is not. That leads us to consider the nature of disenchantment, especially deliberate disenchantment as part of the project of modernity. We shall also think through some challenging implications of taking enchantment seriously for being 'in the moment', for Oneness, for contesting materialism, and for progressive programmes of change. Finally, we shall enquire into the possibility of a way of life oriented to wonder.

Alex Gomex-Marin

Dr Àlex Gómez-Marín is a theoretical physicist turned cognitive neuroscientist. He earned his PhD in Physics in 2008 from the University of Barcelona, where we studied the microscopic origins of the arrow of time. He also holds a Masters in Biophysics from the same university. He was a Juan de la Cierva Fellow at the EMBL-CRG Centre for Genomic Regulation where he investigated the neurobiology



of action and perception in fruit flies, and a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Champalimaud Center for the Unknown in Lisbon, Portugal, where he deployed a computational ethology approach to establish neuro-ethological principles in worms, flies and mice. Since 2016 he is the head of the Behavior of Organisms Laboratory at the Instituto de Neurociencias in Alicante, Spain, where he has been a Ramón y Cajal Fellow, and where he currently is an Associate Professor of the Spanish Research Council. His latest research concentrates on consciousness and cognition in humans in real-world situations, combining high-resolution experiments with theoretical biology and continental philosophy. He is the author of a number of

research articles, and he is shortly to publish his first book in Spanish on the 'tales not told' in current neuroscience. Born in Barcelona, he now lives in the Mediterranean coast of Alicante and has two daughters and a cat. You can follow him on social media at @behaviOrganisms and read his work here: <https://behavior-of-organisms.org/read-us>

Presentation – Science and Magic: A Disturbing Charming Braid

Many people today seem to tolerate real magic only if it is fake, and to denounce as fake magic that which purports itself as real. Modernity is disenchanted, or so it seems. Here I will explore and challenge the idea that science and magic ward each other off. Apart from drawing from current research in the life sciences and the philosophy of mind, we will revise some major stories hardly told, not only to the general public but to scientists themselves (Isaac Newton was a magician, Francis Bacon an alchemist, Wolfgang Pauli a mystic, Marie Curie participated in seances,

William James searched for scientific a proof of life after death). In this way we may untangle a knot whereby what is exceptional has been presented as a rule, and vice versa. It may turn out that we do not need to re-enchant science and nature if we realize that modernity was never really disenchanted.

Ruth E. Kastner

Ruth E. Kastner earned her M.S. in Physics and Ph.D. in History and Philosophy of Science from the University of Maryland. Since that time, she has taught widely and conducted research in Foundations of Physics, particularly in interpretations of quantum theory. She is the author of 3 books: *The Transactional Interpretation of Quantum Theory: The Reality of Possibility* (Cambridge University Press, 2012; 2nd edition forthcoming in Fall 2021), *Understanding Our Unseen Reality: Solving Quantum Riddles* (Imperial College Press, 2015); and *Adventures In Quantumland: Exploring Our Unseen Reality* (World Scientific, 2019). She has presented talks and interviews throughout the world and in video recordings on the interpretational challenges of quantum theory.



Presentation – Quantum Physics and the Return of Enchantment

Cultural modernity has been rightly criticized by Patrick Curry for its dubious project of “the rational mastery of nature, including human nature...It is therefore contemptuous of the wellsprings of life and its enchantment in the bodymind, the female, and the Earth.” This workshop will explore the ways in which modernity, as expressed in the goals and practices of science since the Newtonian revolution, has reified abstractions while denying essential reality. In so doing, it has mistaken the ‘map’ for the ‘territory’ and has lost its way. A key aspect of this inverted world view is the mechanistic nature of classical physics, which forecloses genuine creativity and life-giving meaning: machines do not create, do not initiate; they behave only as they are programmed to behave. Yet out of this sterile wasteland has arisen the desert flower of quantum physics. The notorious failure of mechanistic classical physics to describe the subtler levels of Nature makes clear that ultimately, life will not be suppressed and existence will not be mechanized. This workshop will explore the ways in which quantum physics promises a new way forward, while resonating with ancient wisdom traditions long suppressed. Of course, there are still many who want to mechanize quantum theory by forcing it back into the ‘rack’ of modernity through the imposition of misplaced notions of ‘causality’. We will discuss why such efforts are doomed, and how we can restore a world view in which quantum theory describes the inner source of creativity and meaning, as well as its expression in the outer world.

Alison MacLeod

Alison MacLeod is the author of six books. Her new novel, *Tenderness*, was a *New York Times* 'Best Book of 2021', a 'Book of the Year' for *The Spectator*, a 'Best New Book' for PEOPLE Magazine, and *The Sunday Times* 'Historical Fiction Book of the



Month'. Her last novel, *Unexploded*, was long-listed for the Man-Booker Prize for Fiction and named one of the *Observer's* 'Books of the Year'. It was serialised for BBC radio and optioned for television. Her most recent story collection, *All the Beloved Ghosts*, was shortlisted for Canada's Governor General's Award, named one of the *Guardian's* 'Best Books of 2017', and shortlisted for The 2018 Edge Hill Short Story Prize for best short story collection in the UK and Ireland. She is often a guest on BBC programmes and is an

occasional contributor *The Sunday Times*, the *Guardian* and the *Telegraph*. She has appeared at numerous literary festivals internationally and has been a guest speaker at universities throughout the UK. Professor of Contemporary Fiction at the University of Chichester until 2018, she now writes full-time and is Visiting Professor at Chichester. Currently, she is also a Fellow of the Royal Literary Fund for the Cambridge University Researcher Development Centre.

Presentation – The Deep Imagination, Metaphor, and “All’s One” Vision

In our era of 'fake news', the human imagination often seems faulty. It 'makes stuff up'. It 'messes with the facts'. With instances of literary censorship on the rise, imagined worlds are also increasingly deemed dangerous. At the same time, some exponents of artificial intelligence argue that AI will render the labours of the imagination redundant. Yet, to arrive at a better future, we must imagine it first. How do we re-discover the vital nature of the deep imagination?

In this session, participants will be invited to reflect on and renew their own sense of the imagination's transformative force. As children, we had an innate understanding of the creative plasticity of the world. We knew that all seeing is *seeing as*. A cloud in the sky was a galloping horse. A tree was a castle. A stick was a wand. 'Deep imagination' arises from this agile, seeing-as form of perception – and metaphor is its fundamental atom of expression. Metaphorical thinking yokes experience and knowledge; empathy and intuition; body and spirit. It locates us within 'threshold states' in which we can, through acts of curiosity, attention and play, see through to the living flux and 'connectivity' of the world.

What is a good metaphor? What is its magic? What is the power of metaphorical thinking in our daily world? In this presentation, Alison MacLeod will consider these questions and offer creative approaches towards metaphorical thinking and a re-engagement with the deep imagination.

Hester Reeve

Hester Reeve's practice encompasses live art, philosophy, drawing, David Bohm's 'Dialogue' and social sculpture.

She is interested in the relationship between critical thinking and human agency in everyday life, particularly when it is risked through the figure of 'the artist' (where what constitutes an artist is broadly conceived and not exclusive to art school training).

Recent public works have been staged at Tanzquartier, Vienna, Tate Britain (working under the umbrella of The Emily Davison Lodge with Olivia Plender) and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.



Hester Reeve is Reader in Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam University.

Presentation – Brain Seed: Planting the Mind in the Non-Human Universe

David Bohm once commented: Why does the individual first identify with the body rather than with the universe? For me, this insightful yet somehow humble provocation opens up the opportunity to re-wild the brain and with this the re-enchantment of the mind-body within the unfathomable infinity of all that is (and all that 'isn't'). Might not the mind-body and the brain itself have emotional or feeling-based needs that we continually fail to recognise and which can only be fulfilled by such a re-identification of ourselves within the larger context of existence/the universe?

Brain Seed: Planting the Mind in the Non-Human Universe will be a speculative adventure explored through practices of art, practices of philosophy and the ideas of David Bohm. Images will be given space to dig the ground up but language will inevitably be called upon as a fertilizer (but this will be language cultivated to tremble at the root of its origin).

