

Experience and Reality

by Rebecca Bynum (June 2010)

Previously. I have [argued](#) that contrary to the assumption of most contemporary philosophers, it is entirely possible that mind exists as a reality in and of itself and this independent reality is perceived and utilized by the material brain as are other aspects of reality. And the current materialist vogue of dismissing the reality of the non-material amounts to an attack on the reality of mind. For example, in *How the Mind Works*, Steven Pinker condescendingly asks,

How does the spook interact with solid matter? How does an ethereal nothing respond to flashes, pokes and beeps and get arms and legs to move? Another problem is the overwhelming evidence that the mind is the activity of the brain. The supposedly immaterial soul, we now know, can be bisected with a knife, altered by chemicals.[\[1\]](#)

Therefore, each human being creates his own “mind bubble” of experience, and therefore psychology, not to mention morality, is reduced to a series of electro-chemical “flashes, pokes and beeps” in the individual brain and the mental process, that is to say our thoughts, may be controlled, and perhaps one day entirely controlled, by chemical means.

The modern scientific tendency to explain all experience in material terms has engendered a marked hostility toward any experience not so readily explainable, especially that of the value-realm, love, or even what one might term “religious experience.” Today, such life-changing occurrences are likely to be diagnosed as schizophrenic delusions and anti-psychotic medications quickly prescribed rather than to be taken seriously as actual, meaningful, personal experiences. As Thomas Scheff explains,[\[2\]](#) this *labeling* (diagnoses coupled with drug treatment) creates social isolation of the patient which reinforces his

feelings of disconnectedness and confusion which may in turn prolong the mental crisis and even turn it into a chronic state of psychological dysfunction. When one considers that often these crises are the result of an initial spiritual experience (which can cause temporary disorientation) we begin to see a tendency to isolate and medicate those with the wrong ideas. Spiritual birth can sometimes be quite traumatic, but when it happens in a society that labels this kind of sudden awakening as mental illness, it can be devastating, even life-threatening to the individuals involved.

Scheff contends that recovery from psychosis is directly related to the patient maintaining a connection with at least one other person through a loving relationship – someone who sticks with him through thick and thin.