

Crack in the Cosmic Egg



Ontological refers to the nature of being, existence, or reality itself. It is a term rooted in ontology, a branch of philosophy that asks “Is consciousness a fundamental part of existence?” Joseph Chilton Pearce discovered and personally experienced an aspect, quality or state of mind that interacts, in dynamic and reciprocal ways, with what we call reality. His collected insights and writings invite us to ponder and explore; ‘Is this quality of mind and reality two sides of the same coin, and if so, what ‘magical’ lives could we live?’

“We need a broader look at “mind” than the biogenetically indoctrinated psychologists have given. We are aware of our reality-adjusted thinking, our ordinary, socially-oriented, logical, rational thinking. We are less aware of another mode of thinking with which we are continually but more peripherally involved.”

“The goal is nothing less than (to access, develop and creatively participate) in the very ontological underpinnings of things, the reality-shaping way by which events come about.” jcp

Joe used the metaphor of the *Cosmic Egg* to describe the totality of our culturally conditioned reality—the shell of assumptions, beliefs, and logical constructs that shape how we perceive the world. This is not just a poetic image; it’s a cognitive enclosure. The egg represents the mental and cultural constructs that define our perceived reality, language, education, social norms, and institutional systems. The egg is “Cosmic” because it encompasses not just our personal identity but the collective worldview we inherit and accept without question.

Understanding the nature of *Cracks* in this sealed reality is Pearce’s invitation to transcend that enclosure. Cracks represent the moment of rupture—when the rigid shell of conditioned thought begins to break, allowing expanded consciousness, new capacities and creative freedom. It symbolizes a breakthrough in perception, often triggered by deep insight, mystical experience, or radical questioning. Joe saw this crack as essential for human evolution, enabling us to move beyond mechanistic thinking into intuitive, imaginative, and heart-centered awareness. Pearce wasn’t just theorizing—he was offering a blueprint for transformation. As Alan Watts once described, the ‘crack’ isn’t destruction; it’s emergence. It’s the phoenix rising from the ashes of conventional thought.

“I began writing “*The Crack in the Cosmic Egg*” in the late fifties as a protest having been called mad by my colleagues. It took twelve years to write because of all the things that were happening.” jcp

From *Crack in the Cosmic Egg*.

Mind over matter is a misleading notion, and not the issue here. I have, however, traced the *relation* of mind and reality, as complementary poles of a continuum, and have found, for instance, that a spontaneous healing in a terminal patient occurs in the same way that a discovery forms in science, an illumination in religion, or that change of concept which turns the student into the mature physicist.

When the Hindu walks through a pit of white-hot charcoal, or the scientist experiences his *Eureka!* that opens new levels of reality, each uses the same reality-shaping function of mind. This book traces the pattern of development underlying this function, paying particular attention to the formation of answers to passionate questions, or the filing of empty categories proposed by creative imagination.

The empty category proposed by a scientist, for instance, brings about its own fulfillment in the same way, and for the same reasons, that a popular disease, (COVID for example), is entertained, promoted by publicity, feared by all, and watched for in the contemporary form of physician-priest and patient-suppliant, until it fulfills itself on a statistically predictable and self-verifying basis.

While my book explores this mirroring of thinking and experience, I avoid philosophical arguments, such as the “reality” of the world. What I have explored, in this personal search, is the way we experience a world, and, more importantly, the way this relation influences that world so experienced.

“Then Jesus said to the centurion, ‘Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.’ And the servant was healed at that very moment.” Matthew 8:13, to emphasize the creative power of the state Joe is describing.

There is a relationship between what we *think* is out there in the world and what we experience as being out there. There is a way in which the energy of thought and the energy of matter modify each other and interrelate. A kind of mirroring takes place between our mind and our reality.

We used to believe that our perceptions, our seeing, hearing, feeling and so on, were reactions to active impingements on them by the “world out there.” We thought our perceptions then sent these outside messages to the brain where we put together a reasonable facsimile of what *was* out there. We know now that our concepts, our notions or basic assumptions, actively *direct* our percepts. We see, feel, and hear according to what Bruner calls a “selective program of the mind.” Our mind *directs* our sensory apparatus every bit as much as our sensory apparatus *informs* the mind.

A change of world view can change the world viewed. And I am not referring to such parlor games as influencing the roll of dice. The stakes are higher, the relationships more subtle and far-reaching.

For instance, as a young man I once found myself in a certain somnambulistic, trance-like state of mind which I will later in this book define as autistic. In the peculiarities of this frame of reference I suddenly knew myself to be impervious to pain or injury. With upward of a dozen witnesses I held the glowing tips of cigarettes against my palms, cheeks, eyelids, grinding them out on those sensitive areas. Finally, I held the tips of several cigarettes tightly between my lips and blew sparks over my amazed companions. To the real consternation of my dormitory fellows, there were no after-effects, no blisters, no later signs of my folly. This stimulated the physics majors to test the temperature of a cigarette tip, which they found to be around 1380° F. My contact with such heat had been quite genuine, steady and prolonged.

Later, when I did a bit of research on Hindu fire-walking, I understood quite well the state of mind involved, though I never again achieved it myself. It was apparent to me, however, that I had suspended my ordinary thinking, and was using a mode of mind strongly suggestive of early childhood.

“Unquestioned acceptance of the given,” was Jean Piaget’s description of the early child.

At the same time, I was *aware* of myself though experiencing some dissociation within, rather as though I were sitting and watching myself.

Several things intrigued me about this venture. First, of course, why were the ordinary reactions of live flesh to extreme heat not operative under that strange state of mind? What *was* the state of mind? Could the reality of this state be different from the reality of ordinary thinking, and if so, was there a relative and arbitrary quality to *any* reality state? What were the possibilities of this kind of thinking, particularly if it could be controlled by a fully operational, conscious person? (I had surely *not* been fully operational, and the cigarette trick was the only expression of imperviousness my imagination could seize on.)

Reality is not a fixed entity. It is a contingent interlocking of moving events. And events do not just happen to us. We are an integral part of every event. We enter into the shape of events, even as we long for an absolute in which to rest.

It may be just this longing for an absolute in which our concepts might *not* have to be responsible for our percepts, and so indirectly our reality, that explains the hostility of our ordinary intellect to these shadowy modes of mind.

Our world view is a cultural pattern that shapes our mind from birth. It happens to us as fate. We speak of a child becoming “reality-adjusted” as he responds and becomes a cooperating strand in the social web. We are shaped by this web; it determines the way we think, the way we see what we see. It is our pattern of representation and our response sustains the pattern.

Yet any world view is arbitrary to an indeterminable extent. This arbitrariness is difficult to recognize since our world to view is determined by our world view.

Nevertheless, I remembered that strange world in which fire could not burn, and entered into a crash program to find that crack in the egg that we might restructure events more in our favor. During a six-day fasts, I subjected (my first wife Patty, her body laden with cancer), to a total “brainwash” day and night, never letting her mind alone. Through all her waking hours I read her literature related to healing, and while she slept I endlessly repeated suggestions of hope and strength. I had no thought of how the restructuring would take place, but in a few hours, some three weeks later, she was suddenly healed and quite well.

We traipsed back to the (medical) temple, I with misgivings over such a risk of the new structure, to have the priests declare us clean. And that we were duly declared and recorded, with the reaction pattern among the many doctors of that research center running the gamut. From emotional talk about miracles, the brass-tack realists soon rebounded with dire warnings that some fluke had occurred and that we should present ourselves regularly for constant watches for the “inevitable reoccurrence;” just the sort of doubt-category I would have avoided at all costs.

The way by which our reality picture is changed provides a clue to the whole process. A change of concept changes one’s reality to some degree, since concepts direct percepts as much as percepts impinge on concepts. There are peculiarities and exceptions, such as my no-fireburn venture, by which our inherited fabric is bypassed temporarily in small private ways. These are linear thrusts that break through the circles of acceptancy making up our reality.

Metanola is the Greek word for *conversion*: a “fundamental transformation of mind.” It is the process by which concepts are reorganized. *Metanola* is a specialized, intensified adult state for the same world-view development found shaping the mind of the infant. Formerly associated with religion, *metanola* proves to be the way by which all genuine education takes place. Michael Polanyi points out that a “conversion” shapes the mind of the student into the physicist. *Metanola* is a seizure by the discipline given total attention, and a restructuring of the attending mind. This reshaping of the mind is the principal key to the reality function.

For instance, in my wife’s case, a grandmother who had died of cancer was the family legend, and all the females scrupulously avoided all the maneuvers rumored to have possibly caused the horror. Then, in neat, diabolical two-year intervals, my wife’s favorite aunt died of cancer; her mother developed cancer but survived the radical-surgery mutilations; her father then followed and died in spite of extensive medical machinations. Naturally two years after burying her father, my wife’s own debacle occurred, in spite of her constant submissions to the high priests for inspections, tests, and, no doubt, full confessionals. The fact that all these carcinomas were of different sorts, and on opposite sides of the family, was incidental. Few people understood my fury when the medical center that had attended my wife requested that I bring my just-then-budding teenage daughter for regular six-monthly check-ups forever thereafter, since they had found—and thoroughly advertised—that mammary malignancies in a mother tended to be duplicated in the daughter many hundred percent above average. And surely such tragic duplications *do* occur, in a clear example of the circularity of expectancy verification, the mirroring by reality of a passionate or basic fear.

The “empty category” is no passive pipe dream—it is an active, shaping force in the making of events. There are not as many hard line, brass tack qualifications to the mirroring procedure to be outlined in this book as one might think.

For instance, the Ceylonese Hindu under-goes a transformation of mind that temporarily bypasses the ordinary cause-effect relationships—even those we must have for the kind of world we know. Seized by his god and changed, the Hindu can walk with impunity through pits of white-hot charcoal that will melt aluminum on contact. Recently, in our own country, hypnotically-induced trance states have replaced chemical anesthesia, allowing bloodless, painless, quickly-healing operations to be performed.

There are “mutations” in the metaphoric fabric of our “semantic universe,” as Levi-Strauss has called our word-built world. The cults seized these novelties and in their longing for magic allude to shadowy cosmic mysteries. Rather, trance states prove to be forms of *metanoia*, a temporary restructurings of reality orientation. Some fundamental restructuring of mind underlies all disciplines and pursuits. Mathematician and physicist follow the same mirroring of idea and fact, just on a wider scope, from a different set of metaphors, with a different set of expectancies, and from a different esthetic.

Among the potentials of re-syntheses of our current reality, one possibility must be selected, heard as a question one might answer, seen as a goal one might achieve. Every choice involves such a commitment. Once we have made an investment and corresponding sacrifice of other possibilities, our life is at stake.

This centering of mind fills a person with power and conviction. It creates mathematicians, saints, or Nazis with equal and impartial ease.

A mind divided by choices, confused by alternatives (which is our dull norm), is a mind robbed of power. The body reflects this. The ambiguous person is a machine out of phase, working against itself and tearing itself up. That person is an engine with sand in its crankcase, broken piston rods, water in its fuel lines. In spite of great effort and noise, nothing much happens.

Metanola tunes the engine, gets it running on all cylinders, functioning with power and efficiency. Conversion is like a laser; it centers the diffusing and fragmented energy into a tight, potent focus.

Metanola restructures, to varying degrees and even for varying lengths of time, those basic representations of reality inherited or the past. On those representations we base our notions or concepts of what is real. In turn, our notions of what is real direct our perceptual apparatus, that network of senses that tells us what we feel, hear, see, and so on. This is not a simple subjective maneuver, but a reality-shaping procedure.

In the following chapters I hope, by showing what I have found about this reality play, to suggest a way by which we may take a more active part in shaping our events. I will explore the formation of world view, which determines our adult world-to-view, and this will require some exploration of different phenomena of mind, particularly from that shadow-side of thinking called *autistic*. Then I will explore the way a passionate pursuit or commitment of mind shapes its own fulfillment—the way a question can bring about its answer, a belief and its illumination, a desire and its gratification, by reshaping, as needed, those concepts shaped from birth, and so reshaping perceptual patterns (reality).

I have traced this mirroring of mind and reality in scientific pursuits, the postulate, the *Eureka!*, the new notion that changes the actual tangibles for a civilization. Then, I have tried to show how this same relation between idea and fact found in science equally underlies such a cultic affair as fire not burning a person under certain circumstances.

Mind over matter is a misnomer, and even to speak of a *mirroring* between the two probably implies a false dualism. I will try to trace the function by which events are shaped, and avoid those comfortable categories, those idolatries, those easy psychological clichés that act as stopping-places before the goal is reached. And the goal is nothing less than the very ontological underpinnings of things, the reality-shaping way by which events come about.

The high priests of the disciplines controlling our cultural circle try to tell us that logic and reason are the sum total of things, or, if more is possible, that it is only so through *their* controls, which are their own logical rules.

Logic and reason are surely the stuff of which the clearing (culture and its reality) is made, and the high point of life's thrust. Yet these techniques of mind tend to become destructive and trap us in deadlocks of despair.

Logic and reason are like the tip of an iceberg. The naive realists, the biogenetic psychologists, the rats-in-the-maze watchers, claim the tip is all there is. Yet life becomes demonic when sentenced to so small an area. There are times when we need to open the threshold of mind to that unknown subterranean depth—and we always need to believe in its existence. And so, though our cosmic egg is the only reality we have, and is not to be treated lightly, what I hope to show is that there is available to us a crack in this egg. For there are times when the shell no longer protects but suffocates and destroys. The crack must be approached with care, however, lest the egg itself be destroyed.

There is a story in the *Codez Bezae Cantabrigiensis*, a fifth-century manuscript of the Gospel According to St. Luke, that illustrates this circle-line problem. Jesus and his disciple were cutting across a field one Sabbath morning when they came across a man gathering in his grain. The Sabbath was a strictly no-work day, of course, and Jesus had been censured by the Establishment for just this kind of infringement. He knew that only by agreed upon criteria for acceptable acts can a civilization exist, and so he looked at the man and said: *"On the same day he saw someone working on the Sabbath and said to him, 'Man, if you know what you are doing, you are blessed; but if you do not know, you are cursed and a transgressor of the law.'"*

The mirroring of mind and reality finds its best expression in a comment by Jesus almost universally ignored. Those who claim to have heard him insist that *supplication* is the way out. They cry that we should look to heaven for our answers. But Jesus, that harsh realist, recognized the play of mirrors, and pointed out that: "What you lose on earth is lost in heaven." jcp

Meaning perhaps; that we are the Sorcerer's Apprentice. The epigenetic nature of mind and therefore reality renders us vulnerable to a devolutionary cycle, mentors failing to inspire, resulting in the loss of entire capacities in a single generation and the young not being aware of what has been lost, the essential theme explored in 'Magical Child.' Implied is a fundamental loss of true intelligence, empathic compassion and life serving right action, replaced by reflexive knowledge, dogma and reflexive belief, especially about ourselves and others. Other consequences include:

Power Without Wisdom: We've unlocked powerful tools—AI, genetic engineering, nuclear energy—but may not fully grasp their consequences.

Unintended Consequences: Like the broom flooding the room, our creations (plastics, algorithms, economic systems) can spiral beyond our control.

Hubris and Shortcut Culture: The apprentice tries to skip the hard work. This mirrors our tendency to seek quick fixes without deep understanding.

Need for Mastery and Responsibility: The tale warns that invoking forces—be they magical or technological—requires discipline, training, and humility.

In environmental discourse, it's often used to describe humanity's manipulation of nature (e.g. geoengineering or synthetic biology).

In AI ethics, it reflects concerns about autonomous systems acting beyond human oversight.

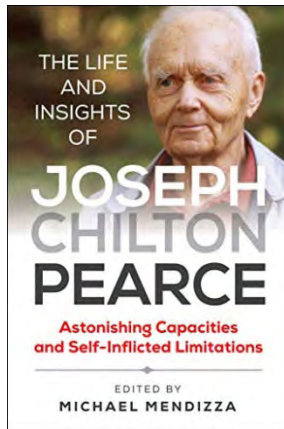
In politics, Sorcerer's Apprentice can symbolize alliances or interventions that backfire—"the spirits that I summoned / I now cannot rid myself of again," from Goethe's 1797 poem *Der Zauberlehrling* (*The Sorcerer's Apprentice*).

What is lost by the model-environment ceases to exist.

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View my twenty-year continuing interview with Joe *here*.

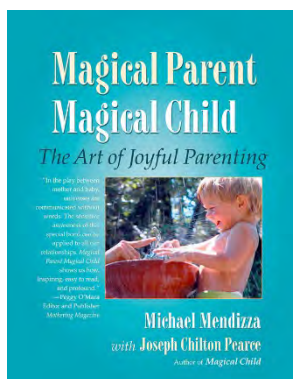
<https://ttfuture.org/joseph-chilton-pearce/>



A comprehensive guide to social visionary Joseph Chilton Pearce's work on the transcendent and magical potential of the human mind

- Explores Pearce's most influential books, including *Magical Child*, sharing his life-changing insights into why we have become what we are, contrasted with the miracle nature intends us to be
- Features essential passages interwoven with Pearce's own commentary, drawn from personal conversations and unpublished material
- Shows how Pearce's key insights build across his books and break down core assumptions about reality and human potential

<https://www.amazon.com/Life-Insights-Joseph-Chilton-Pearce-ebook/dp/B0868VHWCD>



I purchased this book because my life as a woman changed when I had my two children. They literally made me realize that I had purpose and had a legacy to leave behind. I changed my entire life from walking away from being a CEO of my business to pursuing my dream as a writer. This book is unbelievable and it is my parenting philosophy. It has made me so self-aware around my children and the truth is the change in me has absolutely created a life that they are meant to have - that is having FUN. Thank you for this adorable book and the insights. Mary

This was chosen for a parenting book club read. I'm only 30 pages into it, but its 30 are like another book's 100. Every paragraph has something insightful worth stopping to reflect on. Within the first 30 pages it's not at all a How-To

guide to parenting but rather discussion on psychological topics that affect who we as adults are, and how our personality connects with the child (or can disconnect). Wonderful, wonderful! Tara

Great book. Maybe the best and most insightful look at the influence of the relationship between parent and children I have ever experienced. I taught and coached and parented and am now a grandparent. This book should be mandated reading for all education majors. Randall

<https://www.amazon.com/Magical-Parent-Child-Joyful-Parenting/dp/1556434979>