

# **Space/Time and the Living Here/Now**

**a philosophical inquiry into  
objective knowledge and personal experience**

**Gene W. Marshall**

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# Introduction: Repicturing Space/Time

Numerous books and articles are now being published about the importance of living in the here and now as opposed to living in the past or in the future. Some of these books suggest that we need new concepts of time and space more like those of our primitive ancestors, concepts of rhythm and cyclical return rather than a linear movement of time from past to present to future. Still others are concerned about the busyness of modern life and its increasing pace--how we are scattered into so many guilt-ridden emergencies that we have lost our grounding in the glorious now of authentic living. For these and other reasons, people feel that a fresh perspective on time is needed.

Similarly, a fresh perspective on space is needed. Many of us are asking what it would mean to relate more intimately with the places where we live--to speak to and listen to the trees, the birds, the four-footed creatures, the microbes, the soil, the air, the sun, and the rain. All these realities surround us and give our home places their special character.

I want to do some simplified philosophical exploration of space and time, how space and time are united, how they are part of our objective knowledge, how they are dimensions of living in the here and now.

## Why Do This Sort of Thinking?

Why is any of this or all of this in any way whatsoever important for the living of our lives? Contemporary living and thinking, educating and decision-making are in a state of confusion. On the one hand, people think that some authority has the truth for them, and thus they surrender to others their responsibility to think for themselves. And on the other hand, there are people who think that there is no way to validate truth at all, that everyone's opinion is as good as anyone else's opinion. Such persons ask us to live and let live and not argue or contend with anyone about anything. In these reflections, I will be exploring perspectives that provide us a way to think for ourselves about truth without assuming that there is an authority somewhere who knows what truth is.

There are also some very practical needs that we as a culture have to face. If we continue with our current overemphasis on scientific objectivity and if we do not view objective knowledge from the perspective of our contemplative wisdom, we will make a lot of bad decisions. We will continue to destroy the planet. We will continue to view the planet as a useful thing for human consumption rather than a mysterious being that is our larger body. We will continue to use the powers of scientific knowledge to turn our planet into a human-made thing rather than allowing the planet to be its mysterious being in our living here and now. And, at the same time, if we reject or partially reject the validity of scientific knowledge, we rob ourselves of the tools we need to rescue the fluorescence of this planet from ourselves.

Furthermore, our sanity, as well as our success in creating a mutually enhancing relationship with our planet, rests upon creating a responsible philosophical overview. On the one hand we see a flight from vulnerable subjectivity into objective artificiality. We try to live in a human-made world of abstract symbols and in a human-made world of artificial environments. We thereby lose touch with our own bodies and with the natural world in which our bodies are functioning members.

On the other hand, we see various forms of flight away from dealing forthrightly with this oppressive world of objective artificialities. We see people fleeing from contemporary actualities

and challenges into various forms of anti-scientific and/or anti-existential metaphysical overviews. We see this manifest in anti-government militias, anti-government anarchists, illusory idolizations of primitive cultures, medieval cultures, or the antiquated worldviews of our favorite scriptures. We even see people fleeing from all thought and all ethical challenges through denying any validity whatsoever to the processes of the human mind. These philosophical escape artists seem to favor some sort of absorption into a transpersonal state of consciousness from which one need never return to the grimy struggles of space/time.

In whatever ways we choose to idolize the present state of industrial civilization or to idolize some escape from dealing with it, we are thereby irresponsible people failing to create for ourselves a responsible overview. So let us gird up our brain cells and vow to continue thinking for ourselves with, of course, a little help from our friends.

This brief set of essays is intended to be your friend.