

RETURN TO THE BRAIN OF EDEN

“Graham Gynn and Tony Wright follow the implications of modern brain research to an astounding conclusion: that our culturally acquired left-brain dominance has cost us our sanity, but if we have alienated ourselves from nature and our original state of wholeness, there may be a way back. This is a startling book that makes us rethink the most fundamental issues of religion, psychology, and philosophy.”

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AND FOUNDER-DIRECTOR OF THE GLOBAL DIALOGUE INSTITUTE

RETURN TO THE BRAIN OF EDEN

Restoring the Connection between
Neurochemistry and Consciousness

TONY WRIGHT AND GRAHAM GYNN



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*I would like to dedicate my work here to the memory of
Gordon Gynn—father, journalist, and Cornishman.*

GRAHAM GYNN

*It would take several pages to list everyone who has
contributed in one way or another to the research that
has resulted in the publication of this book. For this
reason I will simply say thanks to all those who have
helped over the last sixteen years.*

In loving memory of Grace (Granny) Rippling.

For Corriene and Jago

TONY WRIGHT

Note to the Reader

The theory and combined techniques outlined in this book are the subjects of ongoing research and are not intended as medical advice. Deciding to adopt any of the approaches discussed may in some cases be detrimental; any such decision to do so is made entirely at your own discretion.

CONTENTS

	Foreword by Dennis J. McKenna, Ph.D.	xi
	Introduction by Graham Gynn	1
1	Two Sides to Everything	7
	<i>The Double Brain</i>	8
	<i>Handedness</i>	17
	<i>Accessing the Right Brain</i>	20
	<i>Is Handedness Helpful?</i>	21
	<i>Sleep</i>	22
	<i>Hidden Potential</i>	26
	<i>Telepathy</i>	29
	<i>The Manchester Trial</i>	30
	<i>A New Hypothesis</i>	34
2	From the Forest	36
	<i>Human Evolution</i>	38
	<i>Juvenility and Bipedalism</i>	40
	<i>Hairlessness and Vitamin D</i>	47
	<i>Big Brains</i>	51
	<i>Cast Out of the Garden</i>	53
	<i>Aggression</i>	55
	<i>Why Did Our Brains Stop Expanding?</i>	57
	<i>Ancestral Diets</i>	58

	<i>Humans Are by Nature Frugivorous</i>	62
	<i>Protein, Fatty Acids, and Water</i>	71
3	Figs, Steroids, and Feedback Loops	75
	<i>The Core Hypothesis</i>	75
	<i>A New Theory of Inheritance</i>	83
	<i>Chemicals in Plants</i>	85
	<i>The First Primates</i>	90
	<i>A Change in Diet and an Increase in Brain Size</i>	91
	<i>The Pineal and Exponential Brain Expansion</i>	93
	<i>Surviving on the Savanna</i>	96
	<i>Divide and Rule</i>	101
	<i>The Implications of Agriculture</i>	105
	<i>Junk Food and Degeneration</i>	109
4	Steroid Hormones: Immunity, Digestion, and the “Second Brain”	117
	<i>The Immune System</i>	117
	<i>The Thymus Gland</i>	117
	<i>A Second Brain</i>	121
5	Fertility and Function	126
	<i>Human Fertility</i>	126
	<i>The Ancestral Period</i>	128
	<i>The Period of Steroid Inhibition</i>	129
	<i>Flavonoids and the Female Cycle</i>	130
	<i>The Lost Connection between Ovulation and Orgasm</i>	133
	<i>Males, Diet, and Libido</i>	137
	<i>The Fall</i>	138
	<i>Hairy Women and Bald Men</i>	142
	<i>Serotonin, Testosterone, Depression, and Murder</i>	146
	<i>Testosterone, Society, and Consciousness</i>	147
	<i>Melatonin, the Pineal, and Sex</i>	150

6	Consciousness and the Mechanisms of the Mind	155
	<i>The Bicameral Mind</i>	157
	<i>Let's Sing about It</i>	160
	<i>The Written Word and Cerebral Dominance</i>	163
	<i>Hemispherectomy</i>	164
	<i>Schizophrenia</i>	171
	<i>Multiple Personality Disorder</i>	176
	<i>The Internal Liar</i>	181
	<i>Hypnosis</i>	184
	<i>The Problem with Words</i>	189
	<i>Confabulation</i>	192
	<i>Deeper into Fear</i>	196
	<i>Higher Function</i>	199
7	Drugs, the Brain, and Peak Experiences	210
	<i>Sex, Drugs, and Tantric Taboos</i>	210
	<i>DMT, the Pineal, and Spirit</i>	213
	<i>Ecstasy and Empathy</i>	221
	<i>Superman and Superwoman</i>	224
8	Mad Hatters and Maverick Scientists	233
	<i>Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation</i>	233
	<i>Weak Electromagnetic Fields</i>	238
	<i>Other Research Areas</i>	242
	<i>Restoration</i>	249
	Afterword	255
	Recommended Reading	257
	References	259
	Index	281

FOREWORD

Dennis J. McKenna, Ph.D.

The progress of science and, indeed, of human knowledge requires a dynamic tension between the mere accumulation of observations and “dusty facts” and a synthetic process in which the accumulated results of scientific observation and inquiry are woven together into frameworks that, in the ideal case, create revolutionary paradigms that enhance human understanding of apparently discrete and unrelated aspects of nature. The hypotheses proposed in this book may well represent such a revolutionary paradigm. These ideas do not originate from the mainstream of academia, but rather are the contribution of two independent scholars. The history of science and intellectual inquiry teaches us that, as is so often the case with truly novel syntheses, established scientific and intellectual institutions are too ossified, and too invested in the conventionally accepted worldview, to allow the introduction of a new paradigm without putting up considerable resistance.

Resistance will more than likely characterize the response to this book; its authors will undoubtedly be denounced as mavericks, unqualified to comment on such a momentous topic as the evolution of human consciousness, and the ideas put forth here will be condemned as heresy. Indeed, they *are* heresy in the context of what we think we understand about human evolution, particularly the anomalous evolution of

the human brain and consciousness. But one is reminded of the famous observation of philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer: All truth, he said, passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed; second, it is violently opposed; and third, it is accepted as being self-evident. We should be wary of rejecting out of hand the premises of a hypothesis that may one day seem self-evident.

Evolutionary biologists have long been puzzled by what is perhaps the chief mystery of human origins: the explosive and rapid expansion of the human brain in size and complexity over a vanishingly small span of evolutionary time. There is also the mystery of hemispheric lateralization and the apparent deintegration of the right- and left-hemispheric functions that we humans suffer. In this work the authors postulate that it was not always so; the universal myth of a prehistoric golden age, they maintain, is a racial memory that reflects our primate evolution in an arboreal, rainforest environment in which humans possessed mental and psychic abilities that have since become lost or atrophied in the profane ages that followed. That rainforest environment favored a frugivorous diet rich in flavonoids, monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitors, and neurotransmitter precursors and relatively low in steroid-containing or -inducing elements. This dietary regime both mimicked and fostered a state, reinforced by positive feedback loops, in which pineal functions, including neocortical expansion and hemispheric integration, were potentiated; moreover, these neurochemical feedback loops were amplified in succeeding generations via the regulation of gene expression in the developing fetus, independent of conventional evolutionary mechanisms of mutation and natural selection. Climate changes or other environmental catastrophes forced several lineages of hominids as well as archaic and early humans out of their forest-dwelling ancestral homes into much harsher savanna or grassland environments. As a consequence dietary regimens shifted toward roots, tubers, grass seed, and a greater proportion of animal protein, triggering a reversal of the positive feedback loops that had sustained pineal potentiation and hemispheric integration in the paradisiacal, forest-dwelling golden age. Pineal dominance was disrupted by steroid-mediated, testosterone-driven functions,

primarily due to the reduced consumption of flavonoids and other steroid-inhibitory dietary factors. Changes in the dietary patterns that were forced on the population by this migration put an end to the rapid evolution of the human brain and triggered its devolution, ultimately resulting in the damaged human neural architecture that we suffer from today and the myriad mental and physical deficits that are the legacy of our biological “fall from grace.”

It is not the place of a foreword to present the central tenets of a complex theory in detail; what is alluded to here is only the barest outline of an elegant hypothesis that plausibly elucidates many baffling aspects of human evolution, brain science, and physiology into a coherent explanatory framework. Ecologists have realized for several decades that the complex interrelations of plants and insects are largely mediated through plant chemistry and that the interactive dynamics we can observe in these processes are reflections of millions of years of plant-insect coevolution. Evolutionary biologists have long suspected that similar coevolutionary processes, mediated by interactions with plant secondary products, have influenced the evolution of vertebrates, including primates. The hypotheses presented in this book are incomplete and are even now being refined and developed; however, even in their present form they present a credible foundation on which to build a better understanding of who we are and how our puzzling human species got to be the way it is.

DENNIS J. MCKENNA is an American ethnopharmacologist, author, and brother to well-known psychedelics proponent Terence McKenna. He has written numerous scientific articles and books and was co-author to *The Invisible Landscape* with his brother Terence. McKenna's 2012 memoir *The Brotherhood of the Screaming Abyss* describes he and his brother's life and journeys together. He is now a senior research scientist for the Natural Health Products Research Group at the British Columbia Institute of Technology in Vancouver.