

A Promise We Make to the Dead:
a Comment on Arxiv:1006.2312

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Abstract

The authors of Arxiv:1006.2312 study the effect of mentors on their protégés. The study is quantitative, resting its conclusions on measurable outcomes, such as professorships, publications, etc. But what about the mentor who is a paradigm shifter? The paradigm shifter maybe has one protégé, if that. The paradigm shifter does not get published in the mainstream publications, nor does his or her protégé. But the paradigm shifter and his or her protégé cause revolutions, which are what determine directions and the future course of physics. How do we find those mentors and their protégés? Shouldn't that relationship be one we foster and encourage rather than stifle?

A promise we make to the dead is more binding than one we make to the living.

It was Wednesday, February 20, 1980. My mentor, Professor Dr. Robert L. Carroll, said to me: "I don't want to ruin your life." I met with him at his home between the hours of 10:00 and 11:30. I had told him I wanted to study his anti-relativity theories. I wanted a copy of his book, The Eternity Equation, 1976. His theory was that the universe is essentially Newtonian. It seemed to me at the time that Einstein's General Relativity Theory was on the wrong track. I told him I wasn't ruining my life, that I knew and understood exactly what I was doing.

Off and on over the years I read The Eternity Equation and its supplement published in 1985, The Energy of Physical Creation. If you like partial differential equations, you will love these two books. I want to caution the reader though that these are not simple books. Professor Carroll held back no punches.

He passed away on April 13, 1997. I was unemployed at the time and had just returned from my own father's funeral a 1000 km away. Dr. Carroll's funeral was another 600 km away in the opposite direction. I could not afford to go. I simply had no money. But I made a promise to him in my thoughts that I would do all I could to carry on his work. I have done that. Since 1997, I have published and have had accepted for publication in the alternate press fifty-five articles; I have obtained a US patent; I have mentored a PhD student; and I have conducted funded laboratory research. All this in addition to my fulltime job as a college administrator. I am now approaching the age when it is time to retire. I am tired. I feel like a qualified candidate for Ezekiel's Valley of the Dry Bones. I have done what I promised. It is finished.

How do we measure what I have done? My PhD student, who is halfway around the world, is struggling, just as I struggled. She is not getting published in the mainstream press, just as I did not get published in the mainstream press. What drew us together? Why do we continue working in the direction we are working? Obviously because we see something. We see something that we believe is the truth. There's a total of three of us now (Carroll, me, her). Carroll mentored me, I am mentoring her, and she will mentor someone. The chain continues, extending long into the future. Slowly, ever so slowly, Carroll's physics will creep imperceptibly into the mainstream physics. How can you measure that? You cannot. We cannot measure the truly significant.

Bibliography

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