

Natural, Manufactured Or 'Miracle'?

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Abstract:

Those who postulate that the Shroud image was manufactured have been unable to suggest any manufacturing process which could account for key macroscopic and microscopic features of the image. If it was not manufactured then how did the image form?

There would seem to be two main schools of thought regarding how this could have happened. Some scholars believe that it was an unusual combination of already recognised natural physical processes e.g. the Maillard reaction occurring as a result of putrefaction e.g. Rogers or electrical discharge as a result of seismic activity e.g. De Liso. Others postulate that it might have been a miraculous event occurring as a result of divine intervention and possibly associated with resurrection. In this paper I present a third possibility. Developments in quantum theory and cosmology have led some eminent scientists to postulate that consciousness, awareness and will are far more than incidental products of the material universe but may be fundamental to existence itself¹. One of the founders of quantum mechanics Max Planck² made the following statement in an interview with "The Observer" newspaper in reply to the question "Do you think that consciousness can be explained in terms of matter and its laws?": *"I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing, postulates consciousness."*

Erwin Schrödinger³: *"Consciousness can not be accounted for in physical terms. For consciousness is absolutely fundamental. It can not be accounted for in terms of anything else"*
Andrei Linde⁴ also suggested that physics might suggest a fundamental role of consciousness in existence.

The Shroud image is, as far as we know, a unique phenomenon in human history. There is abundant evidence to suggest that the Shroud may have been the burial cloth of the historical Jesus of Nazareth. If we consider what he taught and how he lived might there be clues in this regarding how the Shroud image formed? In this paper I will discuss the possibility that the Shroud image may have been caused by a short intense burst of electromagnetic radiation from the body that was contained in the Shroud and discuss whether this might be consistent with speculations regarding the nature of matter, space and time which have previously been suggested by physicists including those quoted above. Empirical research on Near Death Experiences ⁵ may support the notion that physical death is not the end of the mind. Since the

image on the Shroud appears to have occurred after the death of the man on the Shroud I would suggest that the question of whether consciousness survives physical death does at least have some relevance to Shroud studies.

Could it be that the image on the Shroud might well be the single most important piece of physical evidence to help us discover more about the relationship between mind and matter, the nature of humanity and our relationship to the material universe and to each other?

1. Rosenblum and Kuttner "*Quantum Enigma*" Oxford University Press 2011
2. "Interviews with great scientists" (Max Planck) by J. W. N. Sullivan "The Observer" January 25th 1931 page 17
3. "Interviews with great scientists" (Erwin Schrödinger) by J.W.N. Sullivan "The Observer" January 11th 1931 page 16
4. www.stanford.edu/~alinde/SpirQuest.doc section 9 final four paragraphs
5. <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/pfenwickneardeath.pdf>