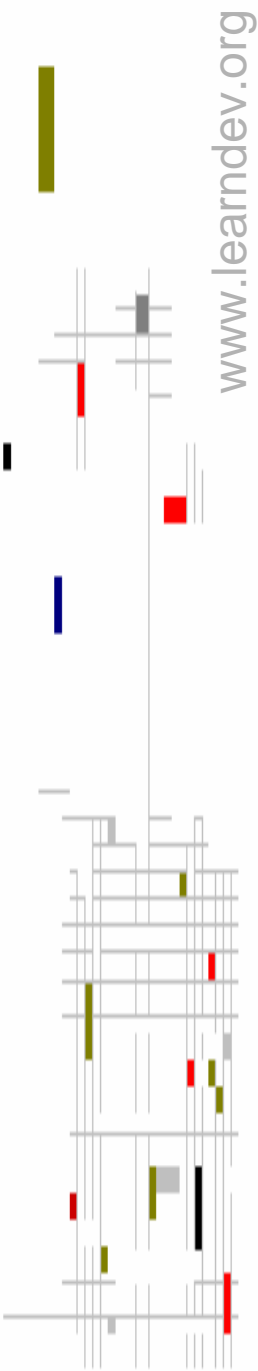




Not by science alone

Jan Visser

Learning Development Institute

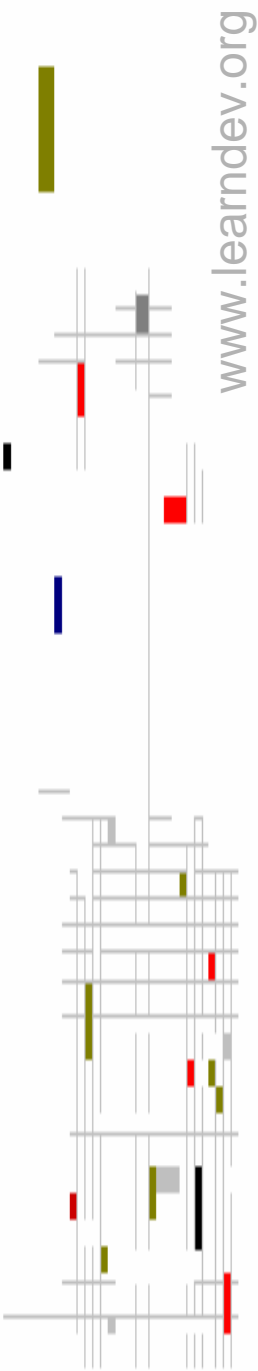


Beyond science, there is the spirit of science
– a spirit not necessarily fed by science

In school I learnt more about science by
taking a class in Latin than by taking
science classes. (Paul Roman)

What is mind?

- Anglo-Saxon origin: “*gemynd*” = memory
- Two perspectives on memory:
 - memory as static concept (stored retrievable information)
 - memory as dynamic concept, i.e. giving meaning, intentionality.
- While we live, we are all “memories in the making” (Yusra Laila Visser, 1997)
- Susan Greenfield (2000): “*Mind . . . is the seething morass of cell circuitry that has been configured by personal experiences and is constantly being updated as we live out each moment*” (p. 13). In other words, it is, according to Greenfield, “*the personalization of the physical brain*” (p. 14) through our experience.



Mind = construction of intentionality, a process that contributes not only to our own existence, but that also enhances the existence of humanity in general.

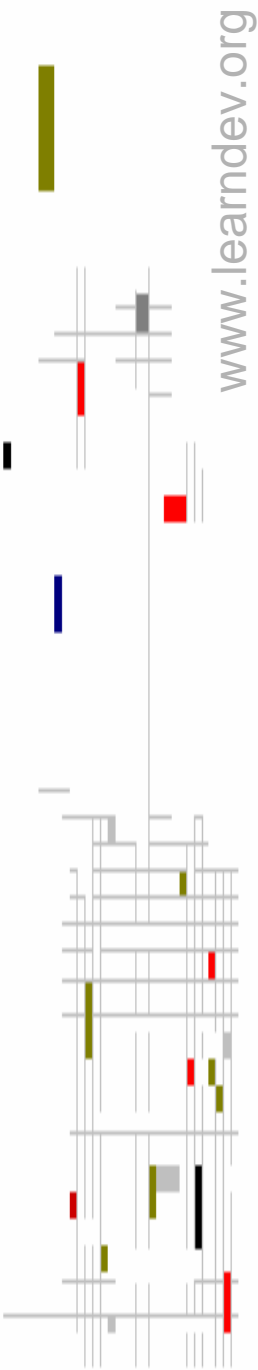
ENHANCING EXISTENCE

Three interwoven spheres of existence in Yoruba culture:

- the world of the living
- the world of the unborn
- the world of the ancestor.

Every individual has the responsibility to **enhance the process of existence** during his or her passage from the world of the unborn to the world of the ancestor. One is thus part of the community of those who came before and those who will come after us. **“The responsibility of creating an environment, which makes this particular passage in which one finds oneself congenial, is a communal responsibility”** (Soyinka, 2000).

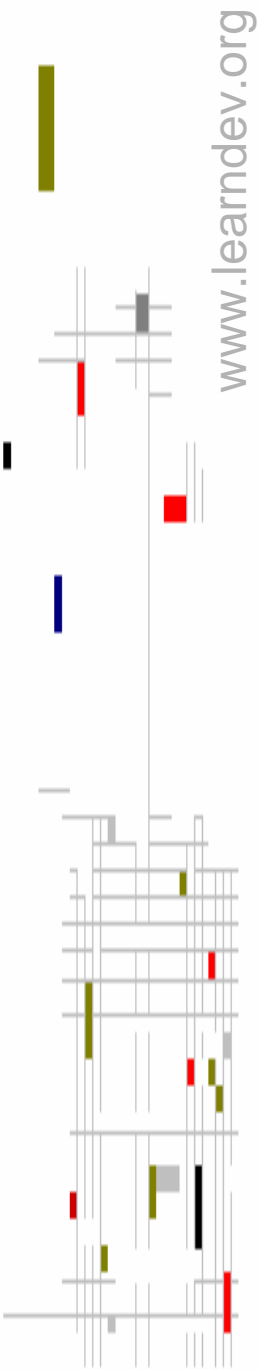




MIND'S MATTER

“...the **mind is** not the brain but **what the brain does**, and not even everything the brain does, such as metabolizing fat and giving off heat” (Pinker, 1997, p. 24).

Mind is a process, “a special kind of process depending on special arrangements of matter” (Edelman, 1992, p. 7).



The scientific mind – an oxymoron

“Science has, for many centuries, had difficulty in dealing with the mind. Proper scientific inquiry assumed processes that excluded, as much as possible, intentionality.” (J.Visser, 2001)

“Science manipulates things and refuses to inhabit them” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964).

MAN VS. MIND - DUALISM

Descartes: Separation between the worlds of mind (*res cogitans*) and science (*res extensa*).

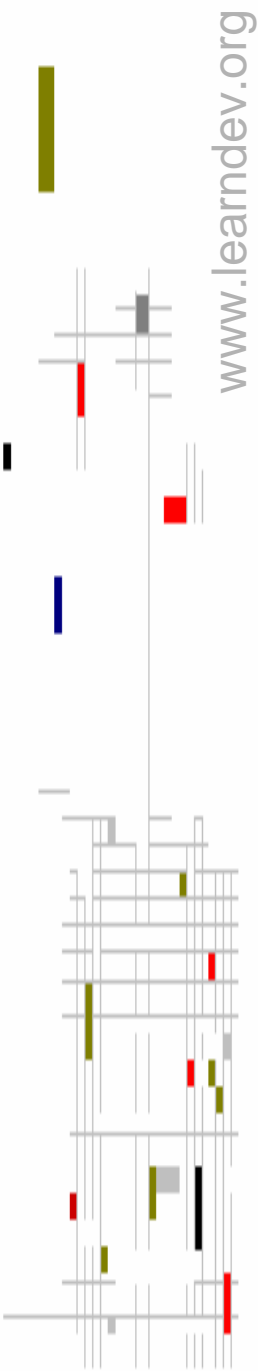


**Descartes
(1596-1650)
by Frans Hals**

Kronig (1969)...reflecting on half a century of his involvement in theoretical physics and reacting to imminent tendencies during the late nineteen-sixties, preferred to qualify as “pseudo-sciences” those endeavors that, while trying to model themselves on the rigor of the physical sciences, wished to include the human being as subject in their considerations.



**Ralph Kronig
(1904-1995)**



TWO EVENTS THAT COMPELL US TO PUT THE MIND BACK INTO NATURE

- *Changing views of the physical sciences themselves ...and of the role of the physical sciences in (re)-connecting human beings to the experience of reality.*
- *The development, started during the later part of the 20th century, of technologies and methods that are allowing our very humanity, or what we thought it was, to become the object of scientific inquiry and manipulation. This includes the insights we are getting into the workings of the brain as well as our genetic make-up. Subject and object are, so to say, looking each other in the eye; they can no longer be kept apart.*

BtSM2005