

book reviews

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science-philosophy of science

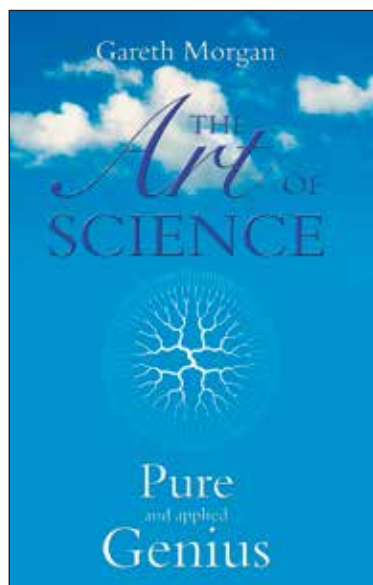
Science and Scientification

Chris Allen

THE ART OF SCIENCE

Gareth Morgan (SMN)

Matador, 2015, 248 pp., £9.99, p/b - ISBN 978 1783063 833.
(Also available from Amazon)



“Tsumdoku” is the Japanese word for buying books and never reading them. So why on earth would you want to do that? Well, a cynic might say, in order to display them on your coffee table or in your bookcase at home ... to create an impression that you know something about their content ... when of course you don’t.

Now, just for the sake of argument, imagine that you do a “Tsumdoku” of Professor Stephen Hawking’s best-selling hardback on black

holes and then decide to throw a dinner party. Further imagine you have the great misfortune to be seated next to one of your guests who just happens to be a prominent member of scientific academia. Imagine further still that this person hasn’t read the book but has espied your copy of ‘A Brief History of Time’ ... and, horror of horrors ... asks you what you thought of it.

You’re in trouble, aren’t you?

Not necessarily, perhaps you’ve invested in a copy of ‘*The Art of Science*’ by Gareth Morgan. And I strongly recommend that you do so because it is a rare thing indeed ... a non-fiction page turner that you can’t put down ... a book that challenges just about everything you ever thought you knew about ... well just about everything. It’s that provocative. But don’t get the wrong idea. The author isn’t anti-science; he’s anti-scientific humbug. His beef is against that section of the scientific and medical community that feels that it has a monopoly on the truth and expects to be treated with reverential awe by the rest of us as if it were some kind of priesthood. He argues convincingly why it hasn’t and why we shouldn’t.

Similar in some ways to Rupert Sheldrake’s ‘*The Science Delusion*’; ‘*The Art of Science*’ is a well-written, humorous and interesting tilt at the scientific and medical establishment. However, Gareth Morgan is more controversial than Sheldrake and so hard hitting at times that I feel he risks alienating or worse still being ignored by it altogether ... which would be a shame ... because he has an incisive mind with a talent of taking complex issues, breaking them down and writing about them in a clear, entertaining and digestible way. Furthermore, he is ready, willing and able to defend his

views ... many of which are quite startling ... and, perhaps more importantly, is happy to be proven wrong.

‘*The Art of Science*’ consists of two parts, the first entitled ‘Pure Genius’, the second ‘Applied Genius’. Its natural target audience appears to be the reasonably well-informed layman. It is unlikely to be well received by members of the scientific and medical academia about which it is, without wishing to put too fine a point on it, pretty unflattering. Gareth Morgan’s challenge is not so much an epistemological one in terms of shortfalls in methodology or paradigm limitations ... as is the case with Sheldrake ... but more along the lines of calling into question the actual integrity and sheer competence of mainstream Western Science and Medicine.

In Part One—Pure Genius—after a briefest of preambles, the author launches his attack in a series of short, punchy, chapters dealing with a wide range of subjects, everything from black holes, dark matter through AIDS and quantum mechanics to meteorology.

And so, returning to the dark matter of black holes, Gareth Morgan explains how Professor Hawking happily admits—towards the end of his best-selling hardback—that they can’t exist and that, if they did, they would be the brightest objects observable in the sky due to what’s called gravitational lensing. So you could point this out to your troublesome dinner guest ... and everything would be alright ... wouldn’t it? Probably not; because—after a brief moment of stunned silence—this outraged academic is likely to stand up and, in a fit of pique, denounce you as an ignorant fool. How dare you? Everyone knows that Hawking is published and what about all of those other papers? And storm out. You see ... you will have violated what the author calls the First Law of Academia: *Don’t contradict anything that has already been published in a peer-reviewed journal!* He explains how whosoever publishes first sets the gold standard ... the scientific position ... even if their findings are **flatly contradicted** by subsequent experimental data derived from careful measurement.

In Part Two—‘Applied Genius’—the author gives a detailed account of a highly practicable and very interesting schema for addressing the perennial problems besetting humanity in which he calls for the application of its collective genius. I had originally intended to go into this area in some detail but have come to the conclusion, whilst writing this review, that it is better to recommend the purchase of a copy of ‘*The Art of Science*’ and read what he has to say without the dubious benefit of a set of pre-conceived ideas. You may not agree with what he proposes ... it may be too radical for your liking ... but I guarantee he will set you thinking and ... who knows ... he may be right.

Unusually for a work of non-fiction, the ‘*The Art of Science*’ does not have a bibliography; the author takes the pragmatic view that there was no need to include one as nobody ever reads the references, let alone follows them up. Be that as it may, he does invite his readership to contact him to discuss any issues and welcomes reasonable dissent.

One final thing ... if you do decide to splash out and buy a copy of ‘*The Art of Science*’ and end up agreeing with the author ... be careful who you invite to dinner! **Chris Allen** is a Hypnotherapist, Writer and Technical Author; web site: www.cach.co.uk

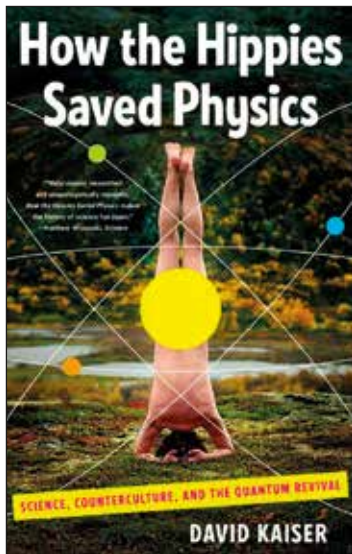
Shut up and Calculate!

Paul Kieniewicz

HOW THE HIPPIES SAVED PHYSICS

David Kaiser

W.W. Norton and Company, 2012, 378 pp., £12.72, p/b – ISBN 978-0-393-34231-4



“How the Hippies Saved Physics” took me back to my undergraduate quantum mechanics courses and my frustrations with my teachers. I wanted to understand quantum mechanics. What did the Schrödinger wave function really mean? Why couldn’t electrons decide if they were waves or particles? Did probability actually move from A to B? But the professor cut me off quickly with, “Shut up and calculate!” The maths works, the theory works. Why are you wasting your time in trying to figure it all out? He implied that the

problem was with ME instead of with the physics that he didn’t understand. And so I switched majors and took up astronomy. At least astronomers struck me as honest about what they didn’t understand.

And so I was excited to read Kaiser’s book about a rag tag group of Berkeley physicists who were also not content to “shut up and calculate.” Dissatisfied with the current climate in physics, they set out to delve into forbidden territory. Expand accepted boundaries of quantum mechanics. Their searches took them into the heart of “non-local” effects, a study of consciousness and even paranormal phenomena. Kaiser, a professor at MIT has written a well-researched and engaging account of this colourful group’s work. The book is a page-turner.

Because of an economic downturn in the early 1970s, many physicists found themselves unemployed, or underemployed. It was a time for experimentation with drugs, the human potential movement, Werner Erhard’s EST, seminars and hot tubs at Esalen. Everyone was exploring the further reaches of consciousness. Fitting right into this culture were serious physicists with part-time jobs, who were questioning established truths. Free from the publish-or-perish culture they met in diverse venues, calling themselves the Fundamental Fysiks Group (FFG). Among them were Elisabeth Rauscher, George Weissman, Jack Scarfatti and Fred Alan Wolf. Other physicists in close contact with the group were John Wheeler, Fritjof Capra, David Bohm and Richard Feynman. Werner Erhard sponsored the group for over a decade.

The group rescued the now famous Bell’s theorem from obscurity and explored its implications. Bell first introduced the idea of quantum entanglement in 1962, that two quantum particles separated in space could be in instantaneous communication. The idea was experimentally demonstrated first by John Clauser in 1972 at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, then by Alain Aspect in 1982. If quantum entanglement (aka Spooky Actions at a Distance) is real, could it not also explain paranormal communication, or the nature of consciousness? For a while Scarfatti endorsed Uri Geller, but then distanced himself when he suspected that Geller was a fraud. But he continued to study the paranormal. Elisabeth Rauscher (who has published over 200 papers in peer reviewed journals) worked in the early 1970s with Targ and Puthoff at the Stanford Research Institute and convinced herself of the reality of paranormal remote viewing. She subsequently developed a model to explain it that involved higher dimensions.

In 1973 Fritjof Capra met members of FFG and organized a series of seminars to discuss his new book, “The Tao of Physics”. He also participated with many of their discussions at Esalen and became a core member of the FFG. His book turned into an unexpected best seller that rocked even the stable boat of physics. Physics suddenly became of interest to the non-physicist. The American Journal of Physics carried articles on how to use Capra’s book to teach physics. Universities designed courses around it. While it also resulted in pushback from many conservative scientists, others were excited to see a renewed public interest in physics.

Inevitably discussion of Bell’s theorem led group members to propose faster than light communication techniques. They were convinced that such devices could be built, despite Einstein’s Special Relativity. The first was Jack Scarfatti’s device that employed Young’s Interference fringes through which “coded” photons could be sent. Unfortunately another FFG member, Philippe Eherhard pointed out a basic flaw that made the scheme unworkable. Next, Nick Herbert proposed the FLASH design that utilized the polarisation of entangled photons to communicate faster than light. This time, most referees could not find a flaw in his argument. Faster than light communication was about to be a reality. But it was not to be. The obstacle lay in subtle features of the quantum theory itself. Two of John Wheeler’s students, Wootters and Zurek, saw the problem, and published a famous paper in which they asserted that due to the linear nature of quantum mechanics, “a single quantum cannot be cloned”. Single quantum states, perhaps, but not the entire quantum. Though entangled photons separated by large distances flip instantaneously, they cannot convey useful information at faster than light speed. One consolation prize as a result of all the efforts was the possibility of quantum encryption.

Where does that leave explorations on the nature of consciousness or paranormal phenomena? Kaiser appears open minded on whether paranormal effects are real. Unfortunately he does not include recent research by Dean Radin on using the mind to influence quantum effects. But whatever the underlying mechanisms of paranormal phenomena, entangled photons are probably not a likely explanation. The Hippies may not have saved physics, but they certainly energised the study of non-local effects and discovered what they can and can’t do.

In 2000 Elisabeth Rauscher declared her manifesto to her former colleagues:

“I believe in non-locality. I believe non-locality is real. Quantum mechanics is probably very fuzzy stuff. Reality is better described by more than four dimensions. Most of everything, I think, is spirit, and a little is condensed out as matter.”

Paul Kieniewicz is a geologist, astronomer and writer. He is an editor of the SMN website, author of Gaia’s Children, and co-author with Andrew Glazewski of Harmony of the Universe.

A Complementary Principle

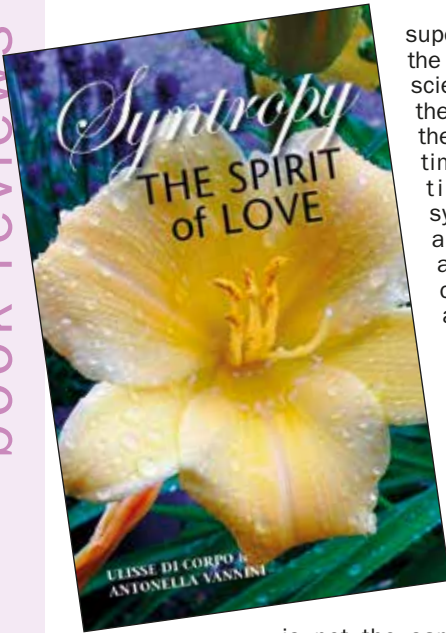
David Lorimer

SYNTROPY – THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

Ulisse di Corpo and Antonella Vannini

ICRL Press, 2015, 155 pp., \$14.95, p/b (\$9.95 Kindle) – ISBN 978-1-936033-17-1

In 1942, the Italian mathematician Luigi Fantappie coined the term syntropy as a law symmetric with entropy that produces ‘a continuous increase in complexity through the action of attractors that emanate from the future and provide systems with their purpose and design.’ This is an important conceptual innovation whose implications are explored in detail in this accessible book. Current science is mainly informed by mechanistic models that emphasise deterministic push rather than the pull or attraction from the future, although the development of complexity theory over the last 30 years has moved thinking in a new direction. At the same time, Einstein coined the term *ubercausalitat* or



supercausality to emphasise the need to extend the current scientific paradigm. There is the familiar causal time and the less familiar retrocausal time while supercausal time characterises systems where diverging and converging forces are balanced and where causality and retrocausality are complementary.

The book summarises and explains the relevance of syntropy to various fields of scientific endeavour, relating this key idea to the converging evolutionary theories of Teilhard de Chardin and more recent scientific work on attractors. Syntropy

is not the same as negentropy, which is the opposite of entropy. Syntropy, by contrast, is the complement of entropy and syntropic information flows from the future. One experimental example is the work of Dean Radin on pre-sponse implying precisely this causality from the future. The authors present a model incorporating not only the conscious and unconscious minds, but also the superconscious mind based on intuition and finality. This is clearly active in the process of incubating inventions as well as our capacity for ESP. They look at the mind-body problem in terms of a confluence of diverging and converging energy and refer to the mind machine experiments at the Princeton PEAR laboratory as evidence of this interplay that cannot be explained by classical physics.

In line with the book's subtitle, the authors place an emphasis on the relationship between the heart and the brain, observing that the Chinese ideogram for love combines those of life and heart. Fantappie distinguishes life by the presence of syntropic qualities such as finalities, goals and attractors. This is very different from the deterministic causality of the entropic world. He goes on to explain that attraction towards a goal is felt as love, deriving from this the proposition that the fundamental law of life is the law of love. This moves life towards higher forms of differentiation rather than levelling and conformity, echoing the development of complexity and consciousness in the work of Teilhard and his final attractor of the Omega Point. Syntropy also gives life meaning that can ground us in a way that enables us to resist excessive peer pressure.

There are some more technical chapters on micro and macroevolution exploring the idea of morphogenetic fields and the importance of epigenetics. The authors suggest that macroevolution through the role of attractors is in fact a converging retrocausal process and they illustrate this in a diagram explaining supercausality (p 115). Towards the end of the book, they come back to the balancing role of entropy and syntropy, comparing this with the complementary Chinese principles of the yin and yang. They could also have drawn on the work of Victor Schauberg, who saw the energy of nature in terms of implosion and explosion, moving towards and away from the centre. Walter Russell expresses similar ideas of alternating expansion and contraction, which one also finds in the scientific work of Goethe.

In making the case for syntropy as an extension of current scientific theory, they state six criteria and show how syntropy actually meets these by going beyond only forward-in-time solutions to fundamental equations. They conclude that 'virtually all its shortcomings could easily be resolved by incorporating the negative time-

symmetric solution into its calculations.' This is an exciting prospect and one that also creates a conceptual bridge between science and spirituality. They conclude that 'as the organising principle of creation, evolution and life itself, love deserves a primary role in our worldview' an important message not only for science but for our culture in general. This book provides a good overview of this significant scientific principle and its implications.

A Syntropic Future

Gerri McManus

THE THEOREM OF LOVE

Ulisse Di Corpo and Antonella Vannini

e-book, £7.15

Have you read this book? I am really interested to hear what people with much more expertise than me make of it.

For me it brings together what I have encountered and understood of quantum physics and mysticism. For me it describes the rationale for the phenomenon of synchronicity and why love is so important, why life evolves to complexity and inanimate objects entropy. It really answers pretty much the questions I have been asking and gives me even more incentive to meditate and focus on love and beauty. This may have been touched on in books I have read by Amit Goswami and others but not so directly described.

Sitting on a beach in August with my Kindle I searched for something light and readable literary fiction. First of all I searched for romantic comedies but after a few sample downloads I broadened my search. However, I have no idea what search terms enabled me to have the good fortune to find 'The Theorem of Love'.

At first I was a little disappointed by the initial discussion about financial corruption - I really wasn't in the mood for the paranoia of conspiracy theories but was also struck by its synchronicity with a conversation I had a minute before and read on.

Set in November 2026 it opens with a number of conversations between a father and daughter about the recent past. This device allows a summary of research and history including the introduction of bioelectronic money, the fall of a Pope and Milgram and Fantappie's experiments.

I found the dialogue at first seemed somewhat artificial as the translation from Italian could be quite clunky and my kindle edition is sprinkled with typos. I gave it a break but the ideas and links between them soon made it compelling reading and I was unable to put it down. It turned out to be exactly what I have been looking for. But further, it has joined the dots for some questions I have been exploring about life the universe and everything - not quite 'chick lit' but union through love is in there. But in case you are disappointed there is even a romantic plot line!

As a psychotherapist I disagree with the argument made by Freudian psychoanalysis is exclusively about the past and that, as a consequence it is uniformly damaging. I also question the unqualified support for bioelectronic money to eradicate corruption and the assertion that its introduction would reduce taxation!

I saw the film *Interstella* just before finishing the book and was delighted to see that it seems to work with the same concepts. (Of course, when you 'buy a red car, you see red cars everywhere').

The book ends with 'to be continued...' so we can look forward to more. For information after the end of the book a 'flyleaf' says that it is based on The Law of Syntropy, Retrocausality, Murder in the Vatican, and as well as other essays available to download.



Science and Free Will

David Lorimer

FREE

Alfred R. Mele

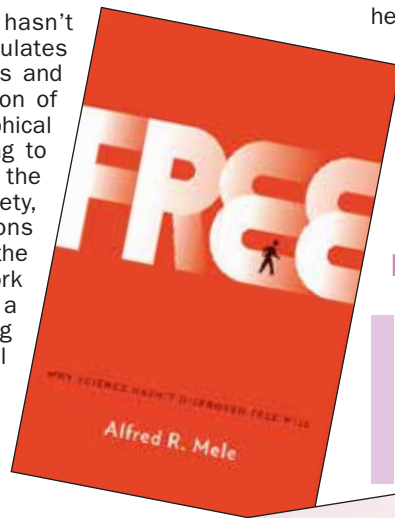
Oxford University Press, 2014, 99 pp., \$14.95,
h/b – ISBN 978-0-19-937162-4

The subtitle 'why science hasn't disproved free will' encapsulates the argument of this rigorous and interesting book. The question of free will has a long philosophical history and it was interesting to find that, in the annals of the Edinburgh Speculative Society, debates on these questions were regularly happening in the late 18th century. The Network has in the past provided a forum for questions relating to neuroscience, free will and the law, focusing on moral responsibility and accountability. If our brain states determine our behaviour, then to what extent can we be held accountable? These questions have become all the more pointed since experiments conducted from the 1980s onwards. Some experimenters argue that our decisions are made unconsciously and therefore outside our control. In addition, social psychologists advance many other outer factors that, they argue, preclude free will.

This book considers such experiments and social thought in some detail. Mele has been running two programmes funded by the John Templeton Foundation including Big Questions in Free Will, and will be presenting his arguments at this year's Beyond the Brain conference. He brings a nuanced understanding to the definition of free will with his idea of deep openness, while acknowledging the important role of the brain. He devotes a chapter to the well-known experiments by Benjamin Libet about readiness potential and the timing of decisions. Libet generalises his findings about urges and intentions to all intentional actions, which is a problem for Mele, who sets the arguments out schematically showing how their premises rest on shaky ground. He then moves on to more recent experiments with fMRI, from which similar arguments are derived. Pressing a button at a particular moment is not the same as carefully weighing the pros and cons of a particular course of action.

The next chapter moves onto behaviour-based challenges to free will, such as those advanced by Daniel Wegener with his arguments for automaticity. He maintains that no human actions are caused even partly by conscious intentions and therefore we have no free will. Mele asks why all actions need to be caused in the same way and echoes Keith Ward's argument about purposeful intention as a necessary category of explanation. His own less bold claim is that conscious intentions are among the causes of some human actions. He also looks at the work of Michael Gazzaniga on post hoc explanations and Philip Zimbardo on prison guards as well as the famous experiments by Stanley Milgram on obedience. The argument here is for situationism - a form of social determinism where a pattern of behaviour is automatically produced. This is also a form of post hoc explanation. The reality is more subtle: we are of course influenced by situations but can still choose a course of action, for instance when confronted by a person falling in the street.

In the last chapter, Mele considers where different people set the bar for free will - a modest version on the basis of rational informed decision-making, and a more ambitious



one involving deep openness that is also compatible with everything they have experienced. He concludes that the experiments discussed don't rule out the existence of modest free will, and that some experimenters set the bar too high by requiring conscious decisions entirely independent of brain activity, hence ruling out free will. This brings him back to the moral dimension with its legal implications for accountability and the observation that Gazzaniga is inconsistent in where he sets the bars for free will and responsibility respectively.

Interestingly, there is also research suggesting that denial of free will encourages bad behaviour so there are also pragmatic reasons for advocating it. Whether readers agree with this conclusion, they will in any event be stimulated by the arguments in this lucid and accessible book.

medicine-health

Paradigms and Cultural Humility

David Lorimer

SPIRITUAL PSYCHIATRIES

Natalie Tobert (SMN)

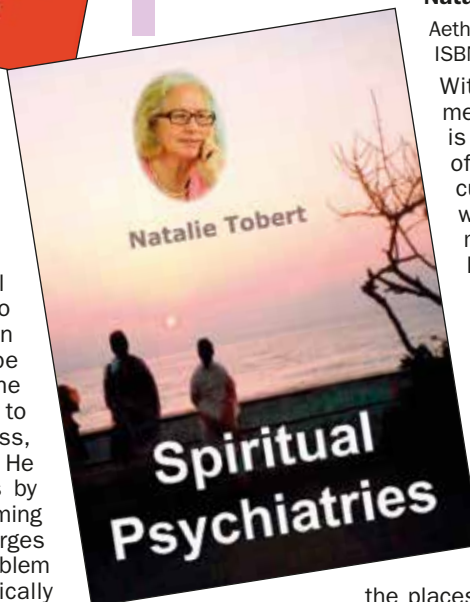
Aethos, 2014, 389 pp., £15, p/b –
ISBN 978-1-49496-225-8

With her background as a medical anthropologist, Natalie is able to take a wider view of the relationship between culture, beliefs and medicine with special reference to mental health practices in India and the UK. Her book is based on extensive fieldwork and interviews exploring both theories and practice for a wide range of mental conditions, which are ultimately about wellbeing - but perhaps more profoundly about inner peace. She works as a participant-observer relating vividly her own experiences of

the places and people she visits. Her approach is interdisciplinary, looking at biomedical, religious and spiritual strategies for addressing mental health.

She begins with Dr Basu, a psychiatrist from West Bengal where she conducts 40 interviews, mainly with healthcare practitioners and mental health patients, but also with philosophers, a guru, a priest, a Muslim cleric and two clairvoyants. Very early on, we learn that the Western model does not fit Indian beliefs about the nature of existence - a central theme that pervades the book. For instance, very few western psychiatrists take spirit possession seriously in the way that it might be recognised in India or indeed Brazil. In addition, consultations are not individual but involve the whole family so that there might be up to 18 people in the room. Patients themselves might consult priests, medical herbalists, homeopaths, healers or astrologers in addition to psychiatrists and psychologists. This reflects the range of perceived causal factors (such as past lives) and the corresponding explanation of symptoms. The reader also learns about the importance of social expectations, especially in relation to gender. Dr Basu observes that many Indian symptoms do not fit in with the latest formulations of the DSM and that cultural differences must be taken into account. He also explains that he keeps notes according to DSM criteria but also his own private classification.

The second part looks at treatment strategies, including pharmacology, homeopathy, herbal medicine and flower



remedies as well as the contribution of religious practices and spiritual establishments. All this is detailed in a series of informative charts. Dr Mistry explains his own background, including the role of Sri Aurobindo, who features prominently in the book. Mistry advocates a recognition of energy levels as well as biochemistry. Natalie relates her experiences of various holy places and healing rituals, noting that pilgrimages can also be an important component of mental health in helping maintain inner peace.

The next part looks at explanations for mental distress with chapters on mundane and esoteric models. The first considers substance abuse, physiological and psychological disorders, the influence of environment and disequilibrium. The second goes beyond orthodox Western models in considering planetary influences, past lives, subtle influences and spirit possession. This leads on to a discussion of the dominance of Western ideas and philosophy and medicine, including epistemology or the theory of knowledge. One can appreciate their resentment of the hegemony of Western approaches that take their own validity for granted and do not take into account the history of other ancient traditions that recognise levels beyond the physical. The idea, for instance, that a divine force should permeate the whole individual is foreign to Western philosophy although not to Western mysticism. We also learn that Dr Bisht was instrumental in adding the spiritual dimension to the WHO definition of health.

Models of health are embedded in existential paradigms that have a distinctive philosophy of the self and explanatory framework about the nature of reality. Many Indian practitioners feel that there is too much emphasis on the mechanistic model and that the causal efficacy of consciousness and mind should be recognised. Natalie goes on to show how these considerations are relevant to UK populations, especially those with high ethnic diversity. 40% of the population of London are from minority ethnic groups, with 32% born outside the UK. Mental health currently costs £105 billion a year or 23% of the total budget. One can appreciate the importance of broader cultural perspectives in this context and Natalie's call for some cultural humility. An important part of her work is the explanation of the relevance of other cultural models to the standard clinical medical model as physicians will certainly encounter these in their practice as reflected in the experience of their patients. This may be a step too far for some, but it is important to understand the psychological impact of other beliefs.

Natalie then reports on some of her own initiatives in Harrow and their potential transferability. She makes a compelling case for a deeper interpretation of human experiences and the relevance of other cultural beliefs, and that they may be more verifiable than we might think from a materialistic or Eurocentric perspective. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in (this) philosophy. Natalie's sympathetic and wide-ranging book advocates wider models of mental health based on real human experiences that should inform mental health practices in multicultural societies.

Opening a Therapeutic Space

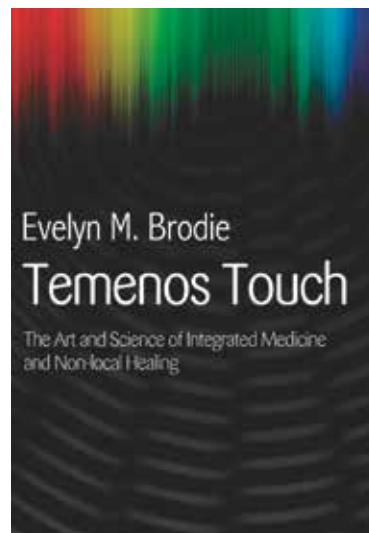
David Lorimer

THE TEMENOS TOUCH

Evelyn M. Brodie (SMN)

Waterside Press 2015, 193 pp., no price given, p/b.

Evelyn's life journey is remarkable by any standards. After studying economics at Glasgow and Stanford, she embarked on a successful 20-year career as an economist, financial TV journalist and corporate communications executive a result of which she wrote her first book in 2004 entitled *Corporate Bitch to Shaman - uncovering the links between 21st-century science, consciousness and the ancient healing practices*. The reader knows they are in for an interesting ride with the dedications listed even before the contents page is including



Peruvian shamans, craniosacral therapy, rebirthing, psycho synthesis, Reiki, Tantra, deep memory process, constellations therapy, and five rhythms dance and movement meditation. Very few of us have such a wide range of experience to draw on. The book itself is divided into three sections: science, art and a shorter one of experiences and case studies. The two major scientific and medical influences are Ervin Laszlo and Larry

Dossey with his framework of three medical eras - mechanical, psychosomatic and nonlocal.

For those unfamiliar with her earlier work, Evelyn retells her story in the first chapter and the turning point represented by a workshop on remote viewing, which shattered her materialistic understanding of life. She lived a double track existence with a full-time job between that time and 2010, when she embarked on a seven-month initiatic journey to Peru, India, Thailand and Laos. When she returned, she felt ready to embark on her new life as a shamanic practitioner, energy healer and bodyworker with first-hand experience of what she calls the omnipresent inforealm. Right from the beginning, she emphasises choice and responsibility. She gives a clear explanation of the science of the inforealm, drawing also on the work of Rupert Sheldrake before moving on to neurobiology and the nature of the mind-body connection with respect to stress and trauma. Her well-informed discussion of holonomic brain draws on the work of Iain McGilchrist among others and challenges the readers not to get stuck in old belief patterns but rather to take responsibility for learning, evolving and growing.

The second part enables readers to apply some of these theories to the body in a practical and therapeutic way so that one comes to appreciate the relationship between accumulated experience and blockages in the body. This may involve communicating with parts of the body where pain is trapped; sometimes this is related to sexuality. Real healing may involve work with the shadow and accessing core wounds, not a comfortable process. The therapeutic space - or temenos of the title - needs to be one of intention, attention and empathy - being really open to whatever comes up in working deeply with the energy field.

There are then separate chapters on Reiki, shamanic healing, past life regression, working with ancestors through constellations therapy, and the importance of ceremony and ritual. The case histories bring the ideas to life and one realises the nonlocal importance of one's own quality of thought, especially when directed towards others. Evelyn clearly has remarkable intuitive and energetic capacity in getting to the root of her clients' issues and it is clear that she has managed to integrate insights from many of the traditions that she has studied. It is important to identify the right level or kind of treatment as well as identifying the source of the challenge. There are a number of rituals that we can profitably do in our everyday lives in order to reconcile ourselves with the past and move clearly into the future. The detailed case histories reinforce the reader's understanding of various complementary interventions and the outcome of the book is an encouragement to the reader to embark on our own healing work, shedding our limiting beliefs and connecting with our true potential. The book is an inspiration to do just that.

Super-Cure or Just Hot Air?

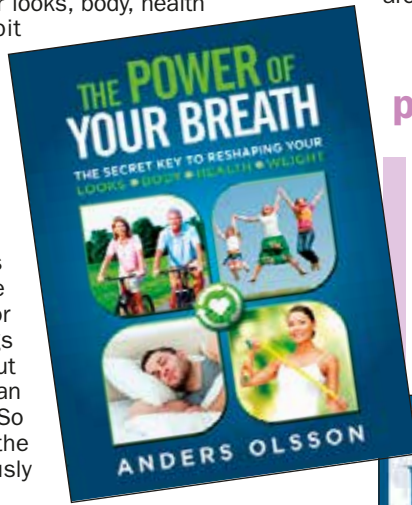
Gunnel Minnett

THE POWER OF YOUR BREATH

Anders Olsson

Creative Commons, 2014, 260 pp., illustrated, £7.24, p/b - ISBN 9 789197 615150 www.consciousbreathing.com

A secret key to reshaping our looks, body, health and weight sounds a bit too good to be true. In particular since it is all just about changing the way we breathe. But the book gives very compelling evidence as to how and why changing our breathing pattern can have such profound effect on us. And, as the author points out, breathing is one of the most important functions for all animals, human beings included. We can be without food and water far longer than we can be without oxygen. So why shouldn't it be that the way we breathe is enormously important?



One interesting aspect of our breathing is that it can be both an automatic process and a voluntary activity: we don't need to remind ourselves to keep breathing, our brain/body ensures this happens automatically. On the other hand, we can also take control over our breathing pattern. A downside of this flexibility is that we tend to use breathing as a way of controlling our stress level and the interaction between inner and outer worlds. The result of this is often incorrect breathing that leaves our body operating on a less than optimal level.

According to research presented in the book, most of us have several problems with our breathing. Many over-breathe i.e. take in too much oxygen which changes the balance of carbon dioxide in the blood, which in turn is the trigger for our breathing reflex. Here the positive side of our ability to breath flexibly comes in. By consciously retraining ourselves to breathe in an optimal way we can change the body's intake of air and reset it in the best possible way so as to maximise the body's 'working environment'.

The book is filled with examples of incorrect breathing patterns, why we have them and how to change them and the effects this will have. Although the title of the book mainly refers to the physical aspect of breathing, it also deals with the effects of incorrect breathing on the psyche.

Although we still have a long way to go to pay the same attention to breath-retraining in the western world, the situation is different in other parts of the world. Eastern knowledge and use of breath (re)training has very ancient roots.

The fact that ancient Greek traditions also paid attention to breathing can be seen in words such as *schizophrenia* that is derived from the root *phren* meaning both diaphragm and mind.

So, even if it does seem too good to be true, understanding how to breathe correctly does hold the key to eliminating stress, boosting the immune system and living a healthier and happier life. Plus, it's cheap and without side effects! (You can't be asked more than that of any cure.) This book establishes this conclusion without any doubt.

For the breathwork community this book should be of particular interest since it presents theories as to how to breathe that to some extent contradict common beliefs, particularly in Rebirthing and Holotropic Breathwork. Although previous attempts to bring together breathworkers of all schools of thought have not been very successful, perhaps now is the time to attempt this type of interchange again.

The fact that techniques, which focus on over-breathing or hyperventilation, can have results very similar to those which focus on the opposite, i.e. to slow breathing down and/or to breathe less, should trigger the curiosity of all breathworkers. And of course, curiosity is key to expanding knowledge - we should all have in common regardless of our starting point. Another thing we can agree about, regardless of school or technique, is that breathwork is a new and mainly unexplored area that we all need to learn more about.

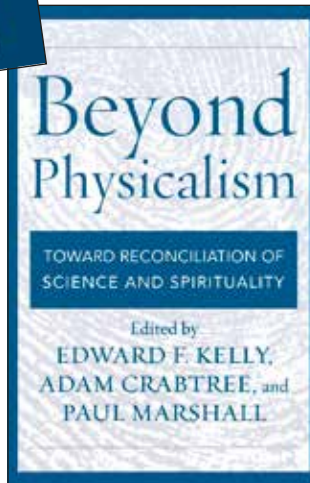
philosophy-religion**Time to Knuckle Down!**

David Lawton

BEYOND PHYSICALISM

Edited by Edward F. Kelly, Adam Crabtree and Paul Marshall

Rowman and Littlefield, 2015, 636 pp., £40/\$60, p/b - ISBN 978-1-4422-3238-9



It is now eight years since the publication of *Irreducible Mind* (IM). In that seminal work, the authors, led, as here, by Ed Kelly, set out the evidence which, to their own satisfaction (and mine), demonstrated the falsity of the physicalist conception of brain/mind relations. The evidence was drawn from everyday phenomena (e.g. memory and intentionality), but especially from "rogue" phenomena: psi, extreme psychophysiological influence (e.g. stigmata), OBES, NDEs, mediumship, mystical experience and others.

In the final section of IM, its authors wrote: "Nothing would do more to hasten their wider recognition and acceptance, we believe, than identification of an alternative theoretical outlook that is scientifically defensible and that would permit and perhaps ultimately even explain them." *Beyond Physicalism* (BP) is the companion volume to IM - it is a record of its authors' efforts to produce that alternative theoretical outlook.

The purpose of BP is not polemical but progressive: 'toward reconciliation of science and spirituality' - in the words of the book's subtitle. The authors assume and affirm the reality of rogue phenomena. They do not pander to those wilfully ignorant of past and present experimental data and experiential evidence, nor do they have any truck with pseudo-sceptics.

There is much talk of a new paradigm - now is the time to knuckle down and develop it!

A New Metaphysics (1-2)

In the first chapter, Ed Kelly neatly summarizes the findings of IM and lays out what a new metaphysics must be able to accommodate. In the second chapter, Paul Marshall sets out a wide-ranging account of the phenomenological features of mystical experience, emphasizing its strong linkage to psi. Psychic and/or mystical experience also feature in other rogue phenomena, and thus a theory that purports to explain any of them must explain them all.

'Physicalism is *metaphysics*, not science; an interpretation of matters of fact, not itself a matter of fact.' (p. 80) Physicalism is conspicuously incapable of accommodating, let alone explaining, rogue phenomena. The principal test of any new

metaphysics must be its explanatory power. Explanatory power is not just explanatory scope, but also explanatory detail. A metaphysic must not merely permit rogue phenomena to be real; it must explain why those specific phenomena are *the* rogue phenomena. It is in terms of their promise to achieve explanatory power that I will approach the theoretical outlooks set out in chapters 3-13 (I omit chapter 6 on Jung-Pauli's dual-aspect monism as it explicitly states that it attempts no explanations).

Permission/Filter Theory (3-4)

Ed Kelly writes: '...these "rogue" data collectively support an alternative class of models which view the brain not as the generator of consciousness but as an organ of adaptation to the everyday environment, selecting, focusing, channelling, and constraining the operations of a mind and consciousness inherently far greater in capacities and scope. ... The *primary purpose* of the present book is to develop this central concept in detail.' (p. xiv – my italics) In chapter 3, Michael Grosso presents a brief history of the permission/filter model. Two key features of the model are that the mental factor "pre-exists" the brain it operates on and through, and that there is a mobile psychophysical threshold that, when lowered, allows rogue phenomena to occur. Grosso warns that terms like "permission" or "filter" are inevitably metaphorical, and they are bound to mislead if we take them too literally.

In Chapter 4, Ed Kelly and David Presti review the scant research on the neurobiological and psychophysiological correlates of rogue phenomena. They advocate a much fuller research programme, for rogue phenomena '*clearly must be tied, in ways we presently do not understand, to functional states of the brain.*' (p. 121) However, in NDEs due to cardiac arrest, we have a *non-functioning* functional state of the brain with many rogue phenomena present (psi, OBE, mystical experience), so such research may not prove as illuminating as the authors hope (pace the human genome project).

William James, whose thinking on these matters is always careful and considered, agnostic yet open, does not commit himself, as do some of the authors, to 'an antecedently existing consciousness that is the source of *all* manifestation' (p. 514, my italics) but to "the more" which could either be 'this common reservoir of consciousness' or 'the larger psycho-physical world.' (p. 522) It seems clear that a "principle of limitation" (p. 408) is necessary, but whether this is best conceived in terms of permission/filter theory is less so.

Anchored in Physics (5 & 7)

In chapter 5, Henry Stapp begins his framework from John von Neumann's "orthodox" formulation of Heisenberg's quantum mechanics, a formulation in which there is a "cut" between the classical observer and the quantum observed. Von Neumann makes a "high" cut at the mind-world interface: 'an "abstract ego" (something akin to Nagel's objective self or even a formal postulate) ...ontologically distinct from the atomically constituted physical world.' (p. 166) The "abstract ego" is, for Stapp, the source of free choice as to what variable to measure in a quantum experiment and also the epistemological subject in a knowledge-based conception of physics.

Stapp writes: 'Yet each such ego retains, in the orthodox theory, a quantum dynamical linkage to its associated physical brain'. This is a natural assumption but is the physical brain a privileged part of 'the atomically constituted physical world'? Unfortunately, I see no promise in Stapp's expansion of the "abstract ego" to a fully-faceted, fully-faculted mind; a psychic self or a surviving soul, as this neglects, for example, the quasi-physical properties of, say, crisis apparitions, especially in collective and reciprocal cases. However, this is not to say that something akin to the "abstract ego" of quantum mechanics will not prove necessary for the metaphysical understanding of free will and knowledge and hence for agentive and noetic features of rogue phenomena.

A more promising approach via physics, and known to many members, is the hyperspatial model of SMN chairman Bernard Carr. The main appeal of Bernard's model lies in its parallels

to metaphysical models from the great spiritual traditions: a hierarchy of subtle bodies, of realms, of consciousness, of spatial and temporal experience, and all within a structure that ascends to unity via unification (the *raison d'être* of Kaluza-Klein and their descendent models in physics). Furthermore, Bernard is the only theorist singled out by Ed Kelly in Chapter 14 for real explanatory power, where the explanatory scope is matched by explanatory detail in respect of J-P Jourdan's research into reports of higher dimensional perception during NDEs. Although I doubt the ultimate success of a physics-based metaphysics of experience, this hyperspatial model of some rogue phenomena may prove seminal.

Mystical Philosophy (8-10)

In mystical philosophy, at least in the popular view, practice takes priority over theory, ritual over doctrine, vision over reason, experience over explanation. Theory, doctrine, reason and explanation subserve practice, ritual, vision and experience.

Nevertheless, there have been adepts who were also persons of high or even genius level philosophical ability. In chapters 8-10, we are expertly introduced to four of them: Neoplatonists Plotinus and Iamblichus by Gregory Shaw; Yoga philosopher Patanjali by Ed Kelly and Ian Whicher; and Tantric philosopher Abhinavagupta by Loriliai Biernacki.

Findings as well as insights of mystical philosophy may well need to be incorporated into the new metaphysics. First among the latter is that plurality emerges from unity. That which is individuated retains connection born of that unity. The purpose of individuation is to return via stages of unification (higher states of psychic and somatic being) back to unity. First among the former and 'represent[ing] a possible watershed in our theory-constructing efforts' (p. 507) is the notion of the subtle body. The idea of the subtle body is endemic to the world's spiritual traditions and plays an essential role in the explanation of psi, of astral journeys, of post-mortem survival and of encounters with the divine, i.e. in most rogue phenomena.

Western Metaphysics (11-13)

A new metaphysics needs to incorporate the best of our scientific knowledge and the best of mystical philosophy.

Chapters 11-13 are the most challenging in the book for they illustrate how radical and revolutionary the displacement of physicalism might need to be. The three authors base their own attempts to displace physicalism on the work of Leibniz, C.S. Peirce and A.N. Whitehead.

Paul Marshall has, over a period of twenty years, honed a neo-Leibnizian monadology: 'the world consists of numerous, indivisible, transforming units. These "monads" are not the atoms of the materialists but complete perceptions of the universe organized from centres.' 'To the question "Why are we conscious of so little?" Leibniz would reply that it is because most of our perceptions are indistinct' (p. 389). Marshall would reply (hence the neo-) that it is because most of our perceptions are filtered.

Allowing for its fantastic premises, Marshall skilfully applies the monadology to the mind-body problem: the problem of sense perception and the "combination/binding" problem; relativistic and quantum physics; psi, post-mortem survival and mysticism. The explanatory scope of the monadology is so impressive that I suspect that there is something (of real value) in it.

Adam Crabtree, a psychotherapist, gives us a clear and concise account of Peirce's thought (an idealist evolutionary pantheism) and his way of thinking (abduction – 'the play of musement in which ideas are associated in a new synthesis' (p. 425)).

Crabtree seems sympathetic to many features of Peirce's thought: mind is all that exists, it is continuous and all is connected (synechism); the individual self is constituted by its relations to others and is distinguishable but not separate

from others; there must be a personal God and God's love is the driver of the evolutionary process. Peirce's emphasis on connection, unification, love (*essentially* unification) and unity may well prove central to a new metaphysics.

In chapter 13, Eric Weiss sets out his neo-Whiteheadian, transphysical process metaphysics: reality is constituted by "actual occasions" – drops of experience that come in three broad grades: physical/low-grade, vital/medium-grade and mental/higher-grade. There are ontologically separable worlds of each grade. This is important, for Weiss claims that non-metric transphysical worlds (e.g. the (vital) dream world) are *as actual* as the waking world ('the world of our everyday experience, and the physical world which is abstracted from it'). If you're reading this review in a dream then this is just as real as if you're reading it awake!

With regard to rogue phenomena, Crabtree writes more of Peirce's interest in them than of Peirce's metaphysics as fruitful in explaining them. Explanations of rogue phenomena seem tangential to Weiss' main purpose of expounding/promoting his own metaphysics. Crabtree and Weiss make claim for the explanatory scope of their metaphysics, but detail is lacking, so explanatory power is not evident.

Toward a Conceptual Framework (14-15)

In Chapter 14, Ed Kelly sets out to collate and combine the ideas and insights gleaned from the frameworks presented, in order to formulate a provisional view of the new emerging paradigm. His final characterisation is that of an 'idealistic evolutionary pantheism' (p. 537). 'The divine game is to return to one's point of origin, back to the bosom of the One, and complete the circular (or spiral?) journey.' (p. 101)

In pantheism, God is immanent and transcendent: the playing of the game and, *at the end*, its winning. We and our lives are within the game.

Pantheism is the authors' way of reconciling science and religion. The form of this metaphysics seems very promising, but is pantheism an unnecessary sop to religion? God is not a neutral term and, alas, I cannot envisage it ever becoming one. Would it not have been better to plump for the One or Tao?

Pantheism is temporal and eternal: the playing of the game is evolutionary and hence temporal. This evolutionary-temporal feature is the main subject of the final chapter by Michael Murphy. However, many rogue phenomena involve a transformation or even transcendence of temporality, and thus may it not be more accurate to say that the meta-realization of the One is *via* temporality rather than being temporal *in itself*?

In Conclusion

I suspect that the Sursem project has been, in recent times, the longest lasting and most intellectually substantial enquiry into rogue phenomena. It has resulted in two mammoth works: *Irreducible Mind*, surely destined to become as much of a classic as James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and now *Beyond Physicalism* – a volume that not only provides much food for thought but is in itself a feast of thinking.

Our gratitude should go to, above all others, the tireless Ed Kelly who, with his editorship and outstanding contributions to IM and BP, has secured a place as one of the great pioneers in the field.

The publication of *Beyond Physicalism* is the culmination of a 16-year project to set the search for a new paradigm on a secure scientific and evidential basis – it remains now for the research community or, more likely, a lone thinker to complete the task.

David Lawton is an independent philosopher with interests in metaphysics, the paranormal and survival.

Inner Empiricism – from self to Self

David Lorimer

WHAT IS GOD?

Jacob Needleman

J.P Tarcher/Penguin, 2009, 305 pp., \$14.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-58542-847-2



In French there is a word 'distrain', which translates as absent-minded and is a cognate of the English word distracted. It is a commonplace to state that we are living in an age of distraction - distracted from distraction by distraction. This means an absence of mind or attention, of being present in life and with each other. Gurdjieff, who reckoned that most human beings lived in a form of waking sleep, recommended an important practice of self-remembering - of being

aware that one is aware. Normally, almost as soon as one does this, one loses this awareness until next time one remembers oneself.

At one level, this lucid book is a dialogue between Needleman as the Professor and as the Seeker - he moves from a purely intellectual approach to one that goes beyond the mind and includes the heart. I remember a Hungarian Mystic at a meeting in Prague saying that the spiritual journey was all about the route between the head and heart. Although the title might suggest a purely philosophical exploration, the book is much more than this, probing a deeper or higher level of understanding beyond the outward facing mind. It advocates an inner empiricism to match the outer empiricism of science - also discussed in my other review of Needleman's book on the environment.

Early in the book, he relates a key episode where he was fortunate enough, at the age of 22, to have an interview with DT Suzuki. He arrived armed with philosophical knowledge from Plato, Kant, Kierkegaard and others. Early in the encounter, he asks his key question: what is the self? Suzuki pauses and answers, as one might expect a Zen master to do: 'who is asking the question?' It is a critical moment, and Needleman no longer knows what to say. There is something, however, about the very presence of Suzuki that raises a question. What is it that informs what we call presence? He refers to a number of individuals who possessed this quality, notably Lord Pentland and Jeanne de Saltzman, both of whom were part of the Gurdjieff work.

In another telling episode, he is with a Tibetan lama, Lobsang Lialungpa, who asks him how many human beings he can see in the crowd around. Many human beings, but how many human beings? Then what does it mean to become a real human being? This is where inner attention and self-creation come in. In answering the question of the book's title, Needleman suggests that the only real proof of the existence of God is the existence of inwardly developed human beings. John Pentland and Jeanne de Saltzman were two such people: 'it is only in and through people, inwardly developed men and women, that God can exist and act in the world of man on earth.' These people are those who are inhabited by and who manifest God, and the evidence or proof is perceived 'by means of what their presence evokes in oneself.' This presence is a certain quality of being or emanation that has been developed through spiritual practice and that incarnates a higher form of energy and attention. It is also a transformational way of knowing or *gnosis* that early Christians knew to be consistent with *pistis*, but which lay beyond it. In meeting Pentland, it simultaneously deflated his mind and gave him a glimpse of higher understanding that also radiated a quality of love. For most of us, there is a gap between how we imagine ourselves to be and what we can be by doing this inner work. I was reminded in this respect of the journey and writings of Simone Weil, who also placed great emphasis on attention.

In Jeanne de Salzmann, Needleman experiences a sense of silence as sacred energy, emphasising the importance of the quality of one's attention and awareness. He even goes so far as to say that I am my attention, that this attention gives a new and more meaningful sense of life. This means that the question about what God is entails a parallel question about the nature of the human. In this model, the energy that comes from above has to incarnate in the body - perhaps this is the true meaning of incarnation in a personal sense. For the Bulgarian sage Beinsa Douno, this meant the embodiment of the principles of love, wisdom and truth - indeed his tomb bears no name, only these three principles along with justice and virtue. We need both to receive and manifest this higher energy in order to awaken and make the journey between self and Self: 'few human beings exist who in themselves incarnate the action within their own human frame of the great conscious forces and laws of creation and conscious evolution.' This kind of presence is a force of consciousness and compassion. We need to move from being distracted and dissipated, without attention, to a state of more consistent and centred attention. What Needleman calls heartless brilliance is clearly insufficient to address the challenges brought about by cleverness without wisdom.

No one can do this work for another, because it depends on the understanding derived from personal experience and, as Gurdjieff suggests, only understanding can lead to being, and being is expressed in presence. This process involves both a descent and an ascent, as represented in the Star of David where the human being is interpenetrated with the divine presence. In Christianity, this is also about a receptivity to grace, but in either event the journey makes inner demands on us. We are constantly creating and recreating ourselves through our thoughts, feelings and actions. This higher, finer and more subtle energy can act through each of us but we ourselves must open up to allow this process to occur, which means regular periods of silent receptivity and tuning to inform the quality of our outer action in the world. Although this brilliantly written book is one man's reflective journey, there are many insights that we can all apply to our own lives.

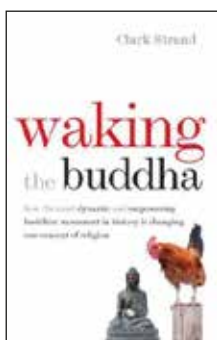
The Buddhist Reformation

Martin Lockley

WAKING THE BUDDHA

Clark Strand

Middleway Press, New York, 2014, 184 pp., \$14.95, p/b - ISBN 978-0-9779245-6-1



Waking the Buddha by Clark Strand, spiritual writer and former Zen Buddhist monk, is a story about a very old religion taking a surprising, interesting and perhaps revolutionary new turn. The book is essentially an historical account of the rise of the Nichiren Buddhist lay group Soka Gakkai, known as the "Value Creation Society." Although founded by Nichiren in the 13th Century, the Soka Gakkai (SG) group has its origins in the 20th century with one Tsunesaburo Makiguchi who was imprisoned by the Japanese

authorities during the Second World War for "thought crimes" ostensibly towards his own culture and people!

Josei Toda was also imprisoned at this time, later becoming legendary for his post-war energy in spreading the SG message. This message, which Josei Toda called a *Human Revolution* was simply that Buddhism was "life," meaning the daily life that "belonged to humanity." It involved people getting together in dialogue to solve day-to-day problems, independent of institutionalised bureaucracy, ritual, or priestly hierarchies. Makiguchi attacked the problems stemming from Japan falling out of step with human life and human values, by developing a system of "value creating pedagogy." He asked essentially what it means to be human: whether it means to

be "only" a member of a religion, nation or thought-crime-free tribe, or rather a "post-tribal" member of the human species. The SG has grown to be active in 192 countries as SG International (SGI), a movement characterised by "no dress code, no priests or monks, and no identifiable architectural style. It has preserved the substance of religious life and let the appearance of religion fall away."

This approach erases the "split between religion and life" that still exists in many modern minds, and highlights the difference between the old and new (SGI) paradigms. Is authentic Buddhism only for the priests or the monks? Many branches privilege monasticism, meditative practice, retreats or "spiritual vacations" over engagement in daily life and dialogue between adherents. In focusing on this split, Josei Toda was to help bring about a shift in consciousness and invite all human beings to participate in a new religious paradigm, almost, one might argue, beyond Buddhism. He called for the abolition of all nuclear weapons, not just to address Japanese fears, but to address the fears of all humanity. In 1958, his successor, Daisaku Ikeda, the third prominent member of SG discussed by Strand, was to impress and soften the stance of Chinese and Russian cold war powers by showing the problem was "plain and easy to understand" dealing simply with the common fears of humanity that could hardly be alleviated by intransigent national defence policy makers. [Many westerners have shared and still share these same fears].

As SG grew, and its reformers self-empowerment image spread, it outstripped the traditional Nichiren priestly establishment in size and popularity. The resulting backlash was that, in 1991, the entire SG membership was excommunicated. As one observer put it, the flea divorced the dog. SG was becoming what *Time* magazine was to call "an international people-to-people crusade against war"—a human revolution. Toda could be forceful. He advised his successor Ikeda "to fight adamantly against any evil that takes root within the priesthood," and in a decidedly non-Buddhist stance even went so far as to call for the death penalty for anyone using nuclear weapons.

The message was clear and popular: "Buddhism exists for the sake of ordinary human beings." Meditation may be good for your relaxation and well-being but, as our author (Strand) and others have recently asked, does it get you energised, "fired up" or have the power to waken you — to transform lives? Does it engage adherents and help address or solve the world's problems? Good question! Consider also the difference between many western approaches to Buddhism as a path individual spiritual growth and the more typical Asian paradigm of collective engagement with mentors and other community members.

To put it bluntly, the current baby boomer generation of western Buddhists could pass away leaving no lasting movement— whereas SGI seems destined to flourish as a truly authentic new religious reformation, engaging humans at a fundamental and inclusive level. It represents a paradigm that while appearing to have shed many of the visible trappings of traditional religion, in fact represents a fundamental integration of religious sensibility with daily life. This life-affirming movement, therefore, stands in rather stark symbolic contrast to traditional Japanese Shinto, sometimes called "Funeral Buddhism," ostensibly less concerned with the here than the hereafter! They say charity begins at home and so do many, if not most, innovative religious movements. SGI has adopted the "home-based discussion group model" aiming to make peace in this world, not the next.

Surely it is because religious movements too often become institutionalised, ritualised and ossified in traditional ruts that they lose their appeal and membership, regressing and retreating into tribalism and rigid, ritualistic, if not thought-policing mentalities. It is often "home-based" or home church movements that re-awaken the religious or spiritual spark latent if not already illumined in any one of us. In failing to conform to traditional religious models (consider how "non-conformist" Quakers shed ritual and priestly hierarchy in

favor of egalitarian and inclusive discussion) individuals may in fact be following the calling of the heart to engage with one another as human beings, and reform the institutions established by previous, but now outdated thought paradigms. Life is dynamic and to “conform” to its currents of thought and feeling is also to be constantly ready to “reform” and find ways to be more authentically human. SGI may have declined to conform with many traditional Buddhist ways but in doing so it has helped reform, revitalise and bring new life to this venerable tradition.

Towards an Undivided Life

David Lorimer

A HIDDEN WHOLENESS

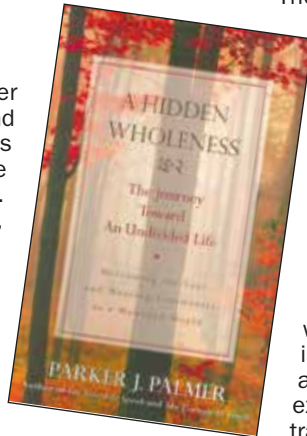
Parker J. Palmer

Jossey-Bass, 2004, 260 pp., \$19.95,
p/b – ISBN 978-0-470-45376

I had not heard of the work of Parker Palmer until a friend mentioned it and I ordered this book on Amazon. He is the founder of the Centre Courage and Renewal (www.couragerenewal.org) with a background as a Quaker, which deeply informs his work in what he calls circles of trust. This book explores ‘the shape of an integral life, the meaning of community, teaching and learning for transformation, and nonviolent social change.’ The phrase ‘hidden wholeness’ comes from Thomas Merton and does not mean perfection but rather embracing brokenness as an integral part of life. The divided life is in this sense a failure of human wholeness as we compromise our deepest aspirations and therefore our integrity. This often happens out of fear. There is a story about a man who wanted to take a stand about a new piece of agricultural legislation, but feared the consequences with respect to his position. The circle of trust enabled him to realise that he ultimately reported to the land rather than to his boss.

A circle of trust is a community that knows how to welcome the soul and to draw forth the real truth of the participants by allowing the inner teacher to speak. Thus we can arrive at and express our own discernments. It is not a matter of fixing or saving people, however uncomfortable, but of creating a space for the authentic voice to emerge. We need to be seen and heard rather than fixed. I agree with Palmer that the soul wants to keep us rooted in the ground of our being, connected to community and to tell us the truth about ourselves and therefore enable us to live an undivided life. He expresses the paradox of being alone together or in a community of solitude to allow this process to unfold as we become fully present to ourselves and connected with others in the circle. Life and death are both mysteries to be honoured rather than problems to be solved. He points out that helping others may in fact harm, illustrating this with a heart-rending story of Nicos Kazantzakis trying to help a butterfly emerge from the chrysalis and killing it in the process.

Palmer gives advice on how to run a group with non-coercive leadership (more is explained on the accompanying DVD). Here he uses poems and stories to deepen the conversation arising out of the silence. There are beautiful pieces from Derek Wolcott, Emily Dickinson and May Sarton, but the highlight is the story of wood carver from Chuang Tsu. The perfection of his craft required a deep preparatory process without which it could not have been attained. The conversation arising out of this story could go on for a couple of hours as everyone relates it to their own circumstances. The same applies to the other poems encouraging us to work from the inside out. This is what Palmer calls the work before the work. In this context, he defines truth as ‘an eternal conversation about things that matter, conducted with passion and discipline.’ In this way, a tapestry of truth can be created from diverse strands of



insight. He likens holding the focus to holding a small bird in the palms of our two hands, and warns against temptations to interfere with the process. He relates an arresting story involving the grandson of Carl Jung on a panel of experts about dream interpretation. One of the cards submitted contained a horrific recurring dream about a concentration camp and Palmer’s friend began to prepare her interpretation. At this point, Jung’s grandson simply asked people to stand in a moment of silence in response to the dream. A few days later, she was discussing this with one of her teachers who remarked that ‘there is in life a suffering so unspeakable, a vulnerability so extreme that it goes far beyond words, beyond explanations and even beyond healing. In the face of such suffering all we can do is bear witness so no one need suffer alone’ - a profound observation.

The last part considers nonviolence in everyday life, a commitment to honour the soul in every situation. Here Palmer introduces the important idea of the tragic gap where we must learn to hold the tension ‘between the *reality* of the moment and the *possibility* that something better might emerge.’ This combines realism with idealism and points to hope as a third way. It is not easy to hold this tension and we are inclined to react in a way that perpetuates the situation rather than draw on higher forces flowing through the broken heart. There is an old Hasidic tale about why we place holy words upon our hearts - they are closed, so that words cannot be placed in our hearts. However, when the heart breaks, the words will fall in. Palmer says that the wisdom of the soul is in suffering without shutting down, holding this tension and standing in the tragic gap. In this way, we can live and express an undivided life, recognising its gift but also its transience. We can bring more being and intention into the actions of everyday life. This beautiful book opens up a space inside to help us do this.

psychology-consciousness studies

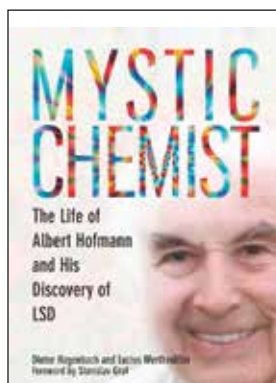
The Man who Opened the Doors of Perception

Paul Devereux

MYSTIC CHEMIST – THE LIFE OF ALBERT HOFMANN AND HIS DISCOVERY OF LSD

Dieter Hagenbach & Lucius Werthmüller

Synergetic Press, 2013, 383pp., \$38.95, p/b –
ISBN 978-090779144-7



Albert Hofmann was a chemist working for the Sandoz pharmaceutical company who synthesised Lysergic Acid Diethylamide, LSD, from ergot, (*Claviceps purpurea*), a parasite of rye. Ergotised bread had been the cause of various outbreaks of mass hallucinogenic hysteria, “St Anthony’s Fire”, across Europe in Medieval times, and probably before. On the occasion of his 90th birthday, I was privileged to have dinner with Hofmann, along with Charla Devereux and Ralph Metzner. I had assumed

this would be a last chance to meet the great man, but his whole demeanour was that of someone at least 30 years younger than his actual age, and, indeed, he was to live for another 12 years. *Mystic Chemist* gives a detailed biography of the man, his work and the legacy of his important and far-reaching discovery. The book is replete with illustrations,

including family album pictures of Hofmann's early and family life, many photographs showing him later on with some of the key ethnobotanical or psychedelic luminaries such as Richard E. Schultes, Timothy Leary, Stanislav Grof, Jonathan Ott, and many more, and handsomely garnished throughout with wonderful examples of colourful psychedelic art imagery.

After extensively describing Hofmann's biographical background, including an early spontaneous mystical experience, the authors provide a careful account of the discovery of LSD. Hofmann was engaged on routine analysis and synthesis of the alkaloids to be found in ergot, some of which proved to be medically helpful (in childbirth, for instance), and LSD-25 was duly synthesised as one of those in November 1938. Because Hofmann thought it might prove useful as a cardiovascular stimulant it was tested for that role but found to be not as effective as existing compounds. So Sandoz more or less forgot about it. But Hofmann claimed that he had a "strange premonition" that haunted him about the significance of LSD-25 and in 1943 he produced it again in his laboratory to test out possible uses for it. In the process, he unwittingly ingested a miniscule amount that sent him on what we would today call an "acid trip". At first he thought he had poisoned himself with something and was dying, but after a hastily summoned doctor assured him that he was physically fine, his experience transformed from a "bad trip" into a fascinating one. Finally identifying LSD-25 as the agent causing his experience, Hofmann and his team were shocked to realise the incredible potency of the substance. He and members of his team conducted further self-experiments with LSD, and his assistant, Susi Ramstein, became the first woman to take an LSD trip.

The authors of *Mystic Chemist* then proceed to conduct an extensive and detailed exploration of where the LSD story went thereafter, tracking how it was tested for psychotherapeutic purposes (with rather promising results), the ethnobotanical context, and the artistic, social, political and legal upheavals it occasioned, and the further potential it still holds for us. It is "the molecule that changed the world" the authors state, and it is true that never have so many people in the span of a couple of generations been able to penetrate into other dimensions of consciousness and travel to the hem of heaven, and, yes, the rim of hell.

Indeed, not only have artists, musicians, writers, philosophers, and media people partaken of the molecule, but so have many scientists, working in fields ranging from quantum physics to the biosciences. (SMN readers might be surprised to learn just how many of their scientific heroes in these fields have done so!) And the use of the raw "LSD alkaloid" in ergot may go way back into antiquity. The Eleusian Mysteries cult of ancient Greece, for example, may very well have used an ergotised beer for its sacramental drink (the *kykeon*) – which would mean that many of the great philosophers and thinkers of classical Greece, at the very foundations of western culture, received insights from the magical molecule.¹ And a discovery, too recent to be included in this book, of a piece of grass hosting an ergot parasite fossilised in a piece of amber some 100 million years old, shows that at least the potential for accessing the powerful alkaloids contained within ergot has existed from before and throughout the rise of all the strains of the *homo* genus.

I indelibly recall many things that Hofmann spoke about during that delightful dinner. One was that he felt modern humanity badly needed something like the Eleusian Mysteries if it was ever to break the narrow bounds of its collective consciousness and move towards greater enlightenment on a sufficiently broad scale, and he remarked how that a revelation LSD often provides is allowing us to understand the phoney way we perceive the outer world in normal consciousness; it is the opener of Blake's doors of perception. "We can measure the light that reaches the eye," he said, "and we can measure the impulses that travel via the optic nerve to the rear of the brain, but what happens then remains a mystery." And that is the mystery in which we dwell.

Anyone interested in knowing the full story of LSD, such an important element of the human story, will enjoy and value this hefty softcover tome.

1. Devereux, P. (1997/2008). *The Long Trip – A Prehistory of Psychedelia*, Viking Penguin/Daily Grail Publishing. 96-99pp.

Paul Devereux is Managing Editor of the Routledge academic publication, *Time & Mind - The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture*, and a research affiliate of the Royal College of Art. A long-time SMN member, he has written many books and papers - both general and peer-reviewed. One of his main areas of research is the study of sound at archaeological sites (archaeoacoustics).

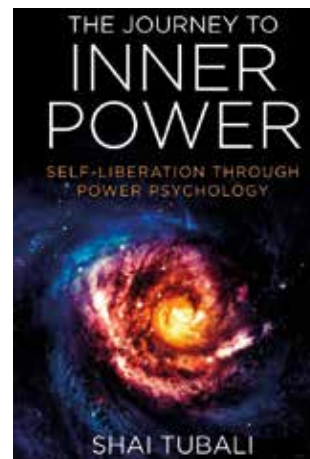
Nietzsche Updated

David Lorimer

THE JOURNEY TO INNER POWER

Shai Tubali

Changemakers Books (John Hunt) 2014, 343 pp., \$20.95, p/b
– ISBN 978-1-78279-712-8



Subtitled 'self-liberation through power psychology' and written from a psychotherapeutic background, this impressive book updates and extends the psychology of Friedrich Nietzsche based on the will to power as the fundamental driver of the human psyche. Nietzsche maintains that anything living is an incarnate will to power: 'it will strive to grow, spread, seize, become predominant - not from any morality or immorality but because it is *living* and because life simply *is* will to power.'

This is an expression of the instrumental or even exploitative attitude and a question that has engaged thinkers down the ages. Albert Schweitzer resolved it through his philosophy of reverence for life, whereby life devotes itself to life, while Arnold Toynbee found that spiritual love was the only force capable of overcoming the self-centredness inherent in being alive.

The three parts of this book explain the nature of the will to power, power psychology and inner transformations. Readers will bring their own life experience of relative power and powerlessness to the reading of the book, which will fundamentally influence how it is interpreted. Proponents of the theory will claim that those who refuse its truth are emotionally resistant and self-deceiving. This may be partly true, and it is certainly the case that the psychology of power explains many fundamental aspects of life, but not the whole of it - or does it? This is the key question raised and pursued in this book. The will is central to human life and the personality is in a sense a compromise between personal will to power and culture. In a spiritual sense, the will to power must be harnessed for the sake of self-growth. However, before that there are many phases to go through, which are clearly set out and explained: the primal narrative, replacement, compensation, vengeance and concealment - much of this is, of course, unconscious, but the patterns are clear in the examples given from the author's psychotherapeutic practice.

Will to power is fundamental in the political arena, but it is frequently disguised by the narrative of the victim and the perception that a country is endangered by an enemy; all this creates a smokescreen 'that makes it possible for them to continue with their violent acts.' One can see the truth of this historically but also in the contemporary scene. Tubali understands trauma and aggression as two sides of the same coin, with one representing powerlessness and the other and

imposition of power; again, the history of violence and sexual abuse demonstrates this dynamic. Despite all this, the author maintains that we can achieve inner power and explains the various processes involved. At the end of the book, he arrives at the point where the expansion of consciousness is the ultimate transformation that also fulfils the greatest yearning of the will to power in a corresponding feeling of empowerment. Instead of projecting one's power outwards, one focuses on becoming an internal ruler of reality and one has in a sense overcome oneself, which is what Nietzsche was ultimately talking about. The book is a challenging but illuminating journey into the hidden depths of the self and culture.

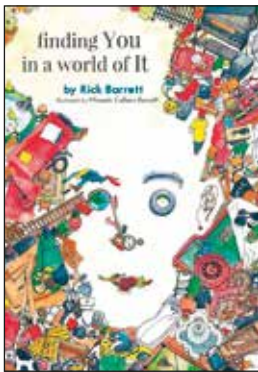
Light-hearted Wisdom

David Lorimer

FINDING YOU IN A WORLD OF IT

Rick Barrett

Living Matrix Publications, 2014, 175 pp., \$16.99, p/b - ISBN 978-0-9960-58858



Years ago in Cambridge, a friend gave me a copy of a famous book by the Hasidic philosopher Martin Buber – *I and Thou*. The title of this down-to-earth and humorous guide to living life to the full reflects Buber's distinction between the I-It and the I-Thou dynamic. Rick brings his background in Chinese martial arts and polarity therapy to bear on how to engage fully with life, using the philosophy of Buber along with other traditions as a starting point. Real life consists of meeting, not just experiencing.

For this, Rick identified three essential components: coherence or wholeness (he works with the human energy field on a daily basis) presence as conscious awareness of the moment, and relating where the you encountered is not an object but rather a co-creator of a vibrant world. In this context, he quotes Buber as saying 'when two people relate to each other authentically and humanly, God is the electricity that surges between them.'

An important starting point for Rick was a near fatal accident from which he made a miraculous recovery. He learned to slow things down, to participate fully in the moment and not to objectify or abstract his experience and become a non-participant in the world of It - what he calls the trance of objectification that takes us away from what is by putting it into a scheme (here Korzybski, Bohm and Krishnamurti come in). Rick gives a vivid example of the meaning of meeting when he holds his son Brian for the first time - an I-Thou moment of oneness and connection. This is possible, even in relation to objects if we, like Goethe, simply remove the mental barrier of separation (he illustrates this rather dramatically with an experiment involving fork-bending). He explains that we have two operating systems: the I-It and the I-Thou/You (I prefer to use the old form as it is an indication of intimacy and still exists in other European languages). Buber called the first experiencing and the second relating - in these moments there are no objects, no thoughts even, perhaps only love.

We can in fact choose between these operating systems, and Rick provides exercises to bring this to life, commenting that there are no thoughts in the I-Thou system, which is entirely in the present. By contrast, the I-It is already in the past. Ironically, he identifies words as the biggest barrier to awakening from the trance of objectification where people are objects rather than subjects. Indeed, he defines the ego as an objectification of the self. He then moves on to wholeness and coherence, sharing a crucial insight that, by pointing his index fingers, his fear and anxiety disappeared, and the coherence of his energy was restored. This sounds disarmingly simple, but readers can try it for themselves, and it can also be applied

in meditation. The key is to bring presence or consciousness to each action and to create space between our thoughts. This means bringing attention in the now to what is, without adding any explanation. Here the technique interfaces with mindfulness, which one can understand is essential for Rick when he is working with people's energy fields.

He suggests a simple technique of self-location by asking where am I now and answering here I am. Interestingly, he applied this technique with great success to a round of golf and played better than he had for over 20 years. I intend to try this myself next month, especially given the fact that I have played very little golf for six months. We can each apply this technique to reset our awareness many times a day. Rick gives another example from the martial arts where used the technique to win a match against a much larger man. Many people have written about love and fear, which Rick claims can only exist in the separate state of the I-mind and can be overcome by meeting in the Buber sense. People can ask themselves what game they are playing and in the process become more present, changing the game when necessary. Of course, this requires practice, which the martial arts call Kung-fu, and applies to the acquisition of any skill or expertise. This book helps the reader apply this to life itself in a simple and accessible manner as a way of changing the quality of one's experience - what could be more important?

Do we Really Need to Know?

Gunnel Minett

HOW SEXUAL DESIRE WORKS, THE ENIGMATIC URGE

Frederick Toates (SMN)

Cambridge University Press, 2014, 498 pp., £25.99, p/b - ISBN 978-1-107-68804-9,

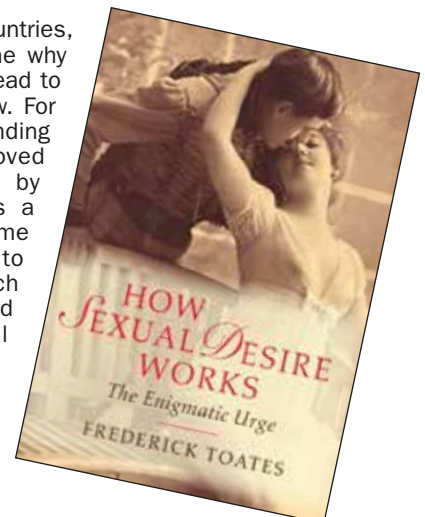
Whether we like to admit it or not, sexual desire plays a central role in our lives. Fortunately for the majority of people it is a source of joy, which not only helps us bond with a partner, but also brings us a sense of general wellbeing throughout life.

Sexual desire plays such a central role because it's essential for the survival of the species. Because it's so central, nature has made sure that it becomes a strong driving force in our lives. The potential downside of such a strong urge or drive is that, when all doesn't go according to nature's plan, a darker side of sex emerges. Many crimes in society are sex-related and throughout history much effort has gone into attempts to regulate and control sexual urges to make sure they are expressed in positive ways.

Sadly, the results of these control efforts have not always been what was intended. Simply punishing sexual offenders does not change their behaviour. To prescribe celibacy does not remove sexual desire. Separating women, or heavily restricting their appearance or movements, does not change much either. On the contrary, we've seen many examples of unintended consequences from, and revisions of, attempts to control sexual expression.

In Britain, as in many other countries, a growing understanding of the why and how of sexual urges has led to a more open and tolerant view. For instance, a growing understanding of homosexuality has removed the attempt to control it by criminalisation. Now there is a growing acceptance that some people just are attracted to the same-sex and that such relationships can be as valid and as important as heterosexual relationships.

In Britain, recently, revelations of sexual abuse have frequently been in the news,



revealing sexual abuse on a shocking scale, often committed by people with some form of authority, for example, celebrities taking advantage of their position, clergy and people in charge of children's homes.

One conclusion to draw from all of this is that traditional attitudes and attempts to control sexual misbehaviour have not been successful. Naming and shaming or punishing people in other ways does not change sexual behaviour. The only positive outcome maybe that it can help the victims to deal with their trauma. But changing unwanted behaviour requires a deeper understanding of the problem. This is one reason why a book like this is so important.

But for society it is not only a question of dealing with crimes committed. In order to prevent future crimes we need to understand the causes of sexual deviation. A theme of this book is that sexuality is a complex area that needs a broad approach to be understood properly. For instance, the book draws parallels between drug addiction and sexual addiction and points to the fact that understanding one may help understanding the other.

A major issue is how and when sexual preferences start to emerge. One theory is that there is a 'window of learning' for establishing sexual preferences, similar to that of native language learning (i.e., only available during a specific period early in life). During this period, it's important for children to get the right type of contact with all age groups. This should ring alarm bells concerning the avalanche of Internet pornography that can often provide the first sexual experiences for many children today. We have yet to see the full effects of this in future generations. In particular since the Internet may be providing a substitute for contact with adults and other children within the same age group.

Simply disapproving of, and trying to regulate, some forms of adult sexual behaviour may not be particularly effective. One such example is the attempts to protect children from paedophiles by very restrictive rules around contact between different age groups. This may help to keep potential paedophiles away, although too many examples show that this has not always been the case. But the real downside of these restrictions is that it prevents children from having natural contacts with adults, including physical contact, which is especially important for young children. This is particularly relevant since, according to the author, a common problem underlying sexually deviant behaviour is the lack of proper contact with adults during childhood.

The conclusion to draw from this book is that we need to get a clearer picture of how sexual desire works in order to understand how it can go wrong. Only then can we design appropriate measures to help people to develop a positive attitude to sex with all the positive benefits this will have for both the individual and society.

This book offers a broad and thorough view, including the latest research in psychology and neuroscience, as to the how and why of sexual desire and urges. It also offers suggestions for how to help people with problems in this area and should be seen as a valuable contribution to an improved attitude that will lead to a healthier and safer society.

Gunnel Minett is author of *Breath and Spirit*.

Freedom from Fear

David Lorimer

THE MOTIVATION MANIFESTO

Brendon Burchard

Hay House, 2015, 234 pp., £12.99, h/b – ISBN 978-1-4019-4807-8

In his endorsement of this book, the novelist Paulo Coelho remarks that it is a poetic and powerful call to reclaim our lives and find our own personal freedom.

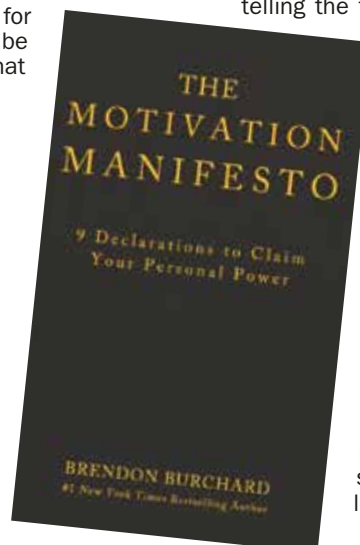
This is a good description of the energy of the book, following on from his previous one *The Charged Life*, which I also reviewed in these pages. Brendon Burchard is one of the leading personal development trainers in the world (www.brendonburchard.com), who started his work from nothing less than a decade ago and has based his work on his response to three questions arising from a car accident at the age of 19: did I live, did I love, did I matter? In the quantified world of what he calls busywork where we spend our time responding to everything and trying to catch up, he reminds us that our life's work is much more important and that if we respond to everything, we will accomplish nothing. Just last week, I received a quote from Stephen Covey encouraging me to schedule my priorities rather than prioritise my schedule.

One of the quotations at the beginning of the book is a well-known one from John F. Kennedy: 'conformity is the jailer of freedom and the enemy of growth.' The book begins stirringly with a summary of the nine declarations of personal power: we shall meet life with full presence and power, reclaim our agenda, defeat our demons, advance with abandon, practise joy and gratitude, not break integrity, amplify love, inspire greatness and slow time - so that we can feel alive and sense fully in the present. These are all expounded in the second part of the book, while the first part on human nature discusses freedom, fear and motivation. Freedom is both freedom to and freedom from, as famously discussed by Sir Isaiah Berlin in his *Two Concepts of Liberty*. A major issue is the way we can so easily trade our integrity for the security of conformity based on a fear of disapproval that can lead to not living our own authentic life. Brendon puts it starkly: fear wins or freedom wins, but we have to choose freedom repeatedly.

Brendon himself practises what he preaches in terms of sustained motivation and ambitiously working towards self-mastery - choosing to be, have, do, or experience something greater in our lives through attention and effort translated into action. This is a willed choice. Two of the nine declarations have a spiritual underpinning in the present: 'all that we love of life can be accessed only now' - just this evening I spent time contemplating the beauty of some primroses shaking gently in the breeze with some small blue flowers just nearby and a fragrant smell coming from other white flowers. This was a precious moment that I might easily have missed. Brendon also suggests that we must enter fully into our various roles as observer, director, guardian, warrior, lover and leader. Among the demons we must defeat are doubt and delay, taking positive and decisive action with clarity and intent; we do not need to seek permission, and have all the resources within ourselves. His chapter on joy and gratitude is particularly inspiring and in it he suggests many things we can be grateful for. The chapter on integrity begins with a quotation from Epictetus: 'first say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do' - a succinct injunction. This requires character, and he proposes six practices of integrity: thinking before we act, never committing to anything where we lack passion, keeping our word, treating others with respect, telling the truth and always favouring action;

then there are corresponding temptations to overcome. I liked his phrase that wisdom is knowing who to be and what to do in a given situation; virtue is acting on that wisdom. Brendon encourages us to open the heart and let the energy of life flow through us in connecting with one another.

He believes that inspiring greatness demands action and excellence and lists a number of virtues for greatness. Here I felt that vision might have been added vision to such qualities as courage, responsibility and respect. It also struck me that the book is written largely from a masculine energy



and I wondered how more feminine readers would react to its sheer eloquent drive. Some questions, however, are important to all of us such as asking who we are and what is really important to us. Brendon suggests that we write our own manifesto in terms of our mission, plan of action and steps to be taken, which we should constantly reread and refine. As a whole, the book is a blueprint for a more intense as well as successful and worthwhile life where we learn to savour the moment, define our mission and make a contribution - well worth a read.

ecology-futures studies

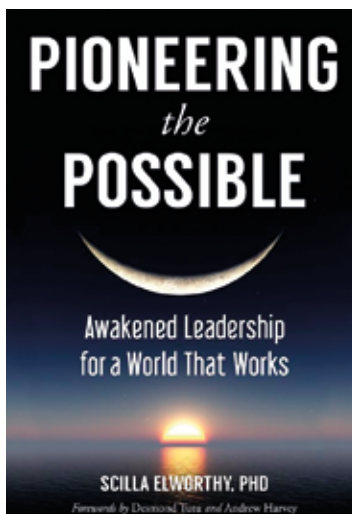
Visionary Activism

David Lorimer

PIONEERING THE POSSIBLE

Scilla Elworthy

North Atlantic Books, 2014, 326 pp., \$19.95, p/b - ISBN 978-1-58394-862-0



It would be a real triumph for the leap of consciousness advocated in this book if, at the fourth nomination, Scilla Elworthy were actually to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In this brilliant and inspiring account of how to pioneer the possible through awakened leadership, she draws on a lifetime of experience as a sacred activist to show that another world is possible and that it is up to us to imagine it and bring it to fruition. The book has stellar endorsements by

ambassadors, senior military figures and specifically from Anne Baring, Jean Houston and Edgar Mitchell.

It will come as no surprise to those who know her that, when at the age of 12 she saw pictures of the tanks rolling into Budapest, she immediately packed her bags to go and join in. Her mother told her that she had to get trained if she was to be of any use, which is just what has happened. Her career began in South Africa, then at UNESCO and in 1982 she founded the Oxford Research Group and later Peace Direct - in the first case she wanted to understand the decision-making process around nuclear weapons and in the second to showcase grass roots initiatives for solving conflict. At the annual gathering last year she told the story of how at a meeting at the Quaker Retreat Centre at Charney Manor she arranged for some residents to meditate in the library underneath the meeting room and how a senior official remarked that something was coming up through the floorboards!

This method highlights one of the central messages of the book, that effective outer action is based on inner work and power. Scilla defines an approach based on 'inner intelligence, on self-awareness, and thus on the ability to understand others' meaning the ability to be silent, listen deeply and work empathically. An important corollary of this approach is the need to deal with one's own anger and outrage and painfully discovering in the process that 'the moral high ground is not a useful place to stand.' Demonising the other can easily lead to an alienating self-righteousness that sabotages the entire intervention. Instead, she proposes the 'patient power' exhibited by Gandhi, Mandela and Suu Kyi. Humiliation simply increases resistance; we need to deal with our own shadow and difficult feelings.

The premise of the book is that a leap of consciousness is both necessary and possible. It brings in the balancing power of the feminine, the reality of interconnectedness and a consequent transformation of value systems. Scilla gives practical examples of individuals who have developed an inner power and put it into action. Some are well known like Desmond Tutu (Scilla worked with him and the Elders), Thich Nhat Hanh and Aung San Suu Kyi (who is a long-term meditator), while others are less celebrated but no less remarkable in addressing genocide in Congo and even two women becoming the hub of Scilla's village by re-opening the shop - before they did so they surveyed the villagers to find out what they would like to buy. These people, like Scilla herself, have presence, which she defines as 'a solidity of being that results from having one's feet firmly planted on the ground while the mind is free and fast and the heart wide open.' Such people provide a living antidote to the prevailing cynicism that poses as world-weary sophistication.

The next two chapters deconstruct current value systems and propose a shift to different norms. Scilla questions propositions such as that nature is a soulless mechanism, endless economic growth is essential, good fences make good neighbours, short-termism is fine and there is always a technical fix available. Instead she advocates a sense of wholeness and stewardship, a shift to co-operation, building trust and redefining security, the integration of masculine and feminine and the satisfaction of our need for meaning and beauty. All this is robustly argued with plenty of examples. This leads on to strategies for getting from here to there including John Bunzl's simultaneous policy, prioritising people instead of profit, nonviolent communication and revolution, transforming the treatment of women worldwide and bringing in new energy sources.

Scilla then comes back to the need for inner work - a new system implies a new consciousness. She gives 13 signposts to waking up to who we really are. These include listening to the authentic self, developing a practice of reflection, dealing with difficult feelings and using conflict as opportunity, going into the shadow, learning how to give and serve (moving from me to we), dealing with disappointment (she lists some dramatic setbacks along the way) and working out what you really want to do; also making time to do nothing, for solitary retreats in wild places where one can listen to the voice of the deep and wise self within. This approach defines the sacred activist as one 'who fuses in his or her being profound spiritual intelligence, peace and passion with a commitment to clear, wise and radical action in the world.' Scilla quotes Ben Okri's poem where he states:

You can't remake the world

Without remaking yourself.

The final chapters provide recipes for imagining a world that works for you and examples of green shoots coming through concrete. Here Scilla explains potential transformations in education, food and water systems, health and healing, death and dying and the possible transformation of conflict, which has been her life's work. She gives a step-by-step outline of how we can develop our own visionary power and apply it practically to an issue about which we feel passionately.

HG Wells said that the future is a race between education and catastrophe. However it has to be a special kind of education that encourages new thinking rather than conformity, an inner awakening rather than the continuation of a consensus trance. The quality of results is directly related to the quality of awareness that informs the action, in other words the expression of being in doing. We all know that our situation demands a new awareness and consequently new values and different kinds of action - it is our greatest evolutionary challenge. This passionate and highly informative book sets out an agenda for a new world, paths to pioneering the possible, with women assuming a more prominent role. As such it should be widely read, discussed and acted upon. As Andrew Harvey remarks in his afterword, our crisis could radically change us and the world we love and live in - nothing less than sacred activism will do.

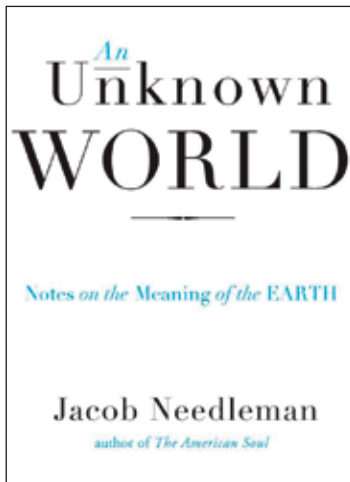
Mind and Nature

David Lorimer

AN UNKNOWN WORLD

Jacob Needleman

Tarcher Penguin, 2012, 219 pp., £15.95, p/b – ISBN 978-0-399-16509-2



Going beyond the immediate concerns of environmentalism, Jacob Needleman asks what is the purpose of life on Earth, and what is the role of human beings in this respect. As with some of his other books like *Time and the Soul*, there is an extra time dimension with the presence of his childhood friend Elias in dreams and reflections, helping him reached new depths of questioning. The title refers to the understanding that a world is a unity. Many thinkers have a vision

of the cooperative unity of humankind, but we have yet to reach that point, as Lewis Mumford and Teilhard de Chardin already envisaged in the 1950s. The work of Vernadsky and more recently of Lovelock and Margulis has enabled us to appreciate the Earth as a living being and life as a form of directed movement in evolution.

An important theme is the limitations of the outward-directed mind and its corresponding ideology of scientism. For Jerry, this represents knowledge without understanding, the part assuming that it can understand the whole without a corresponding widening and deepening of consciousness. This is a form of literalism that corresponds to biblical fundamentalism. Understanding, by contrast, requires what he calls 'the active energy of inner perception' so that we are able to inhabit the physical more deeply - he also refers to a God-infused materiality. He reminds us in this respect that our bodies are our personal Earth and what we do to our bodies we indirectly do to the Earth - we can see this in the corresponding health crises of developed humanity and Earth systems. In this way, 'humanity's relationship to the Earth mirrors our own essential relationship to our own physical body.'

Jerry suggests that real questions are like seeds requiring tending and nourishment and that we should be suspicious of glib answers - their history is one of bloody progeny. In an arresting sentence, he comments that we do not suffer or commit evil because of our questions, but because of our answers. As Montaigne remarked even in the 16th century, it is putting a high value on your opinions to roast people on account of them. This is still happening today because we think we have the right answers. We are so used to thinking in terms of problems and solutions that we forget that the human situation is not in fact a problem to be solved, but rather a consciousness to be lived (p. 95).

The Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard insisted that our real task was the development of inwardness or being. Jerry cites a telling passage which is so concentrated that it is almost impossible to understand. I will spare the reader the detail. However, it presents an opportunity to experience a question: that man is not yet a Self. Jerry realises that we cannot understand the Earth without understanding man and we cannot understand man without understanding ourselves. This involves relating heaven and earth within ourselves and rooting ourselves in the transcendent: 'we cannot be ourselves without at the same time rooting ourselves in God.' Paradoxically, our independence is entirely dependent upon

a higher force that can penetrate human consciousness. And, 'the more we choose it, the more it chooses us.' This deep understanding entails access to all levels of knowledge, perception and being, not just the physical. Here again lie the limits of physicalism and scientism: 'our state of consciousness, our mere fragment of the whole mind, can never understand that which requires the whole mind to understand.' Put like this, it seems an obvious point, but with far reaching implications. We are responsible for the way in which we direct our attention and therefore for the inner side of evolution.

At this point, Gurdjieff makes an appearance (p. 135) with his contention that the Earth is still growing in terms of greater consciousness and greater receptivity. In order to receive finer influences, a finer more sensitive apparatus is necessary, and humans need to continue to evolve. If we do not, then the destruction of humanity may result from our inadequate patterns of thinking and behaviour. Put succinctly, this means that human evolution depends on the inner world and inner efforts to gain access to higher levels of consciousness currently rejected or pathologised by mainstream science - this is what Gurdjieff calls the conscious third force. The important point is that the Earth needs a more enlightened humanity in order to take the next step of evolution. This is our deeper purpose and indeed our hope: an inner transformation of the mind leading to right action towards the Earth.

This is also where a science of consciousness comes in. Not simply an outward-directed science of consciousness, but also an inward-directed development of (the) human being that has been going on for centuries in the spiritual traditions. This means thought allied to feeling and beyond the inherent separation of egotism and greed towards another level of consciousness, one more integrated, more whole. This is the God-infused energy of awakened human beings, not just the isolated rational mind, however brilliant (p. 184). The real is in fact the invisible and the capacity 'to love, to be impartial, to will.' We are 'unfinished animals' - 'the next stage in the evolution of life on the Earth depends on the intentional inward effort of man.' This is not just a philosophical point, but one pivotal to the positive future of life on Earth and coming from the very centre of being - the I Am that we all are. This eloquent book is a necessary counterpoint to the outward focus of most environmental thinking, reminding the reader of the essential relationship between inner and outer and reinforcing the point made as far back as 1967 by Seyyed Hossein Nasr that the ecological crisis has an inner dimension.

We Do therefore We Evolve

David Lorimer

THE UNSELFISH SPIRIT

Mick Collins (SMN)

Permanent Publications, 2014, 230 pp., £16.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-85623-193-0



Mick Collins' own remarkable spiritual journey underpins this erudite and practical book about the fundamental ecological challenge we have created with our thinking, values and actions. He is currently a lecturer in occupational therapy and director of admissions for the faculty of medicine and health sciences in the University of East Anglia. After leaving school at 15, he worked as a labourer and then join the infantry. At the age of 21, he spent the

next six years travelling around the world and finished up in a Buddhist monastery for three years. As well as studying Buddhist psychology in depth, he began to have some powerful spiritual experiences that culminated in a spiritual emergence/emergency that took another two years to work through. After this, he found his current occupation, also training in many other disciplines. His Ph.D. drew on his

experiences of spiritual emergency, which also underpin this book. The narrative is punctuated by many striking dreams, and Jung is one of his central influences.

In the dedication at the beginning of the book, Mick hopes that humanity can find ways to live more deeply, both inwardly and outwardly, to actualise our full human potential. This involves a fundamental insight into the interconnectedness of all life and consciousness, and at the same time a commitment to co-creating a better future. Perhaps the central theme of the book is the relationship between being and doing as complementary functions. Mick points out that the crisis we face is not only ecological, but also spiritual. You could say that we have a crisis of perception and therefore of values and hence of actions. The discourse of the current British electoral campaign is a good illustration as it focuses almost exclusively on economic factors, which in turn ultimately depend upon ecosystem services. The focus is short-term power that completely fails to address longer-term trends. The quality of our actions corresponds to our inner life and therefore our being. In Mick's case, his emphasis is on doing, but with a background of transpersonal thought and actual experience of interconnectedness.

Therapists are well aware of the limitations of the one-sided ego, unconscious of other aspects of the psyche. Jung developed the concept of individuation as a journey from the self to the Self that also involved soul work; in this case, this was partly expressed in the very simple life of the sage that he lived at Bollingen without any modern conveniences. He played, sculpted, cut wood and cooked (the extraordinary detail of his inner journey is laid out in *The Red Book*). Transformation is central to this thesis and journey, which corresponds to an initiation of death and rebirth. We have far more potential than many people realise, and an encounter with the numinous can give us a first-hand experience of what our mystical heritage refers to. In Mick's case this includes some striking dreams and synchronicities that are just as important as external events in shaping our lives. Indeed, he cites an extraordinary encounter of a patient with a crow that he found on top of his car and that hopped onto his shoulder.

Many writers have emphasised that our problems cannot be resolved by the same kind of thinking that created them. Mick reiterates this point and argues that a critical mass of awakened people must engage in the inner work required to bring about a tipping point. The critical mass may be no larger than 5%, corresponding to what Toynbee called the creative minority and some preliminary research results of the effect of meditation on the collective (David Hawkins makes a similar point in his book *Power and Force* reviewed last April). It is both self and society that need to be alchemically transformed. One powerful dream where he is left holding a young lion – lamb indicates the marriage of the masculine and feminine that needs to come forth.

Mick proposes six dimensions for collective transformation: deep learning, deep citizenship, deep democracy, deep culture, deep ecology and deep occupations. Engaging in this work will help overcome the disassociation and perceived separation from nature in our mechanistic culture. Once we have aligned with the interconnected oneness of life, we can join with others and participate in this process of co-creation - the reach of Internet sites such as Avaaz is a good indication of this emerging process. The reflective exercises at the end of each chapter are an excellent way of engaging readers as they go along. Mick remarks that what we do to the world, we do to ourselves.

He suggests that our personal engagement can use the acronym EPIC, standing for qualities of experience, participation, intelligence and consciousness to enable a greater coherence between doing, knowing and being. There is also an underlying need for healing to which dreams can contribute if we are aware enough to pay attention to them. The Greek god Asklepios stands for the inspiration for transformative healing that also involves, as John Moriarty pointed out, an archaeology of the psyche where more

primitive impulses are excavated and inwardly transformed. There are a couple of dinosaur dreams that are indicative in this respect.

Mick reminds us that we are all works in progress and that the journey is 'a path that is made by walking'; also that we are the world and the world is us. Hence the main question is how we will change relationships to nature and each other, transcending mechanistic objectivity and separation to realise a participatory vision in action. He suggests that we need to shift from being worriers to warriors and gives some moving examples of inspirational and transformative action. For example, a cellist from the Sarajevo Opera saw 22 people waiting in a bakery queue being blown to pieces by shellfire. For the next 21 days, he sat outside the shop and played Albinoni's Adagio – 'a profound message of hope and beauty in a world of carnage and misery' and a powerful symbolic action.

There can be no certainty that the process so eloquently described by Mick in this inspirational book will actually come about. It is more likely that we will face a series of crises that could have been avoided with the kind of pre-emptive process described here. However, it does depend upon a critical mass of people shifting their thinking and awareness, which means that we can each make our own contribution to this unprecedented collective undertaking, perhaps partly with some symbolic actions like that described above. Just as the boy threw individual starfish back into the sea, each one of us can make a difference in our own sphere of influence.

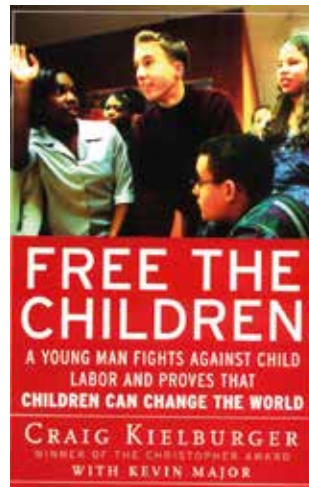
From Me to We

David Lorimer

FREE THE CHILDREN

Craig Kielburger

MetoWe, 2010, 266 pp., \$20, p/b – ISBN 978-0-9784375-0-3



I first heard Craig Kielburger speak to 700 people at the State of the World Forum in San Francisco in 1997. It was an astonishing and moving speech for a boy of 13, who had founded his own charity, Free the Children, at the age of 12 the year before. Fast forward to Wembley Arena this year and I attended the We Day arranged by Free the Children and attended by 12,500 young people from around the country, all of whom had made a difference to their community and contributed to a global project. In the meantime the charity has

reached over 6,000 groups who have fundraised to build more than 650 schools and schoolrooms in developing countries and bring education to 55,000 children. Craig himself has not only completed a degree in Peace and Conflict Studies but at the age of only 31 has been awarded eight honorary degrees and many other prizes.

The story began in Craig's kitchen with a report of the assassination of a freed child labourer, Iqbal Masih at the same age as Craig, who was gripped by the story and the issues it raised. He got permission from his class teacher to address his fellow pupils and eleven of them volunteered to join Craig's group. They began operating out of his house and were soon giving speeches to other schools and gaining more support. The first real breakthrough was his speech to 2,000 delegates at the Ontario Federation of Labour, which was interrupted many times by loud applause. An OFL leader then announced that he was going to pledge C\$5,000 and other unions followed suit to the tune of \$150,000.

This story was front-page news in the *Toronto Star*: 'Boy, 12, takes OFL by storm with child labor plea.' In the meantime he had persuaded his parents to allow him to go on a 7-week fact-finding trip to India, Pakistan, Nepal and Thailand with his 25-year old friend Alam.

This was to prove a life-changing experience as he was able to see the conditions of child labourers in these countries, meet individuals and hear their stories first-hand. Some worked in carpet factories, others in fireworks factories or on street stalls, young girls are sold into prostitution and one girl he met spent her days sorting through old syringes. Many suffer health problems brought about by their working conditions and see no prospect of escaping their situation although Craig did take part in a raid that freed over twenty children and was able to reunite them with families who thought they had lost their children forever. It makes for arresting reading, as do the inevitable travelling challenges one encounters in such countries. As it happened, I was reading the book when I myself had to rearrange my plans as a result of the French air traffic strike a few days ago and travel in a crowded overnight train – this was nothing compared with Craig and Alam having to lug their bags 7 miles in the dark to a ferry terminal only to find that they were not allowed on the boat!

During his trip Craig was able to meet Mother Teresa, who told him that the poor would teach him many things. As it happened, the Canadian Prime Minister was on an official visit to India and Pakistan at the same time as Craig and finally agreed to meet him in Islamabad after he had made headlines in New Delhi at a press conference on his work that resulted in a joint declaration on child labour by the young people of India and Canada. The papers said that the PM had agreed to meet him, which eventually happens in Islamabad. Here idealism meets practical politics with the PMs' concerns about potential trade reprisals if Canada boycotted products made with child labour. However he does agree to bring up the issue with South Asian governments and further action is taken by the minister after Craig returns from his trip. When he finally does come back to Toronto having celebrated his 13th birthday during the trip, he is met by a wall of journalists and TV cameras and spends the next week giving media interviews. The children he had met provided him with moving accounts that he was then able to relay on in his speeches and press conferences.

One of the most important outcomes of Craig's initiative was a revision of the perception that children have nothing to contribute to government policy debates. He states that children are not simply vessels to be filled but rather people with ideas, talents, opinions and dreams. His anger moved him to action and his sadness to a determination to help: 'true power lies in the hands of those who can help improve the lives of others.' He adds that people have to have faith in themselves and faith that they *can* change the world. Nearly twenty years later this spirit was evident at the Wembley We Day. These children believed that they could change the world and had already started to do so with their contributions. This inspiring and gripping book shows the power of vision in action – if you want to find out more, go to www.freethechildren.com and www.metowe.com.

Fair Trade Futures

Martin Lockley

AFTER CAPITALISM

Michael Spence

Adonis Press, Hillsdale NY, (& Floris Books), 254 pp., £16.99, p/b - ISBN 978-093277645-7

In recent years inequalities of wealth distribution have created much concern, especially for those impoverished by the complex economic forces that lead to such inequities. Even a rudimentary awareness of modern economics informs us that the forces that drive the market are complex and unpredictable enough to confound experts and our ability to manage them. Enter Michael Spence and *After Capitalism*,



a contribution to the new Social Science series by Adonis Press. This anthroposophically inspired exposition speaks to how the socio-economic landscape could and should be, in the best of all possible worlds, were we to better understand the dynamics of human affairs. Spence, who helped develop Emerson College in Sussex, presents us with a utopian vision of fair trading futures, although he admits we have a long way to go before they are

realised. His arguments are based on Rudolf Steiner's ideas on the threefold nature of human social life in which Cultural, Rights and Economic sectors play out. In the Steinerian tradition of direct observation of reality (not analysis of other people's ideas) Spence presents a citation- and bibliography-free exposition.

The *Cultural* sector feeds our inner soul life and need for knowledge and creativity. The *Rights* sector deals with law, equality, fair play and acceptable social behaviour. The *Economic* sector deals with production, distribution and consumption of the material things we need to function in the physical world. Money is not a component of the productive process, only a means to facilitate it. Spence reviews how these sectors came into being, noting that in former times they were represented by the "Book," "Sword" and "Plough," or the "Priest," "Soldier" and "Peasant." We are first walked through the most basic economic concepts – how the blackberry picker obtains a product of nature, and can exchange it for another natural product in a "true price" transaction in which both party's needs are met satisfactorily. The use of money substitutes an "economic price" and means of exchange in which the products themselves may not actually be involved. Thus, one can see how true price and actual product exchanges may be compromised.

When it comes to equality and rights, rooted in individual conscience, we are reminded that almost everyone is guilty of favouring friends, family and fellow citizens ahead of those with whom we have no connection. We also know that in matters of expertise not everyone is equal and that such differences are reflected in law and government, especially when it pertains to access to and use of natural resources. [Only 100 years ago much law supported the brutal excesses of the robber barons. It is against such injustices that individuals like Martin Luther King, and before him Mother Jones, stand up for rights and reform]. But neither our physical needs nor our rights can alone feed our soul needs, which are also all individually very different. Nevertheless, on some level we still perceive human beings to be equal, meaning that we recognise our spiritual or "divine nature." Spence holds that it will not be possible to develop the insights, and imaginative and conceptual faculties, and the moral strength needed for the future of humanity until the cultural sphere of society becomes truly healthy and strong," perhaps when science, art and philosophy (religion or spirituality) all come together. This is beginning to happen conceptually, in some cultural pockets, but economic forces mostly present mighty obstacles. For many, labour is still an employer-owned commodity, restricting the path to true freedom. In comparison with the assembly line worker or dishwasher, it is a rare artist or master craftsman that is truly free to create and distribute a product. Between these poles there are "half free" lives (part creative and part economically constrained).

Spence is an advocate of "economic associations" which constrain the forces that lead from healthy division of labour and the production of useful capital (potential loan capital) to growth of excess capital (which tries to increase its own value) to unequal distribution of wealth. To counterbalance such ego-driven excesses, Spence says "gift capital" is necessary to support the cultural and service sectors (arts, education, health care, law enforcement, health and safety), which produce few consumable material products. However, whether supported by patrons, taxes or gifts these income earners are as integral to the economy as anyone else and

support the purchase money > loan money > gift money > purchase money cycle. Spence looks to a future when we must curb our egoism and work out a concept of society as a whole, which if properly managed could provide for the rights and economic and cultural needs of all.

In Part 2 of the book Spence turns to money and its problematic role in distorting value: i.e., it does not represent the labour behind the product (fair trade) but rather has “value in itself” creating concepts of “personal worth” and wealth. He warns that today many transactions involve buying and selling of “rights” not products: e.g., “the right to engage in certain profitable activities.” Such changes come about, in part, when money becomes an abstraction no longer backed by a tangible product (e.g., gold) or, likewise, when “new capital” is created from thin air on the promise of future profits, not income from product sales, which remunerates the actual producer. Much land ownership is in this category. It is not hard-earned, yet it generates profit (rent) for its “owners.” Why is it, asks Spence, that those who put up capital are owners, and those who do the work of production are not? Should owners benefit from a disproportionate share of labour productivity, [as in the days of robber barons and today’s sweat shops]? Spence admits that “it is not easy to get away from” ingrained notions that capital investors “own” the businesses and “buy and sell” the labour. This mindset reflects “a distorted remnant of an old theocratic [and authoritarian] form of society.” His remedies include having investors loan to businesses, rather than buy shares, and so become part of the productive process from which they can be repaid on the basis of true value, rather than shareholder value which often artificial involving on “legal counterfeit money” susceptible to fraud.

Our consciences know that extreme wealth disparities are “wrong” especially when they continue to be generated by dubious and dangerous environmental and socioeconomic practices. “Money has taken on the properties of a veil through which we no longer see the economic realities,” including the fact that there is enough true value product and wealth to alleviate poverty and egregious disadvantage. The worrying alternative is for the rich to get richer as the system allows those with money to buy access and stack the deck so as to generate more monetary wealth and continue promoting the system, which thrives on a “dogma concerning the sanctity of the markets” as if it were a “religious belief.” This insidious system allows for “acquiring land and controlling interests in major businesses and so gaining the power to change the very nature and legal structure of the society which provides the monetary values on which they feed.”

The final two chapters ask what is social and antisocial and how these dynamics will affect the future. Spence returns to basic tenets, reminding us that in nature an organism that feeds on another “without providing anything in return” is a parasite. This is an uncomfortable truth about our society. A grim picture perhaps, but Spence takes the long-term and ultimately optimistic view that we can and will collectively remedy the situation. He concludes that the parasitic money-worshipping system is unsustainable and that the present “basis for corporate structure will be undermined” eventually as the human impulse for cultural creativity, equality and fair trade futures plays out.

Wilderness Hiking as a Soulcraft

David Lorimer

BACKPACKING WITH THE SAINTS

Belden C. Lane

Oxford, 2015, 266 pp., \$24.95, h/b – ISBN 978-0-19-992781-4

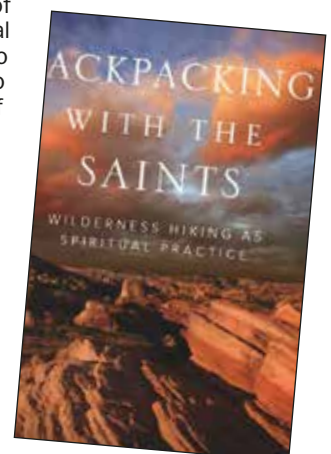
Over the last 25 years, there has been a huge revival in pilgrimages along with a rising popularity of seeing life through the metaphor of a journey - this includes journeys to other realms. The road to Compostela is much more crowded than it was as many people use this reflective time as an exploration of meaning and depth. In this delightful and instructive

book, Belden Lane continues in the tradition of Thoreau and especially John Muir by combining philosophical and spiritual reflections with journeys into the wilderness. He is emeritus professor of theological studies, American religion and history spirituality at St Louis University.

His solitary spiritual treks with only basic camping equipment provide a framework of simplicity and mindful connection with nature, although often accompanied by his own account by a dram. At the beginning of the book are a number of striking quotations including Friedrich Nietzsche that all truly great thoughts are conceived by walking and Sigurd Olson that simplicity in all things is the secret of wilderness and one of its most valuable lessons. It is what we leave behind that is important. After an introductory part on the power of wilderness and the reading of dangerous texts, the author divides his pattern of wilderness spirituality into the four phases of a journey: departure from the world of restless activity on a quest; the need to adopt a discipline involving solitude, travelling light and practising mindfulness; a descent into darkness and despair, wrestling with fear and failure; and finally delights at having endured the desert ordeal, so the traveller returns with new gifts. Each of these phases is divided into chapters vividly describing his adventures and text that he took with him. These include St Columba, St Therese of Lisieux, Thomas Traherne, Soren Kierkegaard, Dag Hammarskjold, Thich Nhat Hahn, St John of the Cross, Martin Luther, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Rumi, Teilhard de Chardin, Gandhi and Thomas Merton - rich fare indeed.

As a university professor, these excursions provide a break from the mind and words, an opportunity to focus on the body and the demands of the trail. Taking a saint along with you is not necessarily a comfortable experience, but a reminder of the essential truths that we neglect at our peril. Pushing one’s physical limits reveals new things about oneself and the discipline of going without, being alone and leaving no trace of one’s presence. He also draws parallels with the Desert Fathers who also spent long periods in solitude. The narrative of the book weaves together evocative descriptions of his experiences with insights from his texts and biographical details of the authors and the challenges they faced. It turns out that many of the saints quoted read outside - St Cuthbert used to read the Psalms waist deep in the sea off Northumberland’s coast. Being in Nature allows one to reflect the surrounding landscape and also enter an interior wilderness. Lane quotes the virtues of the desert father John Climacus, introducing what were for me the new concepts of *haplotes* or the simplicity of non-attachment, *agrupnia*, a watchfulness or vigilance about everything without and within, *aphobia* or a fearless resistance to threats, and finally *anaesthesia* in its true sense of thoughtless negligence, which is the opposite of attentiveness.

Thomas Traherne reminds Lane of the importance of wonder as he trekked on Good Friday with a splitting headache, helping him to identify with the Passion of Christ although feeling trapped in what he called a middle space, a void of liturgical eternity when Traherne is summoning him to reckless abandonment while he just feels himself full of yearning but chained to old and unfinished desires. Then Kierkegaard invites him to understand the four gifts of solitude: separating the individual from the crowd, the ability to nurture one’s true self, access to the mystery found at the core of our being, and the way in which it connects us to the hidden community of the natural world. Dag Hammarskjold’s life was intensely public and private at the same time, as was revealed in his book *Markings* after his probable assassination. He had an inner simplicity reflected in backpacking philosophy, travelling light in a spiritual sense.



Sometimes the going gets rough in terms of fear, failure and dying - here the author is accompanied in the dark night of the soul by St John of the Cross, Luther and the *Cloud of Unknowing*. He reflects on his failure to climb Mount Whitney, taking consolation in the fact that John Muir did not manage it on his first attempt either: 'failure points us back to the true measure of our worth, to something grounded in nothing that we do, but only in what we are.' An aspect of the overall context of the book is Lane's impending retirement and entry into a new kind of wilderness. As part of this he describes the life and death of his dog, a stray who turned out to be an important teacher as well as companion.

The last part brings us to Teilhard, Gandhi and Merton, to a deeper engagement with the world and injustice, linking spirituality with politics through soul force. Merton was one of the first Christians to engage seriously with Zen, remarking that in prayer we discover what we already have and experience what we already possess - and in the wilderness we are taken both outside ourselves and deeply into ourselves. What we thought was out there is in fact in here, but we still need to take the journey in order to discover this. We can go beyond contemplative reading (*lectio divina*) to what the author calls *lectio terrestris*, reading the book of nature while mindfully exercising all our senses. This remarkable book is an invitation to take both an inner and an outer journey into intensity and immensity at the same time.

general

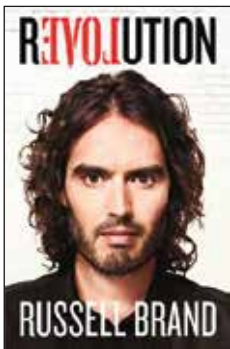
A Funny Brand of Revolution

Martin Lockley

REVOLUTION

Russell Brand

Ballantine Books, New York, 2014, 299 pp., \$26.00, h/b - ISBN 978-1-101-88291-7.



Russell Brand perhaps needs no introduction. His notoriety precedes him, as one who confesses, honestly I might add, to having within him an "extremist, destructive impulse." He gained his notoriety and following as a one time "enfant terrible" of the nightclub flesh pots, comedy club, Hollywood, US and UK talk show circuits. But one can only grind one's gears in the run-away, fast lane for so long before you crash and burn, with a pickled brain and liver.

"Sometimes when you're famous you can get away with being a lunatic," says he, ... perhaps because it makes us question the "customary, consensual behavior" ... but "mostly for a laugh." That's our Russell! So for us members of the general public, who can hardly escape being aware of those in the public eye, it is intriguing to see the transformation that this young man (celebrity) has made from a glitzy, out-of-control, substance-abusing, sex- and heroin-addict wise guy to the new "brand" of social activist-reformer and would-be spiritual guru. He is in a word, trying to be, and perhaps is, a "wounded healer." Time flies in the fast lane and it is noteworthy that the new Mr. B has been clean and sober for 11 years. Russell, if I may be so familiar, has a native charm to go with his native and incisively-quick wit, and a street-wise, but unaffectedly naïve and friendly buoyancy - perhaps he was born buzzed - which makes him talk innocently of the opinions of his quirky "mates" along side those of G. K. Chesterton, Gandhi, Jesus and the Dalai Lama. Innocence has its charms, and I recall chuckling when I saw Russell asked by a talk show host why he titled his first venture into the literary world as *My Booky Wook*; his reply, grinning from ear to ear and without missing a beat, was: "Because I'm childish!"

This present book, *Revolution* (with the 'evol' bit equaling "love," spelled backwards and highlighted on the cover), is ostensibly about the wealth gap and the value-impooverished mind set, and distorted, if not corrupt, consumer-loving, media-drugged, social order, and the cultural narrative which allows such imbalances to exist in the name of freedom and democracy. We now all know statistics which show that fewer than 100 of the world's richest people own more assets than half the world's population, or that the top 1% in the UK own more than the bottom 55%. In the USA the six Walmart heirs own more than the poorest 30%, with more security guards than high school teachers to help protect it! These uniforms stood respectfully to attention, with most of the rest of the world, during the \$30 trillion bailout to the Wall Street wealthiest, as they pulled off the greatest theft in history. But, confesses Russell, he's done OK in the celebrity sweepstakes, and is more than happy to concede that it he is as hypocritical as the next celebrity to even touch on the subject. But remember, society and its values put the likes of Russell into that 1% category in the first place.

Much of the book comes back to the theme of rehabilitation and transformation of the self. In his personal journey Russell has been on the retreat and rehabilitation circuit and become an exponent of yoga and transcendental meditation. He states "The reason I keep mentioning God is because I believe in God." He then quotes G. K Chesterton in saying "The death of God doesn't mean man will believe in nothing but that he will believe in anything." Russell says he was a "good example... at eight a believer in biscuits, at seventeen a devoted wanker, at nineteen a fanatical drug user before winding up in the monastery of celebrity."

Russell often reiterates the unity message central to eastern spiritual traditions, reminding us that "all desire is an inappropriate substitute for the desire to be at one with God." The miracle of existence which keeps our hearts beating without conscious effort should remind us that we are already one with the cosmic fabric. Optimistically Russell looks to a bright future where humans become "something unrecognisable" and have true freedom in a world of our creation where "consciousness is going to coalesce, collectivise [and] ... return to the whole." There are therefore "alternatives to the systems we are currently using to organise society" and these days Russell is nothing if not vocal in this arena.

What then are these alternatives? I agree with our mate Russell that they have to be solutions that redress the imbalances by implementation of sound policies instituted by non violent means, ostensibly driven by the will of the people and their innate sense of fairness, often expressed as righteous indignation when thwarted by fat cats or the taxman. But, and we'll get to this soon, implementation is easier said than done. The enormity of a \$30 trillion theft is beyond the comprehension of the man in the street, especially the homeless one whose indignation, or simple concern, is most likely focused on why he can't afford a hot meal or comfortable bed for the night.

Reading between the lines of Russell's effervescent text I sense a humanistic wisdom (Good on ya' young man), which forgives us mere mortals for our foibles and weaknesses. (And why not? Russell's exhibited a few - often with show-stopping flair). So while he points fingers at problem narratives and players, he forgivingly avoids ideological branding (get it) of perpetrators as demons beyond any hope of redemption. The trick is to move on and find realistic solutions. Consensus is great in theory, but a challenge, if not a near impossibility, in practice, at least as long as the inertia of present thinking prevails. Whistle blowing, and post-modern concern for the underdog has certainly exposed what Samuel Huntington said about US power... that "it remains strong...in the dark; exposed to the sunlight it begins to evaporate." But what replaces the crumbling old order? It is not enough to hope that people power will somehow magically organise, as if it had been politely biding its time to implement new and infinitely wise policies

when the rascally old guard was finally ready to give up its greedy clutches on power. In reality the new guard is likely blinded by resentful and revolutionary fervour, which even if restrained and non-violent is almost inevitably redirected into an unhelpful ideological war of words.

In the latter part of the book Russell takes up the theme of state power (and its goal of protecting private and corporate interests) with considerable attention to Noam Chomsky's incisive expositions on the subject. Although Chomsky is smart enough to expose the devious strategies of power brokers, that does not mean he has solutions or equal power. The robber barons, and corporate rigging cannot be swept aside by compassionate saints who will say "Thanks, nice try, but we can take it from here: why don't you go and enjoy your Bahaman villas, and we'll have an egalitarian utopia up and running by Christmas, which, by the way, we will run in a truly Christian, non-commercial spirit." [My text, not Russell's!] This is why I think Russell's proposed solutions (using 12 steps to recovery models) aspire to at least on the grand scale to rather unrealistic, leaderless, post-modern consensual behaviour. He may be right - I hope so - that it can work locally at the grass roots scale, and evolve from there: dare I say it, with wise leadership! Consensus is great if you can get it, but as Russell admits, when himself engaging in consensual dialogue, one quickly realises how many of us have strong urges to be in control and promote our agendas. Damn it! I know my way makes the most sense!

In recent years Mr. B has come a fair way, and it is surely testimony to his transformation that he was recently picked by the Dalai Lama to host a Buddhist leader's youth event in the UK. He's also testified at various other government hearings, edited an issue of the *New Statesman*, all ostensibly to address social problems. Did the establishment register his message? At least they asked for his opinions, though many have been quick to react negatively to his suggestions as naïve claptrap. But I am reviewing his book, not what naysayers think of him. I'm also a naïve optimist, so must question my own old guard, (A team?), in-the-rut skepticism about naïve new guard solutions, and human nature's inclination to fall back into its old, complacent ways. Russell at least has youth, (some youth), on his side, and is not afraid to speak out. So perhaps it is time for the Mr. B team to take at least one little corner of the field and promote his new brand of revolution.

A National Icon

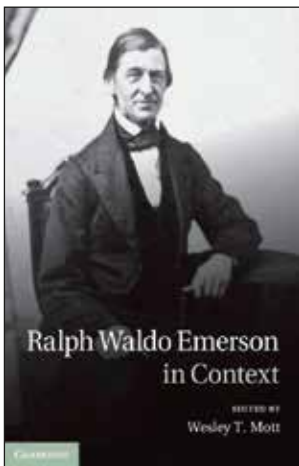
David Lorimer

RALPH WALDO EMERSON IN CONTEXT

Edited by Wesley T. Mott

Cambridge University Press, 2014, 303 pp., £65, h/b - ISBN 978-1-107-02801-2

My copy of Emerson's essays belonged to my grandmother and is dated 1898. It seems that she bought it herself as it is not dedicated by anyone else. It is a weighty tome of some 630 pages in two columns and includes a good many poems as well as the series of essays, *Representative Men*, *English Traits* and *The Conduct of Life*. This new volume does exactly what it says in the title, namely place Emerson in various contexts in four parts devoted to the sense of place, ideas, society and legacy. There are 32 individual contributions ranging through these areas, each with extensive notes and bibliography. There is also a very good chronology at the beginning.



Emerson lived from 1803 to 1882. He was one of the early subjects for photographs, some of which are reproduced as character studies and express different moods. He gradually becomes more craggy, but the benign smile remains. Like his contemporaries, he experienced many premature deaths, including that of his father and three siblings from TB, his first wife and his young son Waldo, a blow from which he reportedly never recovered. He also suffered a physical and mental collapse after his house burned in 1872 and even thrust into the flames the letters of his first wife and mementos of his beloved son. I mention this because the usual focus is on his work rather than his life.

During the course of his career, Emerson gave 1500 public lectures and took advantage of the advances in travel to visit Europe and far-flung areas of the United States. He regarded the purpose of travel as self-culture (cultivation) or what Goethe called *Bildung*, which included meeting Coleridge and Wordsworth as well as Carlyle on his first trip to England at the age of 30. He writes that wherever we go, self is the sole subject we study and learn and it can help us make a transition to what he calls intuitive Reason. He read and translated Latin, Greek and Italian, and was deeply influenced by German idealism. He read and re-read Plato throughout his life. However, he was also one of the first people to appreciate the spiritual riches of Asia and the poetry of Sufism. In connection with mountains, he writes that the good of going to the mountains is that life is reconsidered - it is the excursionary equivalent of acquiring a new idea.

Emerson lived through an age of revolutions. Historically, there was the influence of the American and French revolutions, then the uprisings in Europe of 1848, which he himself witnessed in Paris. He only became fully engaged in revolutionary causes in his outspoken championing of the abolition of slavery. He also supported a more prominent role for women, but stopping short of suggesting suffrage. His poetry is explicitly linked to justice as well as beauty, two elements that he regarded as intertwined, partly through the influence of Schiller.

The lecture hall and the club both offered opportunities for the exchange of ideas and relate back to the idea of cultivation mentioned above. Progress in this regard came from being open to change, growth and self-improvement, consistent with the American ethos of the time. There were many literary clubs in Boston at the time, which became centres of cultural and intellectual activity. The pre-eminent club was the Saturday Club, which included along with Emerson Longfellow, Hawthorne and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Clubs also performed (and still do) the important function of sociability and conviviality.

If Emerson's ethics are set out in his essay on Self-Reliance, then his mystical and spiritual views can be found in the magnificent essay on the Over-Soul, which also shows why he could not be contained within the orthodox religion of his time. This essay is well worth reading in the original. He describes it as 'this deep power in which we exist, and who is the beatitude is all accessible to us.' He goes on to say that 'when it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love' - surely a sublime sentiment.

Each chapter turns out to be a window into the contemporary world, whether of place (37,000 immigrants - mainly Irish - arrived in Boston in 1847 alone), science, history, friendship or even money. Emerson made \$70,000 from the 300,000 books sold during his career, and was comfortably a millionaire by modern standards. For me, the value of engaging with Emerson is meeting a great and expansive mind through the writings he left behind, and this book provides an excellent overview of the different contexts in which he lived.

An Incredible Achievement!

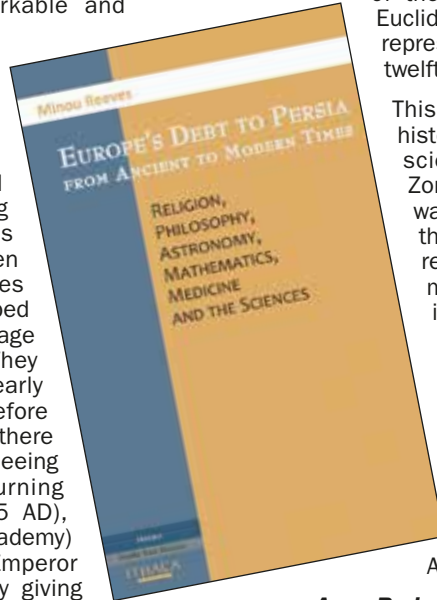
Anne Baring

EUROPE'S DEBT TO PERSIA FROM ANCIENT TO MODERN TIMES

Minou Reeves

Ithaca, 2013, 1,030 pp., £64.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-863-725197

This is one of the most remarkable and enlightening books I have ever read. Its scholarship is meticulous and comprehensive and although the book is over 1,000 pages long, it is never heavy or abstruse. It covers in minute detail the period from 546 BC to 1807 AD and tells the story of how outstanding scholarly Persian kings (from Cyrus the Great onwards) and noblemen from a handful of aristocratic families rescued, safeguarded and developed the religious and intellectual heritage from both Judea and Greece. They set up wonderful universities as early as the sixth century AD – long before those of Europe. They welcomed there the great scholars and teachers fleeing persecution in Alexandria (burning of the great library there in 415 AD), Greece (closing of the Platonic Academy) and Constantinople (under the Emperor Justinian), and honoured them by giving them teaching posts in these universities.



The Greek and Byzantine scholars brought with them the priceless manuscripts they rescued as their former academies were destroyed or closed down, including many from the great library in Alexandria and those, in that library, that had been rescued from Persepolis just before it was burned to the ground by Alexander the Great. The Persian kings fostered the teaching of every kind of science, including in particular astronomy, mathematics, engineering and medicine. They welcomed and developed further the scientific legacy of the greatest of the Greeks: Plato and Aristotle, Euclid, Archimedes and many others whose work was repressed and lost to Christian Europe until the early twelfth century.

This book restores a huge missing section of the history of ideas and shows how the rich philosophical, scientific and medical legacy originating with Zoroaster in Persia and the later Greek philosophers was preserved for European civilisation through the brilliance as well as the immense courage and resilience of Persian scholars and universities (who managed to survive both the Mongol and Turkish invasions). I am absolutely dumb-struck with admiration and gratitude for what this book offers. It should be included in any course on the history of ideas, on medieval history and on the so-called Dark Ages. It shows that Persia was the vital link between Ancient Greece and the science that developed in Europe from the sixteenth century. Copernicus, Kepler and Newton were able to read the texts on astronomy and mathematics that had been translated from Persian into Arabic and then into Latin. What a story!

Anne Baring is author of *The Dream of the Cosmos*.

Easter Meditation

*He rose from the grave to demonstrate
That great truths never die.
They can only be suffocated in our small lives.
We so love the story of crucifixion.
For whom has he sacrificed himself?
For you and me who crucify him daily?
If you don't know the true meaning of life,
No sacrifice and crucifixion will help you.
We don't need crucifixions.
We need resurrections
Every day and every morning
As we remind ourselves who we are.*

Henryk Skolimowski

Prayer for Tolerance Voltaire

*O Thou God of all beings, of all worlds and of all times,
we pray that the little differences in our clothes
in our inadequate languages
in our ridiculous customs
in our imperfect laws
in our illogical opinions
in our ranks and conditions, which
are so exaggeratedly important to us
and so meaningless to you,
that these small variations
that distinguish those atoms that we call human beings
one from another,
may not be signals of hatred and persecution.*