book reviews

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science-philosophy of science

Biology and Spirit
Edward James

LYNN MARGULIS
Dorion Sagan (editor)

Chelsea Green Publishing, Vermont, 2012 , 216 pp., $27.95, h/b - ISBN 978-1-60358-446-3

This book represents an attempt by Dorion Sagan, the son of and collaborator with Lynn Margulis, to summarise Lynn's life and work. He has got 25 friends of Lynn, each of whom she literally bumped into, to encapsulate their years of knowing and working with her into a few pages each. Each contributor brings out particular events in her packed life, or notes new viewpoints generated from her work. Since I cannot usefully shorten further every account, I concentrate on those contributions which reflect some aspects of Lynn's relationship with the Network's spiritual concerns.

What has Lynn Margulis achieved? Since her student days, Lynn laboured to bring the idea of *serial endosymbiosis* into the mainstream of biological science; that *all* eukaryotic cells (cells with nuclei) have evolved from a *symbiosis* of bacteria *without* nuclei that had previously lived independently. This gives a new view on evolution, very different from the recent fashion of *Neo-Darwinism*. There are no magic 'random' events in Lynn's work, as with the Neo-Darwinists.

Lynn is probably best known for her later devoted collaboration with James Lovelock in the development of *Gaia theory*. Jim saw the earth from the top down (1965 work with NASA), Lynn saw it through a microscope, the earth from the bottom up, bacteria living in mud. Taken together, these provide a view of life and earth on a far grander scale than before.

Symbiosis implies that all life is the result of existing organisms getting together to create a more complex new entity. Lynn saw every living thing from bacteria up to the highest level of complexity as an organism which could feel and react to outside events. And organisms can join together to create more complex *organisms*. This is *Panpsychism*.

As an example of symbiosis, only 10% of the cells inside each of us are *human*. The rest are other life forms, essential to our existence, *so we are already legion*. Each organism can affect all other organisms up and down the chain of complexity. So life is *autopoietic*; developing life influences all previously existing life. We are finished with reductionism.

Lynn's now accepted work on symbiosis makes Neo-Darwinism out of date. Lovelock needed to stay close to more conventional views to get published and recognised, but Lynn didn't care. From early on, she experienced academic *Peer review* as a method of suppressing new thinking.

Lynn and Spiritual Concern

Our book has an article by Lynn herself, where she makes clear that until recently she had experienced only conservative evangelical Christian theology, and knew nothing of modern religious or philosophical studies. She seems not aware of Teilhard de Chardin and his vision of a noosphere [3], nor Whitehead's view of all structures in existence as organisms in *process* [1], which would have supported her viewpoint.

Though she rejected the idea of 'belief' in God as a conventional assent to a series of statements, her life demonstrated an all-consuming love of the whole of creation, and caring love for her army of students, visitors and local friends. Any religion might agree that little else matters.

In our book, William Irwin Thompson shows that Darwin's and Neo-Darwinists' theories are built in the mind-set (Kuhn) of Empire achieved by conquest, typical of the 19th Century (British) and 20th Cent (American) Empires. They believed that Empire by conquest represents the ideal perfectionist state of humans, with animals and everything else assumed to be dominated by them. The 'fittest' state is that which has triumphed through the 'conquest' of other possible states.

Thompson also attacks the illusion of proceeding from 'facts' to theory, pointing out that the definition and measurement of every 'fact' depends on some pre-existent theory.

David Ray Griffin and John Cobb are philosophers and theologians who have studied Lynn's work for many years, and become continually more aware of how her ideas impact their own [2]. They have developed the *Process Philosophy* of Alfred North Whitehead, which they see as mutually supporting Lynn's ideas of life interacting creatively with the earth.

Their philosophy is also based on organism rather than mechanism: Physics deals with *small* organisms, electron, protons, atoms; Biology is concerned with *larger* organisms, cells and more complex assemblages. A cell can experience other cells, and has some spontaneity. It may exist only momentarily, may just be a "drop of experience". The eucaryotic cell, the basis of higher life, is already an organism, a union of more primitive organisms. With Lynn and Whitehead, causation is not one-way, but all things interact in a *network* rather than a *heirarchy*. Simple cause and effect are no longer obvious. And with Lovelock, life collaborates with the whole earth to create Gaia. Though there is both competition and cooperation in Gaia.

Denis Noble confirms that Lynn makes Neo-Darwinism out-dated. And the development of Epigenetics, alternative ways of modifying genes apart from 'random' mutations (whatever that means) amplifies her viewpoint. As he also points out, we are made from something like a collection

of musical notes, and yet we also sing the song, which has a meaning beyond the notes.

Andre Khalil studied under Lynn. With her, he experienced the breadth and the excitement of her vision of the world, from the smallest inhabitants of ooze to the edge of space. She joined geology, genetics, biology, chemistry, literature, embryology and paleontology into a unified whole in later work with Lovelock.

Apart from a splendid memorial to Lynn, I suggest that this book provides the best short introduction to Lynn's work and her essential contributions to Gaia theory. It also shows how hard it is to introduce radically new ideas into existing entrenched academic fashions in theory. With the aid of this book, everyone can now move into a genuine *Earth History*[4], an integration of the Earth's previous 4 billion years with the (at most) five thousand years currently believed to be significant by most historians. But now, collaboration not competition is the name of the game; and it is in a different court.

As William Irwin Thompson says: "Study Lynn because *all* you think in the old paradigm is wrong. Lynn has changed everything..."

Personal note: As with any sudden death, we are all left with unfinished business and regrets. The Earth Systems Science (Gaia) group of the Geological Society organised a London meeting for Lynn, and the last time I was with her I promised to send on a nicely printed version of our rather fine poster for the meeting, which she was keen on. I never did...

References

[1] For more information: John B Cobb Jr: *Back to Darwin: A richer account of evolution* William B. Eerdmans 2008

[2] Alfred North Whitehead: *Science and the Modern World,* New York; Free Press, 1967

[3] Teilhard de Chardin: *The Vision of the Past:* See http://archive.org/details/VisionOfThePast

[4] For Earth History as part of Big History, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Historyhttp://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big History

Edward James *is a retired Imperial College scientist and engineer, now working mainly in theology and philosophy and relating the thin conventional scientific ideas of "explanation" to the much wider sphere of understanding which is the human condition.*

The Flow of Seeing

David Lorimer

TAKING APPEARANCE SERIOUSLY

Henri Bortoft

Floris Books, 2012, 235 pp., £16.99, p/b – ISBN 978-086315-927-5

Readers will have seen that Henri Bortoft died at the end of last year. In this his last book following his earlier *The Wholeness of Nature - Goethe's Way of Science* he revisits some earlier themes and gives a very clear exposition of the importance of the phenomenological approach that overcomes the longstanding dualism of being and appearance formalised by Plato. Although it is a technical work with 50 pages of footnotes, Henri writes clearly and patiently, illustrating his arguments with charts and diagrams as he goes along. The five chapters introduce a dynamic way of thinking, Goethe and modern science and the dynamic unity of nature, the philosophy of unfinished meaning and catching saying in the act.

The dynamic way of thinking goes beyond general systems theory, which Henri regards as another form of reductionism. His approach to wholeness was influenced by his study with David Bohm and his philosophy of the implicate order unfolding into the explicate. The principal modern influence, however, is phenomenology, which one also finds in the work of Iain McGilchrist quoted in this book. Phenomenology reflects a right-hemisphere perception where the focus is on the immediate experiencing of what is experienced rather than on what is experienced (represented as separate from oneself); also realising that distinction implies relation. All this involves going upstream to understand how something comes into being, not becoming fixated on the what of the 'final' product or perception and proceeding by abstraction. It is about 'what appears in its appearing', appear*ance* rather than appearance. As Heidegger explains, being is appearing, seeing *is* appearing; they are not separate.

The next two chapters look at the place of Goethe in the history and development of science. The emergence of mathematical theory-based science makes it both rational and empirical while at the same time shifting attention away from appearance and the phenomenon. Both Neo-Platonism and Atomism relegate the 'unreliable' senses to a secondary position, as does Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Henri brings in a new interpretation of Descartes by explaining how his dualism reflected his desire to place mathematical physics on a basis consistent with the Church's (Platonic) distinction between the immortal soul and the mortal body. He was also concerned to repudiate Renaissance animism by evacuating mind from nature. However, our immediate experience is that consciousness includes the world within it. Goethe returned to the senses by putting sensory experience and the phenomenon rather than mathematics in the forefront and bringing in intuition and imagination.

Goethe's understanding of the metamorphosis (coming-into-being) of plants as the modification of a single organ is an important concept to grasp that relates to the upstream dynamic way of understanding phenomena, 'striving out of the whole into the parts', a differentiation within unity, a becoming other without becoming another, which is the activity of *natura naturans* or generative nature. This is what he calls multiplicity in unity rather than the abstract left hemisphere unity in multiplicity. As he puts it: 'the universal and the particular coincide: the particular is the universal, appearing under different conditions.'

The next chapter on unfinished meaning applies some of the same principles to the interpretation of perception, literature and art. The subject-object distinction is deeply embedded in our structures of thought, deriving as it does from the propositional form of Greek mathematics transformed into logic by Aristotle. It is easy to fall into the dichotomy of separating an objective meaning in the author's mind from a subjective understanding in the reader's mind. This assumes a finished meaning that the author is trying to convey. There is a parallel between the notion that appearing necessarily entails seeing and the idea that understanding 'is not a response to a meaning which is there already; it is the appearance of meaning. So we can say that the appearing of meaning is the happening of understanding', or, as Gadamer put it: 'the meaning of any work of art is actualised only when it is understood.' Understanding is necessarily participatory and each work creates a tradition of its own interpretation. Thus meaning comes into being differently according to different situations, and the work of art is always in the state of becoming. Hence, just as in the self-differentiation of the plant, 'the differences in meaning are self-differences in the meaning of the work itself... that constitute its dynamic unity.' This is a very different way of thinking and takes some time to get used to.

Another fascinating section discusses the importance of geometry and philosophy and Plato's attempt to differentiate between the mathematical

and the empirical. Mathematics can be derived and deduced in its own terms without reference to the sensory world. However, this methodological distinction in mathematics was transformed into what Henri calls and unwarranted ontological bifurcation. The final chapter recaps the argument for taking appearance seriously and transcending this fundamental dualism. At the same time, organic hermeneutics overcomes the dichotomy of a single objective meaning versus the relativistic plurality of meanings. We are not subjects in front of an object, but rather participants in an event of appear*ance*/coming-into-being, an experience of immediate presence rather than re-presented separation, an emphasis on process rather than structure and abstraction. This seminal volume should be compulsory reading for philosophy of science students and indeed lecturers. They might find it hard to climb out of their philosophical ruts, but this lucid book, if closely studied, will enable them to do so and enter into a flow of being and living.

Towards a 'nice' Unselfish Theology

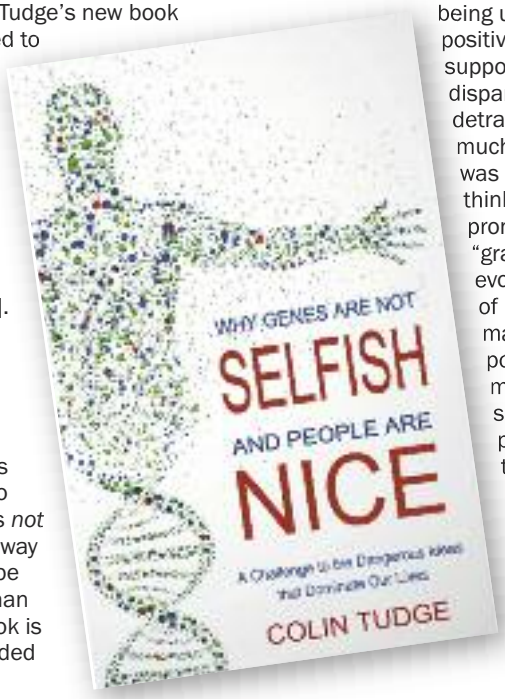
Martin Lockley

WHY GENES ARE NOT SELFISH AND PEOPLE ARE NICE: A CHALLENGE TO THE DANGEROUS IDEAS THAT DOMINATE OUR LIVES

Colin Tudge

Floris Books, Edinburgh, 2013, 294 pp., £16.99, p/b ISBN 978 – 086315-963-3

At the heart of Colin Tudge's new book (title here abbreviated to *Not Selfish*), is the notion that a paradigm shift in scientific and economic thinking is long overdue if we are to better realise our potential. [This shift is happening, as the book testifies]. The thesis is that we are conditioned to think competitively and selfishly, even though we have the capacity and perhaps an intuitive longing to build a society that is *not selfish*. Put another way the book is a call to be cooperative rather than competitive. The book is rather unequally divided into two parts. The first, on *The Nature of Nature*, goes into rather lengthy detail about mainstream and alternative paradigms on evolution, ecology, resource use and the human condition. The second on *The Big Questions* is, for me at least, the more cogent part of the book, in which workable solutions are proposed.



I suspect that many SMN readers will find Part I very familiar. Tudge reviews evolutionary theory in detail, including standard treatments of Darwinism and Neo-Darwinism, the latter characterised as having had two phases: the genetic (Mark I) and the DNA-oriented (Mark II). He also speaks of Ultra Darwinism, which is represented by Richard Dawkins and his *Selfish Gene* paradigm which, as we all know, has received increased doses of bad press from many quarters, not least for extreme metaphors that characterise us as lumbering robots controlled and manipulated by selfish molecules. Dawkins bashing gets a bit old, perhaps, but then again he asks for it with his extremist views and poorly-informed forays into theology and metaphysics. One has to chuckle at Dawkins' characterisation of his Ultra-Darwinian followers as "brights," implying the rest of us are dim. I doubt history will see his crowd as representative of a new " enbrightenment." Just to be clear, it is this brand of Darwinism that Tudge objects too most strenuously, and for good reason.

Tudge says he sees "Darwin as one of the great nineteenth century romantics," characterising his Tennysonian "nature red in tooth and claw" writing as "pure gothic." This is rather surprising since it is usually Goethe who is seen as the great romantic "nature philosopher" biologist, with the term "romantic" being used both positively by his supporters and disparagingly by his detractors. In as much as Darwin was a serious thinker, famously prone to see a "grandeur" in his evolutionary view of life, Tudge makes a fair point, which I might express simply by pointing out that we must see Darwin's sensibilities, and his uncertainties in the context of the consciousness of the man and his times, and not in the context of the narrower dogma of Natural Selection that subsequent biologists have too-rigidly imposed. In short Natural Selection was just part of Darwin's original thesis, and was no dogma at the time it was proposed. Dean Farrar who read Darwin's funeral speech at Westminster Abbey in 1882 said there was not one trace of "materialism in all his writings."

Tudge likes to use the term "punch up" for the competitive "fight for survival" notion which is so prevalent as a tooth and claw explanation for evolution. This notion has unfortunately become so ingrained that "life's fundamental competitiveness is taken to be self evident" whereas "life's obvious collaborativeness is taken to be merely an epiphenomenon." He reminds us of the tautology that all survival of the fittest means is that survivors survive, and points out that in reality "the best survival tactic is to cooperate."

Throughout Part I of the book the message of the subtitle is ever present as a subliminal theme: avoid "dangerous" overly materialistic ideas. We are reminded, as we have been in so many similar expositions, that behaviourism was a reductionist school of psychology that wreaked more havoc than any other. In a more holistic vein we are asked to consider whether intelligence is "simply something that arises when nervous systems (or computers) grow sufficiently complex? Or is it a general quality of the universe which all creatures may evolve to partake of..." like a response to the presence of light? In a similar vein we are reminded that Rene Dubos pointed out that "Life is a property of the universe." Although I found Part I of the book a little drawn out, I can't fault the message which, among other things, reviews the Gaia principles of the wisdom or homeostasis, or as Alexander Dumas put it "All for one and one for all." In a rather dark version of this sentiment Bertold Brecht said that the rich need the poor more than the poor need the rich even if the poor don't yet realise it. [I might draw on Alan Watts who said much the same thing: you can't enjoy being part of an "in group" without an "out group" to help define your position]. Certainly it is cool to be progressive, holistic and enlightened (even smug!) but we only define such positions by recognising what we consider to be un-cool, detrimental and "dangerous" to our collective well-being.

With this lengthy preamble we come to Part II of the book, the more interesting part for me, where Tudge addresses *The Great Questions* in chapters on "*What the Universe is really like, What's true? What's good?,*

Metaphysics, Science and Religion, and Renaissance." Given the scope of these great questions, Tudge does a good job in making relatively succinct and practical suggestions on how we might take action to find alternative solutions that help challenge " the dangerous ideas that dominate our lives."

I found much of what Tudge has to say convergent with the ideas of Mary Midgley, especially when it comes to the question of understanding the broader meaning of science as a pursuit that requires wisdom, philosophical perspective and a degree of humility, self-knowledge and even reverence. Surely we can see, after all the new physics has taught us, and as Dr. Goswami puts it, that "the reality of matter is secondary to that of consciousness"? Science is largely our creation, made up of shifting paradigms, formulated by our consciousness, and so more than what Joseph Needham described as "the ruthless mathemetisation of ideas." As Kurt Godel has pointed out all mathematics contains "at least one assumption that cannot itself be proven" and so it must be understood as "a human invention." It is not a God-given method or yardstick by which all can be measured objectively and unequivocally.

We need to recognise that we are both "Apollonic" rationalists and "Dionysiacs" prone to following our feelings and intuition, and able to manifest both masculine and feminine sensibilities. The world contains both those who have a feeling for transcendence and those that reject all such intuitive notions. These divides are part of diversely complex consciousness and the collective human condition. Therefore, echoing a previous point about intelligence "if we perceive consciousness to be a universal property" of which we partake, then we can have a "different view of intuition" as "the mind's attempt to gear itself to the universal consciousness; in effect to read the mind of the universe." Einstein and others of many stripes wished to do just this. Thus, by implication, we may avoid the trap of "dangerous ideas" which we already intuitively know to be driven, in many cases, by greed and selfishness rather than common sense and common interest.

If we cultivate self-awareness and that which helps build community, this makes us "nice" (or nicer) and gives us every reason "to suppose that there is an intelligence behind the universe" that we can partake of, collaborate with, and a tap into as a source of wisdom. If one thinks this far, one can put newer and "nicer" paradigms into practice from the bottom-up. On a firm foundation of a broad, scientifically philosophical metaphysic we can build a social infrastructure based on sound economic and political theory, which will in turn make day-to-day realities of life more cooperative, healthy and meaningful. This one might call a new theology of collaboration, based, as Tudge defines it, on "transcendence, oneness, compassion and humility." Competitive cynics and skeptics might argue that human nature is not there yet, but Tudge is one of many voices calling for just such a "nice," kindly, new theology. And one might well ask: "ain't that nice enough for starters? What's not to like?"

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'Not in your Philosophy'

David Lorimer

THE IMPOSSIBLE HAPPENS

Imants Baruss

IFF Books, 2012, 115 pp., £9.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78099-545-8

In a book I reviewed a couple of years ago, Larry LeShan wisely observed that impossible things don't happen. If they happen, they are by definition possible, so the problem lies with your theory rather than with the fact. The subtitle – 'a scientist's personal discovery of the extraordinary nature of reality' - provide the framework for the narrative by a professor of psychology who teaches courses on consciousness while at the same time being involved in experiments himself. This means that he can bring a rigorous approach to his own experience. He urges the reader to take a critical view throughout. The topics covered include precognitive dreaming, remote healing, dreaming through a personal health crisis and talking to dead people. This will be relatively familiar territory for readers of this Review, but not for most scientists. The author recounts that his conclusions

were arrived at gradually through an accumulation of evidence that became overwhelming and could not be explained away.

The narrative draws on diaries and dream journals with interspersed commentary explaining the significance of various events. There is some interesting symbolism relating hockey games with the publication of academic papers, but the details do seem to correspond. His experience of pre-cognitive dreams leads to a revision of his concept of time, whereby a dynamically changing now embodies both past and future; the future is in some way enfolded in the present. The author's experience of the most healing is informed by Richard Bartlett's book *Matrix Energetics*. He describes various experiments involving students including some control sessions in which he did not actually do anything active. Sometimes, the sensations experienced by the subject corresponded to an increased focus of energy on his part. He observes that the more deeply he is able to enter a non-dual state, 'the more profoundly participants are affected by healing processes that lie outside myself.' This leads him to speculate that reality is structured so that changes in the imagination can directly affect physical manifestation.

The most interesting chapter is about dreaming through a health crisis involving a blob on his liver. He introduces a healer friend called Jeanette. One evening he was sitting on the beach reflecting on the nature of reality (as one does) when he notices that his left ankle is vibrating. He wonders if Jeanette is healing him, so he texts her and gets the response 'hehehe'! He goes on to describe the diagnosis of the liver blob; amusingly, when he interrogates his imagination what it was doing there, the answer comes 'to create a sense of urgency.' One can see that this might be the case with almost any health crisis. He discusses this situation with Jeanette, who comments that he seemed to have picked the blob up from a patient he healed a few months back. She herself regularly took on illnesses that she then eliminated from her body, which is almost health equivalent of the vicarious atonement. The path of least resistance for healing may sometimes lie through the body of another. Jeanette talks about the way she does this and recommends Chinese herbs for detoxification. Finally, during a healing session he feels a gentle vibration in his body, then, after a minute his abdomen collapses inwards by an inch and a half. He observes that it felt as if something had disappeared, which Jeanette interprets as the departure of a pattern of information. It is interesting to consider diseases as embodied manifestations of such patterns of information. This is not an all or nothing event, but rather a peeling back of layers as a transformation occurs. It is a bold but insightful chapter to write.

The final chapter considers a few cases relating to survival of consciousness. One interesting incident concerned words appearing on a computer including 'screaming' and 'ouch' just after the person had hit their knee on a desk. It seemed like the deceased grandmother was trying to find a way of communicating; in a later document, the phrase 'sorry loves' appears. The author takes a sceptical view of instrumental transcommunication but describes a pretty convincing mediumistic session ostensibly with a dead hockey player. Finally, he asks if death might be an awakening into another reality, and describes a significant occasion in his own life when he seemed to wake up from ordinary consciousness as a result of deep reflection on Heidegger. I suspect that, as Elizabeth Lloyd Meyer's book *Extraordinary Knowing* noted, many more people have anomalous experiences than are prepared to admit them, still less discuss them with colleagues. Stimulating books like this may encourage other professionals to come forward and redefine the scope of academic psychology as well as expanding our understanding of reality.

Shiftshaping

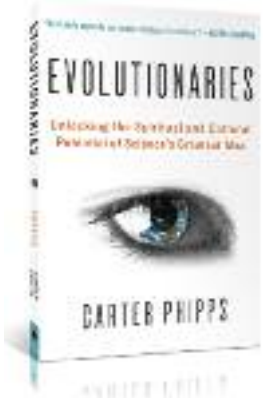
David Lorimer

EVOLUTIONARIES

Carter Phipps

Harper Perennial, 2012, 400 pp., $15.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-06-191613-7

Carter Phipps is a writer who as editor of Enlighten-Next had many opportunities to interview leading evolutionary thinkers. Here he provides an antidote to Daniel Dennett, who regards evolution as the ultimate corrosive idea demolishing everything in its course. As such, he is an inheritor of Alfred Russel Wallace rather than Charles Darwin, although the name of Wallace does not feature in this book. Wallace believed not only in evolution through natural selection, but also in the evolution of consciousness, potentially beyond death. Although the scope of the book is very considerable, there are other notable omissions such as Brian Goodwin, Goethe, Ervin Laszlo and Ilya Prigogine, all of whom have contributed important ideas to the philosophy of modern evolution and to a new science of qualities.



Having said that, the book does live up to its subtitle of unlocking the spiritual and cultural potential of science's greatest idea. The four parts re-examine evolution, reinterpret science, re-contextualise culture and re-envisage spirit. The book goes well beyond the dichotomy of believing or not believing in evolution, which is a much more significant factor in the US than it is in the UK. The pivotal figure is Teilhard de Chardin with this comprehensive vision of evolution, and there is a delightful description of the interaction between the young Jean Houston and Teilhard (Mr Tayer) in New York in the spring of 1955 just at the time of his death. He told her to remain true to herself, moving ever upward towards greater consciousness and greater love - wise advice indeed.

In the West, evolution was prefigured by ideas of progress developed during the 18th century Enlightenment, but it has to be seen in terms of cycles of development and decline, as Goethe suggested. This applies to individual organisms as well as cultures, although the general trajectory maybe upwards and onwards. In our own time, it is evident that technological progress outstrips progress in humanising ourselves, although, as the author points out, there is an upsurge in spirituality beyond dogmatic religion. This is basically optimistic, an optimism that I share even with a few sanguine reservations, although I like his idea of a progress of meaning. The title of Evolutionaries refers to people who are cross-disciplinary generalists, who understand vast timescales and who embody a spirit of optimism. In science, this means the emergence of cooperation, directionality or purpose, an emphasis on novelty and creativity and what Sir Julian Huxley called transhumanism. This last theme includes an excursion into the work of Ray Kurzweil who thinks that the human self is nothing more than information that could be transferred onto a different organic substrate. Phipps is wary of this move, characterising it as an over-conflation of consciousness with informational complexity.

This brings him to the evolution of consciousness or the noosphere and the ideas of 19th century idealists such as Hegel, Fichte and Schelling as well as lesser-known thinkers such as Steve McIntosh, James Mark Baldwin, Jurgen Habermas and Jean Gebser, where he provides summaries of their work. There are also extensive sections on spiral dynamics and the philosophy of Ken Wilber. Evolutionary spirituality and enlightenment has been championed by Andrew Cohen, but it has also been exemplified by the number of other thinkers such as Barbara Marx Hubbard, who herself was inspired by Teilhard when reading about the drive for greater expression, greater connectivity and greater consciousness expressing itself to an individual. Another person influenced by Teilhard was Thomas Berry who helped articulate a new cosmology, work continued by Brian Swimme. We stand at a moment of choice with huge upsides and downsides, but we can collectively choose to evolve consciously, and this book is an important contribution to this realisation.

medicine-health

The New Public Health?

Margaret Hannah

ECOLOGICAL PUBLIC HEALTH: RESHAPING THE CONDITIONS FOR GOOD HEALTH

Geoff Rayner and Tim Lang

Earthscan from Routledge Press, 2012, 432 pp., £26.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1 84407-832-5

Like many people in public health of my generation, John Ashton and Howard Seymour's book, The New Public Health was an inspiration[i]. It plotted a path of public health from its Victorian roots to the 1980s. Many people I speak to who have read the book are particularly impressed by a series of photos from a class of schoolchildren in Liverpool going back 100 years. From stunted, adenoidal faces in the late 19th century to the smiling, white-toothed, well-looking children of the 1970s the pictures are a graphic illustration of the progress made in public health over that time.

The Health For All[ii] ambition of the 1980s and the Ottawa Charter[iii] on which it is based, and which are described in detail in the book, saw public health building on that legacy by making cross-sectoral alliances at all levels in society. Working in settings such as the school and prison, working with partners in the voluntary sector, local government and health services at district, city and national level and forging alliances across nations we could fashion a future which would

achieve this lofty goal of Health For All by the year 2000.

But the dream has gone sour. A countervailing current of neo-liberal economics has played out across the globe since the 1980s creating greater inequality between people within and between nations than ever before. Furthermore, as our industrial culture expands and consumes ever-increasing amounts of material resources, chickens are coming home to roost, not least in the guise of climate change and other major environmental challenges. The time is ripe for a new framing for public health. Might *Ecological Public Health: reshaping the conditions for good health* signal a fresh approach?

Both Geoff Rayner and Tim Lang are prominent figures in the public health field. Rayner has a background in environmental health and led the UK Public Health Association for some years. Lang was the first Professor of Food Policy in the UK. He invented the idea of "food miles" which describes the distance between the place where food is produced to where it is eaten. Both have a base at City University in London and have collaborated on a number of papers and projects in recent years relating to food, obesity and wider public health issues. Their new book is an impressive synthesis of the knowledge and practice of public health, which they have accumulated and developed over many years. But the question remains whether the book signals a significant shift from the previous traditions of public health or suggests an incremental improvement on it.

The book is in three parts. The first part is entitled, "Images and models of public health" which introduces the idea of ecological public health. This is built around four dimensions of existence "material, biological, social and cultural". The authors then go onto describe a series of images of public health – public perceptions of what it aims to do. These include the application of science, state control and intervention in people's lives ("Big Brother"), combatants in the race against microbes and activists campaigning against anti-health forces. These images are a reflection of how society has multiple views on public health and are deeply embedded within its culture and structure. The second chapter explores some definitions of public health making the point that in the 21st century it is necessary to recognise that human health and eco-system health are co-dependent. With this in mind, they go on to set out a series of ambitions for the future to help us engage with the challenges of public health more effectively. The first of these is to recognise the challenge of complexity regarding this as essential given the inter-connectedness of the problems facing human health today. The authors then set out further ambitions including the need for a compelling narrative, inter-disciplinary approaches, democratic renewal and a rethink of public health based on ecological principles.

In the third chapter of Part One, Rayner and Lang review the history of public health through five different lenses, which they call models: sanitary-environmental, social-behavioural, bio-medical, techno-economic and ecological. For anyone new to the field of public health, the book is worth obtaining for this chapter alone. It is a substantial review of the theory and practice of public health in the last two centuries and is well illustrated.

Part Two is most substantive part of the book. It describes a series of transitions which public health will need to address in this century. The authors rightly point out that in the past, public health has tended to focus on two transitions – that of demography (both the size and age-structure of populations) and epidemiology (the pattern of disease). They set out to expand this with seven more transitions: urban, energy, economic, nutrition, biological, cultural and democratic. They realise that this excludes other possible transitions, but argue these transitions are those most relevant to their desire to establish a framework for ecological public health. Each of these transitions is mapped with scholarly detail. Each chapter is a useful introduction to both the transitions and the contested nature of their causes.

The final part of the book is titled, "Reshaping the conditions for good health" and contains just one chapter, "The implications of ecological public health". The authors list eight implications in total and, since these encapsulate some important conclusions, it is worth exploring a few of them in detail. The first is to "Use ecological thinking to address public health". The implication in this statement is that there are no "silver bullets" in 21st century public health, which in the complex environment of today is very much the case. Nothing a simple as removing the handle on the water pump in Soho Square and hence curbing a cholera outbreak is likely to work. However, the authors also state the need to look upstream at prevention, rather than downstream at treatment of disease. In viewing public health in this dichotomous way, the authors are slipping into a linear trap, rather than embracing a complex view of reality. A different framing of 21st century public health suggests the river metaphor works better if we see ourselves as all swimming in it, some rather better than others. The task of the future public health becomes less the task of stopping people falling in, but helping them swim and enjoy the thrill, whilst they are at it.

The next implication is to "Use the four dimensions (material, biological, social and cultural) to address complexity". Clearly four dimensions is better than one, but if we are truly to address complexity, we have to let go of categories altogether. If readers of this review have stayed with me to this point, you will have seen a trend in this book towards lists and taxonomies. Yet these are the very antithesis of truly ecological, complex, holistic thinking. Every now and again, the authors allude to different framing, when for example, they mention Murray Gell-Mann's description of life as a complex adaptive system. They recognise that his perspective invokes a "planetary consciousness and a sense of solidarity with all human beings and, to some extent, all other living beings. His was big thinking indeed!" Rayner and Lang can't quite take on this "big thinking" about complexity. Instead they say, "Our task was framed by our focus on health. Gell-Mann's was all life, essentially a major updating of the Enlightenment". For me, this is a critical shortcoming. Whilst espousing the need for an understanding of complexity to address modern public health challenges, they fail to engage fully with the implications. They see the connection between human health and the health of eco-systems, yet are not able to see they form part of a larger "complex adaptive system" which we call life. Interestingly, they almost contradict themselves in their final point as I will explain later.

The third implication of ecological public health is to recognise the nine transitions, which they described earlier in the book as critical future determinants of health. They also recognise that nine is not an exhaustive list. I would agree. Tony Hodgson, for example, has recently described a World Model with twelve points to represent the key factors, which determine the health and sustainability of human societies[iv]. Hodgson also recognises these domains are not just in transition, which suggests smooth trends, but are subject to major discontinuities or shocks. In future, society will need to be resilient in the face of massive uncertainties. Again, I was surprised not to see more emphasis on resilience as a key component of ecological public health.

The next implication is to invoke the public health imagination. This makes the important point that we have to envision our future if we want to shape it in a positive way. Having heard Tim

Lang speak on several occasions, I know how capable he is of articulating this. Unless we imagine a positive future for ourselves, we cannot select from the present the promising innovations, which are likely to contribute to its emergence. Interestingly, the authors write about seeing the example from a healthy town and imagining it spreading it across society. What is lacking from this section are two thoughts: when we collectively imagine a healthier future we encounter tensions between different values and also, stepping into the unknown future takes personal courage. As Maureen O'Hara and Graham Leicester have described in their book, "Dancing at the Edge", it is often helpful to start small, but act in a way, which models the culture we want to live in.

The authors are to be congratulated for their critique in the next section of evidence-based public health. They describe this as a need to shift from evidence to knowledge and state for example, "Whilst statistical methods can help resolve some difficulties, they cannot replace the value of human scrutiny, argument and judgement." I would go further and suggest that since ecological public health is based on complexity theory, where causes are effects and effects are causes, there simply is no evidence base currently for effective action. The future public health needs to not just learn to plan based on what we currently know, but in Don Michael's phrase, "plan to learn".

Further implications of ecological public health include the need to re-invigorate public health institutions and recognise that many improvements in public health have come about through social movements. In terms of their budgets, traditional public health bodies such as the World Health Organisation and the UN are dwarfed by the multi-national corporations. MNCs have a track record in lobbying intensely to maintain their stranglehold on trade and suppressing controversial evidence of their harm, even if this is damaging to health. However, social movements in public health have become fragmented and confused. Knowing that both authors have considerable track records in leading public health movements, it would have been good to hear a bit more about their thoughts on responding to this challenge.

The final implication of ecological public health is to unify natural and human sustainability. This is the very point they were reluctant to embrace in Part Two, that natural and human systems both contribute to a larger life-death-life process, which Gell-Mann would describe as a complex adaptive system. They get close to recognising this inconsistency, by stating that a new Enlightenment is needed in the 21st century. They suggest that as "sustainability is the single greatest challenge to the Enlightenment tradition of progress ... it is its inheritor". They point to the importance of a vigorous debate about progress in the context of an economy based on ecological principles – what Tim Jackson has described as "prosperity without growth" and suggest the public health movement is well placed to lead and participate in this debate.

Overall, *Ecological Public Health* provides an impressive overview of the history, theory and current challenges in public health. Many of the significant figures and achievements of public health are mentioned. The case for change and a fresh approach to public health for the 21st century is clearly made. I hope this book will lead to further explorations and debate in public health about the underlying shift in mindset we will need to embrace if we are to engage with the complexity and uncertainty of the health challenge ahead.

Dr Margaret Hannah *has worked in Scotland as a Consultant in Public Health Medicine for 16 years. She is also a member of the International Futures Forum*

i Ashton J, Seymour H. *The New Public Health*. 1988. Open University Press.

ii World Health Organisation. *Health for All by the Year 2000*. 1979.

iii World Health Organisation. *The Ottawa Charter.* 1986.

iv Hodgson A. *Ready for Anything: designing resilience for a transforming world.* 2012. Triarchy Press.

Cancer Prevention and Treatment – is Diet Important?

Dr Andrew Tresidder

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO BEAT CANCER

Chris Woollams

Health Issues Ltd 2012 468 pp., £16.99, p/b ISBN 978 0 9565391-1-3

ANTI-CANCER

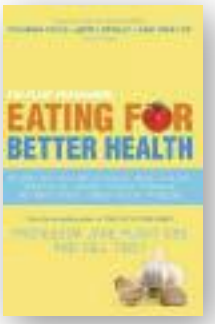
Dr David Servan Schreiber

Penguin Health 2008 294 pp., £14.99, p/b ISBN 978-0-718-15429-5

EATING FOR BETTER HEALTH

Jane Plant and Gill Tidey

Virgin Books 2010 344 pp., £9.99, p/b, ISBN 978-0-7535-1949-3



Our bodies evolved over millions of years to be healthy self-repairing organisms, given the right conditions. The design default is health, supported by programmed repair. Bodies were designed for a varied diet of roots, shoots, vegetables, herbs, raw meat, micronutrients and fresh water. We need to take note of this, even if we do not return to this diet. Medical approaches to cancer have been to treat the cancer, not the whole body – and have focused on surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy – seeing the cancer as an outsider to be fought and defeated. Medicine has largely ignored the science of nutrition and how to support the body to heal itself – it takes it for granted, but does little to support and enhance the processes. Why? Because it is not taught at Medical School – there is a yawning Chasm in the curriculum.

Biochemist Chris Woollams, driven by a desire to help his daughter Catherine recover from her brain tumour, has thoroughly researched the field, only to find that there is a great deal of scientific evidence for optimising nutritional and other approaches to help overcome cancer growth. Some is already adopted in US and other hospitals – e.g. Vitamin D supplementation – but we ask why not everywhere? Chris presents a commonsense, scientifically founded knowledge base to tackle this vital subject effectively.

It's all about too much and too little – and sufficient repair time and freedom from pollution. Too much of

the wrong (usually processed) foods; too little of the right health giving foods and herbs, vitamins and minerals; addressing factors such as high quality sleep and melatonin production, and learning about the harmful effects of chemical and electromagnetic pollutants and fungal and parasite load. Chris has addressed a vast curriculum gap that exists in Medical Practice. This book should be required reading for every patient with cancer – every doctor who treats it – and anyone who prizes health and recovery and wishes to avoid cancer and other illness. He has put together some excellent resources on www.canceractive.com

David Servan Schreiber was a well-known US Psychiatrist and researcher, author of *Healing without Freud or Prozac*. Whilst researching, an opportune MRI showed an early brain tumour. He describes the approach taken to treating it effectively and the result. Initial advice did not include a holistic approach, however it spurred him to research the genesis and development of cancers from a personal point of view, with a view to "Escaping statistics". (He has eventually died, some 18 years after a two-year prognosis was given him). He notes that we all have seeds of cancer in us every day of our lives – but finds that the vast majority never develop into tumours. A recurrence of his own cancer a couple of years later made him evaluate his whole approach to health. He summarises this by providing a new view, drawn from science around the world, of the mechanism of cancer. This view is based on the immune system, the inflammatory mechanisms that promote the growth of cancers, and the possibility of blocking their spread by preventing new vessels from nourishing them.

Four approaches follow from this

1. Guarding ourselves against the imbalances of our environment that have developed since 1940 and promote the current epidemic of cancer

2. Adjusting our diet so as to cut back on cancer promoters, and to include the greatest number of phytochemical components that actively fight tumours

3. Understanding and healing the psychological wounds that feed the biological mechanisms at work in cancer, and

4. Creating a new relationship with our bodies that stimulates the immune system and reduces the inflammation that makes tumours grow (p. 5)

He tells a personal story, and details nutritional approaches and foods that promote inflammation (and promote cancer) – those with high glycaemic index, those with a high ratio of omega 6 fatty acids to omega 3, hydrogenated oils, trans fatty acids and carcinogenic chemicals such as many pesticides. He reminds us, like another great Frenchman, Claude Bernard, that the state of the soil (of the body) is all-important before the seeds of cancer can develop. He finds that

- green tea blocks tissue invasion and angiogenesis (an important part of cancer growth)
- soy blocks the action of dangerous hormones
- turmeric (especially when with black pepper) is a powerful anti-inflammatory (interfering with NF-kappa B antagonist)
- berries (black-, rasp-, straw- and blue- and others) contain anti-angiogenic chemicals and can help detoxify cells
- many spices and herbs help contain cancer growth

In summary – we can choose to eat a diet that fights cancer – or that promotes it. He gives valuable and timely guidance on the simple ways we can change our diet to help our own health. Dr S-S then goes on to look at the effect of our state of mind on our immune system, our susceptibility to, and the growth of cancers, by looking at

1. the mind-body connection

2. healing wounds from the past (that otherwise handicap the immune system)

3. reconnecting with our life-force

4. defusing fear

This short and eminently readable volume (I enjoyed it on holiday) has enough science (written by an leading researcher) to satisfy the sceptic, enough information to help the busy doctor understand important and overlooked facts about cancer, and enough wise comment and guidance to inspire society to look at the importance of these approaches to tackle cancer, both before and after it arises.

Jane Plant, a professor of geochemistry, was given months to live when she had her fourth recurrence of breast cancer secondaries. She had already had four operations, chemotherapy and radiotherapy – and the medical cupboard was bare. Already eating a healthy diet, she put two and two together –in rural China breast and prostate cancer are very rare – and in rural China virtually no dairy products are consumed. Adopting a dairy free diet resulted in regression of her cancer – and nearly twenty years later she remains well. She has written extensively since – *Eating for Better Health* is a synthesis of advice covering many of our common Western degenerative diseases (*Your Health in Your Hands* is her book on breast cancer).

The principles are to get the right balance – eating an alkaline diet high in fibre, much fruit and vegetables, especially leafy green ones such as brassicas and spinach, spices and herbs are all shown to be beneficial to health, along with the essential fatty acids the body requires as building blocks – a mixture of omega 3, 6 and 9 in proportions provided by food such as oily fish, oil from seeds, and mono-unsaturates such as olive oil. Needles to say, certain foods should be avoided – hydrogenated vegetable oils, refined carbohydrates such as sugar, artificial additives and sweeteners such as aspartame, pickled or cured meats, chlorinated water (use a filter), caffeine. Dairy products contain growth promoters and other hormones (in order to grow a small calf to a large animal quickly) and in the adults of a different species (humans) appear to target the breast and prostate. And yes, dairy products may be a good source of calcium – but this is an advertisers' half-truth – for the calcium ions are balanced by phosphate – which the body must excrete (accompanied by a calcium molecule) – so the net benefit is actually zero. (anyway, where do cows get their calcium from – surprisingly grass and other leafy vegetables!). Certain foods – such as meat (animal protein) are allowed – but only advised in small proportion relative to vegetable sources of protein.

It's a scary truth – born out by *The China Study* (Dr Colin Campbell) that most of our degenerative diseases are those of affluence and eating habits that diverge from those our bodies were designed for. The China Study looks at Chinese health and illness before the very recent changes in diet and increases in pollution that will inevitably lead to 'Western illnesses'.

There are huge vested interests in society, both business and cultural, that provide us with ready access to calories bare of nutrition, to oils and fats changed from their natural state, and to many foods adulterated by

processes of 'added value'. There is little profit in selling raw beetroot, cabbages and other fruit and vegetables in season and locally available – compared to the great profits to be made from seducing our senses with sweet things, clever marketing, flavoured drinks, preserved food with a long shelf life, 'added value products' (added value for whom?) or two for the price of one. Years ago a friend put a pat of butter and a block of margarine in the garden. Within a few days, the butter had disappeared, eaten by birds and beasties. Weeks later, the margarine remained intact..... It is a challenge for each individual to go back to basics and think for themselves from first principles as to how to create health – and sadly, for many, it is only serious illness that acts as a wake up call. Jane Plant had that wake up call herself, responded to it and has shared her learning. But it is uncertain as to whether policy makers, let alone individuals, will choose to listen to the message.

These three books should be in every Oncologist's and GP's consulting room and Patient Library. When a hospital consultation can cost hundreds of pounds, and orthodox therapies many thousands, to ignore the cheap resource of information to help someone help themselves is unwise. And in some cases, as seen in two of the authors above, health can be restored for many years after a serious terminal diagnosis.

And for society? an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure! Can we afford to continue ignore the factual evidence as to how nutrition affects our health? By doing so, we make it very likely that many of us individually and collectively, will develop chronic degenerative and malignant illnesses. Maybe not such a wise choice... Up to the medical profession to take a lead on this?

Dr Andrew Tresidder *is a Somerset GP, with interests in Patient Safety, Physician Health, and Spirituality and Personal Growth.*

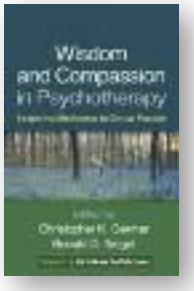
Buddhist Psychology for Today's Psychotherapy

Julian Candy

WISDOM AND COMPASSION IN PSYCHOTHERAPY: DEEPENING MINDFULNESS IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

Edited by Christopher K Germer and Ronald D Siegel

The Guilford Press, 2012, 407 pp., £29.99, h/b – I SBN 978-1-4625-0376-6



This is a rich volume. Not just in any material sense, but spiritually. It is a much expanded version of the proceedings of a conference held at Harvard Medical School in 2009, an event born of the enthusiasm of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in fostering fruitful conjunctions of science and spirituality, west and east. He took part in the conference, writes a foreword to this book, and judging by the many chapter epigraphs drawn from his works and sayings, has greatly inspired its 35 contributors.

In the first of five parts, entitled *What are Wisdom and Compassion – why should we care*, the editors introduce the image of wisdom and compassion as the two wings of a bird that might be named *mindfulness*. This key term threads its way through the rest of the book, and most of the chapters conclude with exercises that are developed from and grounded in the practice of mindfulness, a topic on which the editors have already provided a sourcebook: *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy* (2005). Like many that follow this chapter is framed by a clinical example that illustrates its theme, in this case the essence of mindfulness: *awareness* of the *present moment* with *acceptance.*

The ten chapters making up the second and third parts, entitled *The Meaning of Compassion* and *The Meaning of Wisdom,* begin to unpack and illustrate these concepts. The necessity for self-compassion, initially within the therapist paralysed as he may be by the infectious despair of the stuck and helpless client, and subsequently within the client once the now released therapist can evoke in him its healing power, is movingly described. The chapter entitled *The Wise Psychotherapist* begins "Why would anyone in his or her right mind write... about being a wise psychotherapist? The enterprise is inherently presumptuous", then goes on to set out a remarkably comprehensive and evocative delineation of this supposedly egregious being. Interestingly, the final chapter of each of these parts is devoted to the notable recent advances in the neurobiology of compassion and wisdom, all contributing to a more complete understanding of these fundamental but curiously neglected topics.

The fourth part, *Clinical Applications*, comprises six chapters dealing with the application of mindfulness in the treatment of suicide, substance abuse, anxiety, depression, trauma, and in couple therapy. While no-one should claim that mindfulness based therapy is a cure-all, vivid evocations of real patient and therapist encounters point unequivocally to the conclusion that it can enhance the effectiveness of almost all specific interventions. The big exception of course is psychotic developments, where empathy (related to but not identical with compassion), and thus the maintenance of a therapeutic alliance, may not be possible. Comments about this, and about the impact of mindfulness on the shadow – indexed only once – would be welcome.

The final chapters that form the fifth part, called *In and Around the Consulting Room*, deal with the disparate topics of parenting, the place of religion in therapy informed by wisdom and compassion, and ethical growth through the exercise of wisdom and compassion.

Overlap is inevitable, and in its way welcome, as is difference, in emphasis and occasionally of content. What perhaps is notable is the degree of confluence of meaning and significance amongst these 35 distinguished psychotherapists and scientists, itself reflecting a compatible and complementary world view. This has allowed the editors to insert extensive cross-references between the contributions. Indeed the editors and publishers have done an excellent job in their efforts to ensure error-free copy, and in providing full biographical information, a single collated reference section and two indices.

All but one of the contributors is from the USA, mostly from New England. The exception is our own Paul Gilbert, professor of psychology at Derby, who writes a chapter *Depression: suffering in the flow of life*. In common with other contributors, he provides extensive references, many of them recent. We are thereby reminded that since the turn of the century there has been a notable upsurge in broad-based and eclectic research into the value and effects of psychotherapy, which finds itself no longer so tightly

tied to a particular theoretical basis provided by individual schools and their often charismatic founders. Moreover, this generation has confirmed yet again what it is that distinguishes effective psychotherapy from friendly chat or charlatanism: "the evidence that non-specific factors, as opposed to specific techniques, account for nearly all the change in [psycho]therapy is overwhelming" (Bracken et al Br J Psychiatry 2012 201 431). Surely the outcome of so much research entitles us now to stand down that tired and necessarily empty phrase 'non-specific', and in its place put 'wisdom and compassion.'

And there is another reason to acknowledge the healing and restorative power of these two qualities. Throughout this volume we find emphasis not on a one-way traffic - therapist who gives to client / patient who receives - but a two-way exchange whereby each enhances wisdom and compassion in the other: the therapist responds to the client's predicament with wisdom and compassion, thus fostering those qualities in the client who by that response is able to nurture them in the therapist. Growth all round, and a true dyad.

This excellent volume is for all who take an interest in mind healing, or in the mind, or in healing.

What we need next is a conference on *Wisdom and Compassion in Medicine*.

***Julian Candy** is a retired psychiatrist.*

Suffering and Depth

David Lorimer

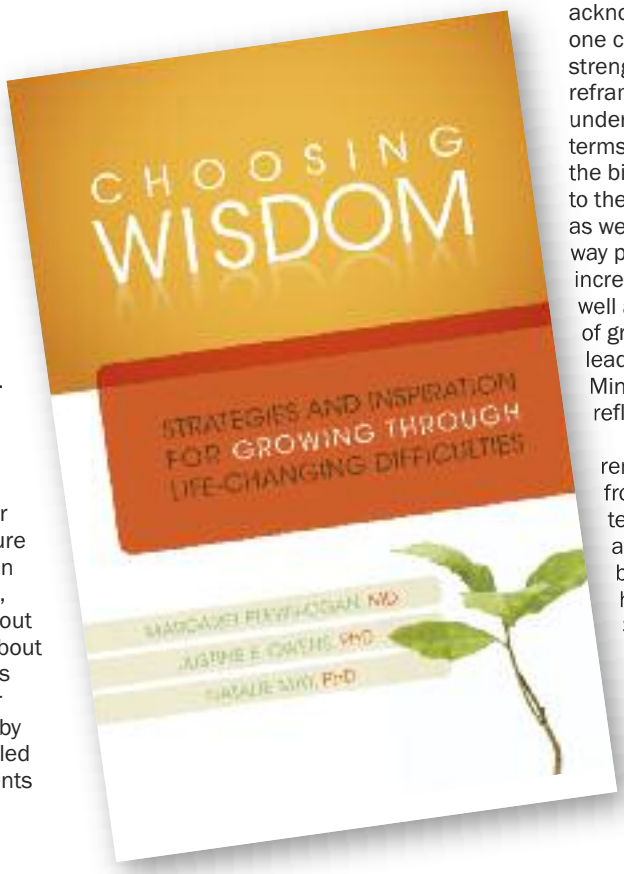
CHOOSING WISDOM

Margaret Plews-Organ, Justine E. Owens, Natalie May

Templeton Press, 2012, 248 pp., $19.99, p/b-ISBN 978-1-59947-395-6

Many readers will be familiar with the classic book written by Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, about his experiences in Auschwitz. In it he quotes Nietzsche's famous saying that what does not kill me makes me stronger. He certainly exemplified this himself, but not everyone can rise to this. In another context, I remember hearing a lecture by Elisabeth Kuebler-Ross in London when, referring to traumatic events, she remarked that we either come out crushed or polished. This book is about the journeys of doctors and patients through adversity and out the other side. It is based on a study funded by the John Templeton Foundation called Wisdom in Medicine involving patients coping with chronic pain and physicians coping with being involved with a serious medical error leading to feelings of inadequacy and guilt. Over 130 people were involved in the study, and this book outlines the common pattern that emerged from both groups. The structure of the book first gives the background with definitions of wisdom and observations on post-traumatic growth. Then it traces a path through adversity through acceptance, affirmative action, integration, the creation of a new narrative and the acquisition of wisdom. The third part outlines advice from the field in terms of finding community, expressing gratitude and compassion, the importance of meditation and mindfulness, the role of action, spirituality and forgiveness.

At the beginning of the book, the authors remark that wisdom is multidimensional in involving intellect as well as emotion, compassion, empathy and self-reflection, all of which is embodied in a person. It also implies 'integration of knowledge, experience, humility and compassion into a creative, good life.' Later in the book they cite a different but equally interesting definition that the essence of wisdom 'is to hold the attitude that knowledge is fallible and to strive for a balance between knowing and doubting.' They also isolate six components, namely reasoning ability, sagacity including concern for others and self-knowledge, learning from ideas and the environment, good judgement, expeditious use of information and intuitive perspicacity.



All the cases make it clear that existential crises involving both physicians and patients bring one face-to-face with the ultimate realities of life. Nor are any easy answers possible; we are often left with uncertainty and ambiguity in the face of overwhelming events. Our faith and metaphysical understanding may be fundamentally undermined and we realise the fragility and value of life. As Jung observed, these situations are not so much resolved as grown beyond. In any event, people are required to make hard choices that can be broadly creative and constructive or self-defeating. The way in which we handle adversity defines us as characters. If we come out polished rather than crushed, we may have to redefine our self-image and narrative about who we are. This particularly applies to physicians who have made serious diagnostic errors and to have to admit that they have not maintained their perfect standards. There is one particularly moving case where the physician plucks up the courage to go and ask forgiveness from the patient, which turns out to be a healing journey for both parties. Another physician thought he knew how to forgive other people, but did not know what it meant to forgive himself, largely, it seems to me, because he regarded the universe as a whole has an unforgiving place.

After acceptance and what the authors call stepping in – active engagement with the trauma – comes integration of the terrible experience and its implications 'into a new understanding of ourselves and our world.' This requires a humble acknowledgement of fallibility before one can move on with renewed strength. Our new narrative can reframe the situation and enable us to understand what we have learned in terms of deeper meaning and seeing the bigger picture. Autonomy gives way to the need for community and support as we find how adversity changes the way people feel. There is often increased compassion for oneself as well as for others, as well as a sense of gratitude and forgiveness that can lead to a deeper healing. Mindfulness, meditation and reflection also have a role to play.

The transformations described reminded me of similar outcomes from near death experiences in terms of greater appreciation of life and reordering of priorities. We become acutely aware of our humanity, joining what Albert Schweitzer calls the league of pain. We come to a new understanding of our body and its processes. The final chapter makes it clear that the path to wisdom entails a series of choices that are difficult,

courageous, conscious and intentional. It is up to us how we play our hand. The book is accompanied by a moving DVD that brings the narrative alive and enables one to get to know some of the people one reads about and feel more acutely the dilemmas and challenges they face. Although primarily aimed at the caring professions, this profound study contains important lessons for all of us when it comes to dealing creatively with adversity and maturing into wise individuals in the process.

philosophy-religion

I AM who I AM
David Lorimer

THE HIDDEN POWER
Thomas Troward

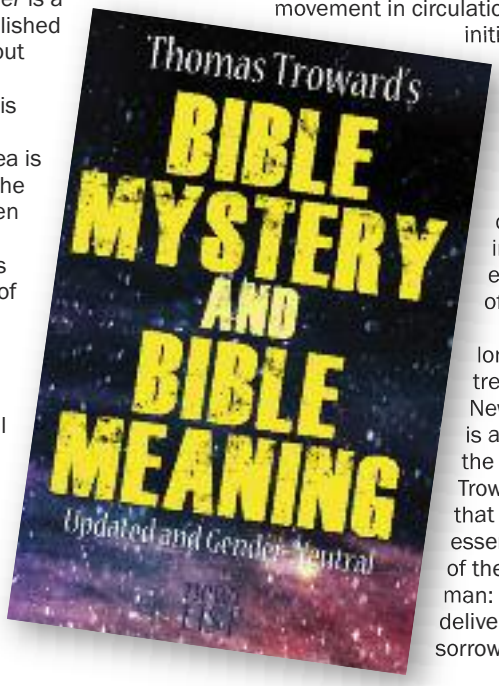
Forgotten Books, 2008 (1921), 132 pp., p/b, available on Amazon – ISBN 978-1-60506-920-3

BIBLE MYSTERY AND MEANING
Thomas Troward

Dodd, Mead, 1913, 323 pp., p/b, available on Amazon – ISBN 1-60424-472-0

Last year, I wrote a review of a number of New Thought books, including a volume by Thomas Troward (1847-1916), who was the most distinguished of these thinkers. After he retired from his career as a divisional judge in Punjab, he devoted the rest of his life to painting and writing, delivering the famous Edinburgh Lectures on mental science only a few years after William James's famous Giffords. James had the highest regard for his writing, which is the epitome of clear legal exposition of complex metaphysical issues.

The Hidden Power is a collection of unpublished papers that came out after his death and contains some of his most penetrating writings. His key idea is his explanation of the relationship between macrocosm and microcosm in terms of the polarisation of Spirit from the universal into the particular, which means that 'the I AM in the individual is none other than the I AM in the universal. It is the same power working in the smaller sphere of which the individual is the centre.' This in turn is what the Bible means when it talks about man being made in the image of God, with the same capacity for creative thought. This Spirit is the infinite Creative Power of the universe and the inner origin of all thought, which is subsequently reflected on the outside. Troward elaborates: 'because I am what I am, I may be what I will to be. My individuality is one of the forms in which the infinite expresses itself, and therefore I am myself that very power which I find to be the innermost within of all things.... It is the very same I AM that I am.' What can say I am in you is identical with the spirit that says I am in me.



Troward's writings are so rich that I will confine myself to two other themes before moving on to biblical symbolism. In an essay on desire as motive power, he criticises religious practices that aim at the extinction of desire rather than its sublimation. He explains the principle of affinity as a reciprocal movement of two forces towards each other, and that the attraction towards its affinity becomes desire in the conscious mind, namely the desire to create some condition better than the present. He goes on to say that 'desire is the mind seeking to manifest itself in some form which as yet exists only in its thought.' Hence it is the principle of creation 'the force behind all things, the moving principle of the universe and the innermost centre of all life.' Desire is the sum total of the livingness of life oriented towards love, abundance and giving. Finally, desire has fulfilment as its correlative, bound together as cause and effect. The key question, of course, is the nature of what is desired.

Another essay discusses the spirit of opulence. For Troward, our real wealth lies in our creative power, so we must first be opulent in our thoughts and generous in our intentions. Life is movement in circulation, which we can initiate by giving as a centre of distribution. We can all give liberally of ourselves and set in motion a corresponding inflow by expanding the life of others.

One of the longest essays treats the Bible and New Thought, which is also the subject of the second book. Troward maintains that the Bible is essentially the book of the emancipation of man: 'this means his deliverance from sorrow and sickness, from poverty, struggle, and uncertainty, from ignorance and limitation, and finally from death itself.' This is a radical and refreshing interpretation. His theology of the relationship between Father and Son is an extension of his understanding of the relationship between Universal Mind and the individual. The Son is of the same nature as the Father, but is particular rather than universal. So theologically Father stands for the Absolute, Originating, Undifferentiated Life, and the Son represents the same life differentiated into forms. Jesus's insight lay in knowing this non-duality (gnosis) and acting directly from it. His conception of prayer is the opposite of the normal uncertainty, since he recommends being grateful for having already received what we have asked for since we are absolutely certain of the reciprocal response of the Infinite Spirit.

Bible Mystery and *Bible Meaning* went through 24 printings even before 1913, and sets out detailed considerations about themes such as creation, the fall, the missions of Moses and Jesus, the teaching of Jesus, the law of liberty, the sacred name and the forgiveness of sin. Like the first book, this is one to be studied rather than read through casually. The starting point is that God is ONE, and this ONE expresses itself as the MANY, whose task is then to recognise themselves as manifestations of the ONE. He elaborates this in three propositions, first that humans are made in the image and likeness of God, second that ignorance of this truth is the Fall (as the Neo-Platonists believed) and third that when one comes into perfect knowledge of the first truth, this understanding leads to a full expression of life. His philosophy of evil or disintegration is that it serves as a transition to a higher degree of life where current conditions first have to die.

Moses had a direct encounter with the I AM in the burning bush, an episode that is echoed by Jesus in the John's Gospel expressions of the Great Affirmation. I AM is the Resurrection and the Life, also the Way and the Truth. Troward maintains that the Great Affirmation is the Secret of Life: 'to say I am with a true understanding of all that it implies is to place ourselves in touch with all the powers of the Infinite.' In terms of the evolution of culture, what he calls the Fifth Kingdom of spiritually developed man represents the progressive awakening to the recognition of our spiritual nature as a working principle of applied faith. Jesus insisted that knowing the truth was freedom, something we all have to discover for ourselves. Ultimate freedom lies in union with the divine rather than

separation, in applying the law of love representing the unity of the Spirit.

A further practical insight relates to the nature of the Universal Mind as receptive and substantial in the sense that it represents a field were thoughts are formed and nurtured. Here the necessary conditions are attracted for the full maturing of the seed. The seed here is a suggestion by the conscious mind, while the Universal Subjective Mind forms 'a matrix for the germination of all the seeds of thought that are planted in it.' Hence the need for discrimination about what we plant. There are many other themes and that I might have elaborated, but I hope the foregoing will give you the reader a sense of the depth and richness of Troward's thought and the understanding to be gained from it.

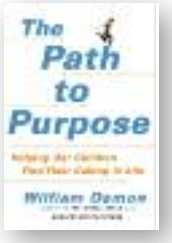
Young People Finding their Calling

David Lorimer

THE PATH TO PURPOSE

William Damon

Free Press, 2008, 217 pp., $15, p/b – ISBN 978-1-4165-3724-3



Bill Damon gave a keynote address at a recent conference organised by the Jubilee Centre in Birmingham University - this is where I first came across his work. In his previous books he argued for the universality of core moral values and the inadequacy of education simply based on self-esteem. Here he draws conclusions from a study of 1,200 young people aged 12 to 26 and detailed interviews of some 300. He relates two critical experiences of his own: as a student he handed in a sloppy, half completed assignment. When the teacher took him to task, he replied that he had not realised that the assignment 'counted.' John Hawes fixed him with a steely gaze and said: "Mr Damon, everything you do in this world counts." This is a remark well worth remembering. The other incident was as a graduate student studying with the Jean Piaget in Geneva. Evidently, the great man's pronouncements were somewhat impenetrable and he became exasperated at the incomprehension of one student who failed to understand his concept of equilibration. He asked the student what was the best way to stay up and float in the water. The student suggested various responses including treading water, at which Piaget thundered: "No! You must *swim*, and in a *direction*. You must *move forward*, that will keep you steady. Plus, you may also have the advantage of getting somewhere." Another very good piece of advice.

Bill begins by filling in the context of our time as one where many young lives are adrift, with record levels of mental distress. There is a great deal of uncertainty, apathy, drifting and lack of any general sense of direction. He treats this sociologically, although one might add that our scientific worldview insists on a world without any intrinsic purpose or meaning and the whole orientation of our culture is extroverted. Children are rarely encouraged to sit still and look within; they are in a state of constant activity and stimulation. Bill finds four broad categories of response in young people: about 25% are disengaged (interestingly, this corresponds to the youth unemployment rate in many countries), around 25% are dreamers, another 31% dabblers and only 20% purposeful. These figures ought to give pause for thought to any education policy maker, with only one in five young people really engaged in purposeful activity. The 25% disengaged had no aspirations and some did not feel it worth acquiring any.

Damon defines purpose as an ultimate concern, the final answer to the question why: 'a stable and generalised intention to accomplish something that is at the same time meaningful to the self and consequential for the world beyond the self.' He argues that finding a clear purpose in life is actually essential for the achievement of happiness and satisfaction, a view that goes way beyond the superficial consumerism of our time and is reinforced by the research of Martin Seligman. He finds that family is the first source of purpose for young people, but there is less engagement in the community and especially in politics - they don't see the point of this activity.

The chapter on profiles in purpose is truly inspiring, and shows what some young people can do and have done with focus and dedication beyond themselves. Interestingly, they regard themselves as normal and feel that anyone else could have done what they have done. People like Ryan Hreljac have exceptional clarity of purpose that generates a phenomenal amount of positive energy leading to the development of 'self-confidence, optimism, gratitude and a deep sense of personal fulfilment.' Ryan was only six when he became distressed about the lack of drinking water in Africa and decided to do something about it. Earning extra money from household chores was not going to be enough, his parents explained, when he found out that each well would cost $2,000. So he went out and started making speeches and presentations, raising the first $2,000 for one well. By 2007, the Ryan's Well Foundation had built 319 drinking wells in 14 countries (www.ryanswell.ca). "Anyone can do anything", he says, remarking that he will go beyond his limits and see where he ends up. The book is worth buying for this chapter alone.

Later chapters address the need to go beyond a culture of short horizons, and give parents some guidelines about how to help elicit a sense of purpose in their children. It is significant that there have been changes in the importance attributed to the contrasting values of developing a meaningful philosophy of life and being very well-off financially. In the 1960s the first rated as over 80%, but has now dropped to 42%. The second was 45% and has risen to 74.1%. This tells its own story: perhaps more consumption, but less happiness and contentment. Bill advocates that adults need to be active in creating a wholesome cultural environment and setting standards that are both constraining in terms of boundaries and inspiring with positive examples. The rhetoric of personal statements in applying for university is not sufficient; these aspirations need to be embodied in real life, and parents can help their children 'effectively pursue their highest aspirations in a realistic manner.' The questionnaire in an appendix is a great starting point, asking students what is most important to them, why they care, whether they have any long-term goals and the meaning of being a good person. Parents can also introduce young people to mentors and encourage an entrepreneurial attitude, a positive outlook, a feeling of agency and a sense of responsibility.

The concluding chapter calls for a culture of purpose for all young people, and Bill points out that purpose is both deeply individual and internally constructive, yet it is an unavoidable social phenomenon manifesting itself into engagement with others. We each live individually and collectively. This work will be harder for parents who themselves lack a sense of purpose, but research on the dying emphasises how important it is to have lived one's own authentic life, to have sung one's song. The ethos of schools undoubtedly has a role to play, but a cultural shift is also necessary, as many books reviewed in these pages attest. He concludes by saying that 'we can offer young people possibilities that fire their imaginations, guidance that encourages their highest aspirations, support that helps them realise their aspirations, and the cultural climate that inspires rather than demoralises them.' Young people will make their

own choice, but we can make significant improvements in enabling them to choose what is best for them. This book is essential reading for all parents and those involved more directly in education, and its message needs to be heard at the highest levels of government.

Thresholds of Spiritual Redemption

Martin Lockley

REPRESENTATIVE MEN IN THE LIGHT OF ANTHROPOSOPHY

T. H Meyer

Lindisfarne Books, 2012, 145 pp., US$ 15.00, p/b ISBN 978-1-58420-139-7

Given that life as we know it has been around for some 3.5 billion years, and that we all share physical, biological and psychological characteristics of our parents' and grandparents' generations, surely immortality is one of life's most obvious and enduring traits. Likewise, given that we appreciate this only through the gift of consciousness, or should I say our current evolutionary structure or stage of consciousness, it is perhaps not surprising that the more we learn about consciousness, especially from direct experience, the more evidence appears to accumulate in favour of the immortality and reincarnation potential of soul and spirit, i.e., "consciousness" in all its higher and lower dimensions. Evidence of OBEs and NDEs only add internal consistency to this paradigm. Did I forget to mention that most religious and spiritual traditions believe in the Eternal Life? I would add that there seems to be an obvious reason for our collective growing interest in this domain of human experience: this is where evolution is taking us, as it has in the past, to new domains of consciousness. Our subtler faculties know it, whether we know it or not!

So who were you in a previous incarnation, what are you doing in this incarnation and how might you be preparing you for the next? These are questions intriguingly, perhaps provocatively, posed by T. H. Meyer in his new book *Representative Men*. As the subtitle suggests this is a view *in the light of anthroposophy*. Rudolf Steiner and his disciples never cease to amaze, and it seems his teachings continue to percolate and bubble to the surface with no sign of diminishing in import. Steiner saw no need to explain or justify the evidence for the spiritual world, as done above, he experienced it directly. So, for him, reincarnation was what one might call a fact of life. However, what did need some explanation, thus becoming part of his teaching, concerns what lessons we might take from each incarnation, and ultimately from our own. So, just as we may learn from the revered teachings of a Jesus, a Buddha or a Lao Tzu, so we might also learn from the lives and experiences of "representative" incarnations, whose historic lives were more often robed in secular, sometimes shabby cloth. These "representative men" include Moses, Grunewald, Goethe, Nietzsche, Wilde, Kafka and Eckstein. [I don't know why no women are included. Perhaps Steiner never went on record analysing female examples. I suspect he would have had an answer that addressed the slight, non-binary importance of gender in multiple incarnation cycles.

As a scientist-thinker Wolfgang Goethe deeply influenced Steiner and the philosophy behind Anthroposophy. Goethe's wide-ranging knowledge and renaissance interests included what Meyer calls "an underlying affinity with Moses." Goethe had on occasion said he felt and prayed like Moses. Meyer argues that "The ...deepest theme of world and human history... remains the conflict between unbelief and faith... [thus] the epochs when faith rules ...are splendid, heartening and fertile for contemporaries and posterity..." In contrast, eras of unbelief vanish before posterity. Space does not permit analysis of Moses' strengths and weaknesses, Steiner's mystery dramas, the parallels between Moses and Faust or the perceived resonances between Elijah, John the Baptist, Raphael and Novalis, but consider the intriguing notion that "in the not so remote future...we will fail to grasp the world, unless we turn to the concept of reincarnation of the human soul and to the karma that traverses several earthly existences. We call it the spiritual interrelationship of the world ..."

Meyer holds that Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is "the great hymn of praise to the higher development of the human spirit. Steiner deeply empathised with Nietzsche's tragic demise (coinciding with the end of the Kali Yuga in 1899). He loved the power of Nietzsche's work, which he interpreted as symptomatic of the "impulse of the age" – the impulse of humankind "to aspire again toward the spiritual realm " But the "hazard," Steiner held, was that Nietzsche received "inspirations without knowing, or ... even wanting to *know from where they come*." Steiner is quoted as saying that Nietzsche's good friend Wagner, who died in 1883, intervened, from the spiritual world, to have him "fall into mental darkness...[to shield]... his consciousness from entering a perilous region."

The chapter on Oscar Wilde is particularly moving thanks to Wilde's extraordinary writing after his "prestigious rise followed by a terrible fall into perversion." Wilde's homosexual relationship with the profligate young aristocrat Lord Alfred Douglas [initials LAD!] led to a stormy battle between a world famous writer and the powerful British aristocracy. Wilde lost, ended up in Reading jail, and wrote *De Profundis*, which according Dunlop, a Wilde biographer, was "the most stirring book he had ever read." Meyer opines that the significant "psychological-spiritual change experienced by Wilde need not, and probably cannot, manifest in the same life." Rather it contains "the very seeds of his entire subsequent development that will extend into succeeding Earth lives." Even [I would say] in Wilde's incarnation his literary and psycho-spiritual transformation was remarkable. Before he as "utterly indecent" ... "ceaselessly sensing the impending doom of his life... shrouded in tragic anxiety... relentlessly tempting providence ...he was genuinely reckless... until misfortune befell him." In prison, this same wild man was to write "At all cost I must keep love in my heart." He observed acts of kindness that were the "impetus to an inner metamorphosis" which brought him out of the "bitterness of lonely exile into harmony with the wounded, broken and great heart of the world." He wrote that "Where there is Sorrow there is holy ground." Wilde prepared for his next Earth incarnation by being wary of falling prey, a second time, to the vices of ambition, vanity and untruthfulness. His final cry was "What an appalling ending!" but "What a beginning! What a wonderful beginning!"

Whereas Wilde took steps to cross the spiritual threshold, Kafka, like Nietzsche, failed to do so. Steiner met Kafka, who was tormented by "*tarrying*" on the threshold. But "as an initiate of spiritual development based on *freedom* [Steiner] was not *allowed* to" influence Kafka's decision. "**Such is the challenge that awaits every individual today – namely, the task of becoming aware of one's own spiritual strivings**" (my emphasis). We see this choice in the chapter on Steiner's friend Friedrich Eckstein, who Steiner credits with having had a "far-reaching" positive impact on his early intellectual life. Together they explored every intellectual avenue of the day. But eventually they parted ways over Eckstein's adherence to Kant's flawed philosophy and Eckstein's position that spiritual knowledge should be kept secret. Steiner was ultimately to express "utter distress" at Eckstein's direction, which was unable to pass beyond the "ice labyrinth" of conceptual intellectuality to gain genuine spiritual insight.

So it seems, Steiner recognised that we can know we are spiritual strivers with the freedom to choose our spiritual paths consciously. When we do so new thresholds come into focus and we may realise they facilitate our own spiritual redemption and inner metamorphosis. We may save ourselves from "tarrying" too long in the ice labyrinths of torment and the purgatory of unbelief in this incarnation or those to come.

Self-Realisation

David Lorimer

ESSENTIAL WRITINGS

Swami Vivekananda

Orbis Books, 2012, 185 pp., $22, p/b – ISBN 978-1-57075-996-3

Picture this: a young Hindu Swami stands up at the World Parliament of in Chicago in 1893 and says – "Sisters and Brothers of America" and is immediately greeted with thunderous applause, a standing ovation that goes on for two minutes. Vivekananda then proceeds to deliver a short 700-word address, which is followed by another standing ovation from the 7,000 people present. This immediately put in on the map at the age of 30. He was signed up by a speaker bureau, spending the next period travelling around the country giving lectures on Hinduism and the necessity for a universal religious outlook. It is hard to overstate the cultural significance of his intervention. From it has flowed a shift in attitudes that makes his message important even for our own time, especially with respect to fanaticism and violence.

Born in 1863, Vivekananda grew up as a disciple of Ramakrishna, absorbing his tolerant outlook and emphasis on self-realisation. He had travelled to the United States in 1893, feeling a calling to take part in this new venture of a World Parliament of Religions. He invited the audience to embrace religious tolerance, openness and acceptance, hoping that the convention would sound the death knell of fanaticism, persecutions with the sword or with the pen and mutually uncharitable feelings between religions. The book tells the story of the struggle he underwent in order to obtain the necessary credentials to be able to present at the Parliament, about which Prof Wright of Harvard commented that asking for his credentials was like asking the sun about its right to shine. His return to India in 1897 was a triumph recorded by Tagore, who wrote about Vivekanda's path of infinite freedom from our egocentric self and the awakening of the human to fullness. This outlook foreshadows the development of the philosophy by Radhakrishnan in the 20th century. Vivekananda returned to America in 1899, and died there in 1902 before his 40th birthday.

The book contains extracts from his letters, speeches and lectures, including spiritual teachings of Hinduism, Jesus, Christianity and, religious pluralism, the nature of spiritual life and techniques of meditation. Vivekanda sees religions as supplementary to each other, each representing a different view of the sun or a different well containing the same water. The difference lies in the form of vessel. All surviving religions contain sacred books, which, if taken literally, lead to bigotry and dogmatism. Vivekananda emphasises being rather than book learning, commenting that the study of books does not lead to spiritual development: 'always cultivate the heart; through the heart Lord speaks, through the intellect you yourself speak.' Religion consists of realisation - not learning, but being: 'if a man reads but one word of love, he indeed becomes learned.' Ramakrishna used to say that it is a mistake to go into a mango orchard and count the leaves, rather than eat the fruit. Leaf counters may want to know the exact date on which the Sermon on the Mount was delivered, but the point is to feel and apply it.

Vivekananda took a dim view of missionary activity in India in the light of India's own rich spiritual heritage. He pointed out that India has never sent missionaries, and recommends people to welcome other religions, but to allow people to have their own. He outlines the nature of the spiritual path as requiring purity, a real thirst after knowledge, and perseverance. Likewise, the real teacher understands the spirit of the Scriptures and maintains an inner purity that can be felt by followers through the medium of love. Such teachers actually feel the oneness of life; they don't simply talk about it. It is striking that Vivekananda remarks that modern times tend to make a 'hotchpotch of the brain' with all sorts of other similar ideas floating around - one wonders what he would have made of the present state of distraction. The instructions he gives for meditation will be familiar to many readers, but are valuable nonetheless. He highlights the importance of developing concentration and its key role in education. At the end of the book, the editor has a few recommendations for how to become like the Swami, including facing your fears, seeing God in every person you meet, meditating and putting your faith into action. One example taken from Vivekananda himself is his cleaning of the sewers after an outbreak of plague, as well as formulating some guidelines for sufferers. This book makes clear how the resonance of Vivekananda's message continues to this day.

A Heresy of the Spirit

David Lorimer

THE CATHAR VIEW

Edited by Dave Patrick

Polair Publishing, 2012, 286 pp., £12.99, p/b -ISBN 978-1-905398-28-7

Since the 1930s, there has been a progressive increase of interest in the Cathars, both spiritually and historically. This began with the work of Déodat Roche bringing an esoteric neo-Catharism to the south-west of France linked to many of the key sites where Catharism had flourished, especially the Valley of the Ariège where the tradition still flourishes. Historians began to take an interest in the 1940s, and the 1960s saw the establishment of the Centre d'Etudes Cathares in Carcassonne. French television created a documentary in 1966, which brought the story to a wider audience. I have a number of the best-known books by scholars such as Rene Nelli, Michel Roquebert and Anne Brenon. Then in the 1980s Network Member Dr Arthur Guirdham published a series of books on Catharism. His initial interest was triggered by traumatic memories on the part of a patient, which led him to unravel an intricate tapestry of connections also involving a previous life of his own. Also in the 1980s, Emmanuel le Roy Ladurie published his book about life in a Cathar village, *Montaillou*, and I had the opportunity of meeting him in Paris. In 1987, around the time of Harmonic Convergence, there was also an inspiring message about the church of love attributed to mediaeval Cathars. A 1990s Channel 4 programme on the Gnostics included a reconstructed debate between St Dominic and Guilhabert de Castres, a Cathar Bishop.

This book brings together 25 diverse essays on various aspects of Catharism and its legacy. There are historical contributions, spiritual reflections and autobiographical journeys; inevitably some chapters will be of great interest to individual readers, depending on their own orientations. Many are footnoted with fascinating historical detail. Spiritually, the power of the movement lay in its simplicity, equality between men and women and the evident emanation of goodness from the 'parfaits' and 'parfaites', the bons

hommes and bonnes femmes. A crucial distinction between Catharism and Catholicism was their assertion that the efficacy of the sacrament depended on the being of the celebrant, not merely on his office. It is easy to see how this would undermine power of the Church, even without the local political implications of the aristocracy siding with a secessionist movement.

Catharism is close to Bogomilism originating in Bulgaria and spreading across southern Europe. Both movements emphasised the importance of the Gospel of John and had a special ceremony – the *consolamentum* - that served both as an initiation for the elite and a deathbed rite of passage for the believers. The Gnostics and the early church both have this distinction between those who knew (*gnosis*) and those who have faith (*pistis*), an inner and outer circle representing a different degree of spiritual commitment. The dualist heresy has been extensively treated by historians and theologians and forms the bedrock of Cathar theology, although lived experience is more important than doctrine. On the esoteric front, I have on a number of occasions visited the Bethlehem cave, which may well have been the site of initiation, with the postulant crawling into the cave through a tunnel and then standing inside a pentacle on the wall representing a new state of being.

The most evocative Cathar site is Montségur, where over 200 Cathar parfaits were burnt in a huge pyre in March 1244. This was one of a large number of atrocities committed in the region. Several authors write about their experiences in this place. Then there is the connection between the Cathar-Bogomils and the White Brotherhood of Beinsa Douno (Peter Deunov) in 20th-century Bulgaria. Douno specifically makes this connection, as detailed in a fascinating essay by Hristo Madjarov. Perhaps the final message is one of the original renewal involving a fresh manifestation of love and wisdom. My friend Margaret Long writes not only about her encounter with Guirdham but also describes his understanding of the training to become a parfait and the importance of their emanation of light and purity leading to a higher consciousness and a refinement of insight. As a whole, the volume is an expression of the indomitable Cathar spirit, almost an archetype, encouraging the exploration of a deeper sense of identity and purpose and the corresponding work of spiritual renewal in our time.

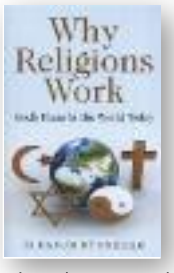
Renewing Social Capital

David Lorimer

WHY RELIGIONS WORK

Eleanor Stoneham (SMN)

Circle Books, 2012, 134 pp., £9.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78099-496-3



Writing as a scientist and a Christian, Eleanor takes on the criticisms of the 'new atheists' in this short and erudite book about the spiritual condition of our times. Naturally, atheists focus on what they regard as the intellectual and moral shortcomings of conventional religion, paying scant attention to the good achieved by these same religions and what they represent by way of social capital. She sees the main role of religions as caring for our spiritual life and growth, urging a transformation within religions themselves to address the core issues of our spiritual condition. In some senses, this is already happening, but many people do not regard their offerings as relevant to their own lives. As she points out, there is a large cohort of people regard themselves as spiritual but not religious.

Eleanor questions this distinction on the basis of her own experience, and also observes that many people claiming to be in this category display very little by way of spiritual practice and ethical contribution. It is one thing to be searching for meaning and purpose and to have a sense of the interconnectedness of life, but it is another to commit to a practice that reflects this insight. It is ironic and perhaps symptomatic that my dictation system twice substituted Internet for infinite! Churches, for their part, need to consider their role as providers of spiritual nourishment and growth while remaining critical of pseudo-spirituality. Taizé chants and opportunities for coming together in silent contemplation are especially important in our noisy and distracted society.

Eleanor reminds readers of the immense amount of charitable, educational and relief work carried out by churches and other religious organisations around the world, which is based on love and compassion for suffering that lies at the root of world religions. 50% of schools are run on a religious basis, and provide opportunities for disadvantaged young people to make real progress. She details the rich inheritance of faith and values in terms of Scripture, the golden rule and spiritual wisdom. She directly confronts objections by atheists and analyses the way in which the new atheists focus narrowly on the dangers of fundamentalism. She advocates a greater maturity of outlook all round, arguing that we should be nurturing religion as a force for good in the world rather than calling for its abolition. This means going beyond mere tolerance in interfaith work and reaching towards respect, understanding and appreciation.

As a member of the Network, I know that Eleanor has had a chance to attend many of our meetings, and discusses some of the presenters like Dean Radin, Larry Dossey, Andrew Newberg, James D'Angelo, Stuart Kauffman, Satish Kumar, Ursula King, Karen Armstrong and Henryk Skolimowski. The massive spiritual transformation and radical activism advocated by Andrew Harvey is in fact the message of Jesus, so we don't need to invent another religion. Surprisingly for me, she cites Pope Benedict XVI recommending the philosophy of Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, who was once Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford and subsequently President of India. Benedict praises his vision of a religion of the spirit able to unite fundamental unity with varied differentiation. This is a key social and spiritual agenda for our time. Eleanor concludes that religions have an important role to play in facing our multifaceted crises, maintaining that we must seek wisdom beyond knowledge and information. Fundamentally, it is we who must change if we wish to create a new world, tempering our will with the spirit of love and wisdom, as CG Jung put it. Eleanor is a voice of sanity in the frenzied debate generated by the passion of new atheism.

psychology-consciousness studies

The Development of Consciousness

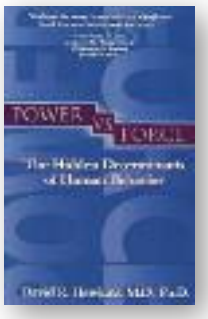
David Lorimer

POWER VS. FORCE

David Hawkins

Hay House, 2012, 370 pp., £12.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-4019-4169-7

This seminal book, first published in 1995, was drawn to my attention at least 10 years ago, and I know I have another copy somewhere on my shelves. Only when it was republished last year did I get round to reading it, and I would urge readers to do so as well. David Hawkins, who died last year, was a psychiatrist who published *Orthomolecular Psychiatry* with Linus Pauling in 1973. In the introduction to



this book he explains the extraordinary experiences that led him to his life work. This begins with a mystical experience in 1939 when he was sheltering from the snow on his paper round and experiences 'an effusion of light and a Presence of infinite love...which was indistinguishable from my own essence.' In his late 30s he succumbed to a progressive and near-fatal illness that failed to respond to any treatment. In extremis he calls out to God to help him, if there is a God.

When he awoke, a massive transformation had taken place. He found he had no personal self or ego – 'just an Infinite Presence of such unlimited power that it was all that was.' The world was illuminated by the clarity of an Infinite Oneness and truth was self-evident; however, his nervous system felt strongly overtaxed as it was carrying more energy than its circuits were designed for. People began to come for treatment from all over the world, and his deeper Self was in charge. He discovers that his non-dual state is paralleled in teachers such as Ramana Maharshi and Nisargadatta Maharaj. He writes that the compassion of the Presence recontextualised each patient's reality and brought about healing and inner peace. He realises that pain and suffering arise from the ego's sense of separation, which cannot coexist with the understanding that one is the universe. His discipline is to act with constant and universal forgiveness and gentleness, without exception, surrendering personal will. Further on, he writes about the dark night when one is called to transcend duality, and a new level of fear arises – 'the final terror of absolute aloneness', letting go of ecstasy. It is these states that represent the Power of the title. I have summarised this at some length, but the introduction alone is worth the price of the book in the light it sheds on the journey of human consciousness.

The book takes the position that consciousness is primary, and that the observable world is a world of effects. We have always tried to understand and influence our experience, but we have a tendency to identify our own intellectual artefacts as reality. Our understanding clusters around a variety of mental attractor fields with corresponding pattern recognitions that we come to label as truth. Hawkins identifies four fatal faults in thought systems: failure to differentiate between subjective and objective, disregard of the limitation of context, ignorance of the nature of consciousness and misunderstanding of the nature of causality. His own system, based on reproducible experiments in applied kinesiology, has provided him with the means of establishing a scale of human consciousness with qualities and individuals calibrated on this scale from 0 to 1000 - a technical appendix provides a detailed protocol for interested readers, and Hawkins emphasises that the research underpinning his scale was carried out over 20-year period involving millions of calibrations on thousands of test subjects of all ages and personalities. He likens the individual mind to a computer terminal connected to a giant database of human consciousness, where individuals reflect and can tune into various levels. As well as kinesiology, Hawkins uses chaos theory and nonlinear dynamics to elaborate his system. He also introduces a more complex model of causality.

The third chapter summarises the test results and sets out a detailed map of consciousness with six corresponding factors (pp. 72-3): a God view, a life view, a level, a numerical reading, a corresponding emotion and a process. 200 is the pivotal point where qualities and emotions become strengthening and uplifting rather than weakening and debilitating as tested on the subjects (some of these have been done double blind). Emotions such as scorn, hate, anxiety, despair and blame are well below 200, while trust, optimism, forgiveness, reverence, serenity and bliss represent progressively more refined states of consciousness characteristic of more advanced beings. Everyone responds strongly to life-supportive fields above 200, while individuals calibrating at below 200 will tend to see themselves as powerless victims. The next chapter explains in detail the calibration system and its progression. Interestingly, the collective level of consciousness of humanity as a whole remained at around 190 for many centuries, and only jumped to its current level of 207 20 years ago. This is surely an encouraging development. Reason calibrates at 400 and love at 500; it is interesting to note that Newton, Einstein and Descartes calibrate at 499 - the ultimate development of reason but just short of love. Joy is 540, beyond which one finds the domain of saints who desire the good of all life forms and merge into the divine will. Peace is 600, and levels from 700 to 1000 represents enlightenment. Hawkins explains that at this level 'there is no longer the experience of an individual personal self separate from others; rather, there is an identification of Self is Consciousness and Divinity.' This level can also be reflected in works of art as well as individuals. Gandhi calibrated at 700, while the British Empire was apparently at 175, hence Power triumphs over Force.

Hawkins defines consciousness as the vital energy that gives both life to the body and survives beyond it in a different realm of existence. Awareness, correspondingly, is defined as 'the all-encompassing attractor field of unlimited power identical with life itself.' Power attracts and unifies, while force is divisive; it repels and polarises. Power serves others, while force is self-serving: 'power appeals to our higher nature, force to our lower nature. Force is limited, whereas power is unlimited.' (pp. 136,159). Force automatically creates resistance that limits its effect by definition. Power is associated with the embodiment of principles; 'it emanates from consciousness itself; what we see is a visible manifestation of the invisible.' These higher manifestations correspond to what the Bulgarian sage Peter Deunov called love as a force in the mind and a principle in the spirit. One can readily understand how this calibration can be applied to the evolution of both individual and collective consciousness. We still live in a world largely dominated by qualities below 200, force and fear, while we can see that visionary developments are moving in the direction of power as defined by Hawkins and embodied by the greatest human beings. The level of consciousness of an individual is determined by the principles to which they are committed.

We ourselves have a choice about aligning with higher or lower energy attractor fields. Will is defined as repeated choice. What we emanate is what we will tend to attract by means of entrainment. Hawkins applies his analysis to a number of different fields, including politics, business, sport, society, the arts, physical health, wellness and the disease process. In common with Walter Russell, he argues that genius is characterised by access to high-energy attractor patterns, including beauty. True artists are humble and grateful for the illumination and insights that they receive. Real leaders treat everyone as an equal, and true success corresponds to alignment with higher power energy patterns. In addition, emotions are reflected in our physical state of health.

The last part considers meaning in more detail, observing that all spiritual teachings emphasise the progressive elimination of the identification of self as finite, in a cognitive, affective and ethical sense. To the extent that one realises the universality of Self expressed in every individual, one will live according to the golden rule. This is

not an easy process, as Hawkins himself points out in the introduction referred to above. Beyond 600, ordinary thought ceases and 'existence is witnessed as Knowingness, omnipresence and non-duality.' This is a state of peace and love coincident with the Self. This search for truth is reflected in all religions, to which Hawkins devotes a separate chapter. He calibrates Jesus Christ at 1,000, but the calibration drops progressively to 540 by the sixth century and 498 by the 11th century, where it has remained ever since. Meister Eckhart is calibrated at 600. Readers can draw their own conclusions, but the author explains that this is due to the misinterpretation of spiritual teachings by the less enlightened with more limited capacities for perception and understanding.

It is also not surprising to learn that many TV programmes calibrate well below 200, and a typical US TV show caused test subjects to go weak 113 times during a single episode. More encouragingly, and not surprisingly, one high-calibrated individual can counterbalance many thousands or even millions of lower calibrated people. It is this thought that lies behind doctrines such as the vicarious atonement. Hawkins calculates that only 15% of the world's population is above the critical level of 200, but this 15% is more than able to balance the remaining 85%. The implication here is that our own advancement of consciousness also raises the whole, and is perhaps our most important potential contribution to life. Occasionally, as in mystical experience, we can glimpse a level way beyond our current calibration, and reading inspiring books or contemplating inspired works of art can have the same effect. I can certainly attest to the uplifting nature of this extraordinary book, but do not feel competent to judge whether the average calibration of 810 is true. I do however urge readers to read the book for themselves.

Entering the Inner Refuge

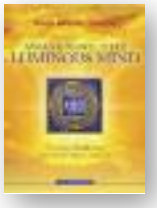
Peter Fenwick

AWAKENING THE LUMINOUS MIND

Tibetan Meditation for Inner Peace and Joy (CD included) £10.99.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Hay House, 2012, 185 pp., £ 10.99, p/b - ISBN: 978-1-4019-3761-4



Tenzin is the founder and spiritual director of Ligmincha Institute, a non-profit organisation dedicated to preserving the ancient teachings of Tibet and Zhang Zhung. His book is a practical description of a number of methods of meditation. I have been meditating now since 1967 and have tried a number of techniques while pursing my seeker's path. The meditations in this book, although the same as all meditations, are fresh and invigorating and worthy of practice. He has a clear concept of the pain body and both its emotional and physical genesis and enhancement and the difficulties that arise by focusing on the pain body rather than using the meditation techniques to find a secure place within yourself where you can rest. This special area he calls 'the refuge' and his meditation techniques are designed to take you to the refuge. He stresses often in his book how our natural mind is pure and perfected, giving rise spontaneously to positive qualities such as love, joy, compassion and equanimity. He adds "We do not need directly to cultivate these positive qualities, nor to produce them through effort, because they naturally arise." He goes on "That is why recognising the natural mind is the inner refuge and is the purpose of the meditation practice in this book. He points out that there are three main doors to the refuge; through stillness, silence of speech, and spaciousness of mind.

So how does one find the inner refuge through stillness of the body? He emphasises that these meditations are useful not only for when your life is going well but more importantly, for when you are disturbed. "First, don't move your body. Let it settle. Allow your pain to breathe. Second, don't feed your body negative attention or worry. It is important to draw the right kind of attention to the body. Become still and focus your attention upon stillness. That's your door. Go deeper towards this stillness." You will come to a space of spaciousness that you experience as indestructible. It is permanent, it will hold you for ever. This is a very effective meditation for when the mind is tumultuous or when you can't settle to anything. Refuge through stillness is your answer.

Do you remember those terrible days, or more important, those terrible nights when your mind won't shut up and despite whatever you do there is a prolonged running commentary in your head, much of which is often painful. Then the meditation for you is finding the inner refuge through the silence of speech. What you do is sit down and balance, or if it's at night then lie silently on your back, "Focus your attention and listen in the silence. If your voices are persistent, simply **allow** the voices and feel the space and the silence around them, instead of listening to them and trying to negotiate with them. Feel the silence in and around the voices rather than trying to find the silence in the absence of voices. You find the silence within the noise, begin to hear the silence. It is there. It has always been there." As you are neither rejecting your inner voices nor inviting them, they slowly diminish as they are not being reinforced. Let the silence expand, listening all the while. After ten minutes you will be secure in your second refuge. And if at night you may fall into a dreamless sleep,

The third method is finding inner refuge through the spaciousness of mind. For me, this is a wonderful, calming meditation. Start as before, sitting quietly and balanced, at rest. "As before, draw your attention inside, not to the body, not to the voices, but to the mind itself. Instead of feeling stillness or silence, try to feel the spaciousness, the nature of mind is very spacious and...the nature of mind is described as clear and luminous. You can feel space around and within the sense of not knowing. You recognise the light within that darkness." As the space expands, the mind stops fretting over what it doesn't know and who you are and when you enter the luminous mind the mind becomes conscious of its own state and you feel an incredible protection. Just stay there.

So try those three doors to your inner refuge. He calls these three methods 'pills', and suggests that we may need to take one three times a day. The three refuges, the body of emptiness, the body of light and the body of bliss, are your three tasks to keep yourself balanced and creative.

The book goes on to describe how to deal with the pain body, how to kill the ego rather than be dominated by it. He points out "The notion of pain body, pain speech and the pain mind – the whole existence of your personality and characteristics – is caused by not knowing your true self. His methods in this book will lead you to experience this bliss and find in times of disturbance a true inner refuge. The final chapters are devoted to the union as great bliss. Union in this context refers to openness and the awareness of openness. Even though short this book is a practical manual for living. All you need to do is practise the methods.

***Dr. Peter Fenwick** is President of the Network.*

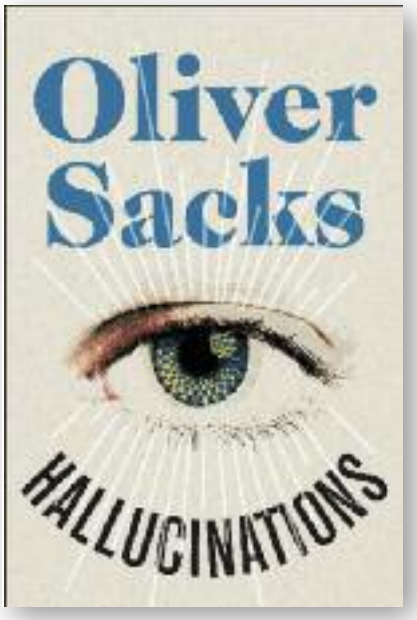
The Mind's Eyes and Ears

Paul Devereux

HALLUCINATIONS

Oliver Sacks

Picador, 2012, 322 pp., £18.99, h/b - ISBN 978-1-4472-0825-9



Neurologist Oliver Sacks is probably best known for his *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* (1985) and *Awakenings* (1973/1990), made into the film in 1990 starring Robert De Niro and Robin Williams. In *Hallucinations*, his latest offering, Sacks presents a thoroughgoing review of the often staggering visual and multi-sensory hallucinations associated with a wide range of conditions, including various types of blindness, especially Charles Bonnet Syndrome (1), sensory deprivation, migraine and epilepsy, sleep disorders such as narcolepsy and sleep paralysis, hypnogogia (visions on the edge of sleep), brain damage, Parkinson's Disease and numerous others.

Sacks makes extensive use of first person accounts from, variously, historical sources, his own patients, and, interestingly, himself. In his "Altered States" chapter, for example, he reveals that in his younger days he took a considerable number of psychoactive drugs – medical and recreational – sometimes in frightening combinations and quantities. One Sunday morning he had taken 20 Artane pills on advice they would give him quite a trip. Disappointingly, nothing seemed to be happening; a failed experiment, it seemed. Two friends dropped by as they often did on Sundays. He chatted with them and made them brunch, asking how they wanted their eggs, but when he emerged from the kitchen, there was no one there. Real and solid in appearance, and interactive, the visitors had nevertheless been hallucinations. Over his long life, Sacks has had even more remarkable hallucinatory experiences which he describes in vivid detail in appropriate parts of the book.

The neurologist tells how various medications used for treating a variety of diseases can cause some patients to have powerful hallucinations, including out-of-body experiences, doppelgangers (spectral doubles of oneself), and various types of "visitors". One such case involved Gertie C., an elderly patient suffering from Parkinson's Disease. She had long experienced hallucinations, usually of a pleasantly bucolic nature, but when she started on L-dopa they took on a more amorous, sexual character. She had one hallucination, "a gentleman visitor from out of town", that manifested faithfully around 8 o'clock each evening and stayed about 40 minutes. Even if readers feel they know what hallucinations are, they will find cases in this book that will make their jaws drop.

Hallucinations is a fascinating read and Sacks writes in a straightforward manner. But though he is kindly and humane, stressing that hallucinations do not equate with insanity, he has what I would call an ontological deficit. He is steadfastly reductionistic, and for him there is no room for anything like parapsychological explanations, though some of the cases he presents certainly seem amenable to such, as do other instances of a type Sacks does not mention, where multiple witnesses are involved or where an apparition is place-related and seen by various people at different times. There can be no doubt that all apparitions, all ghosts, are hallucinatory, in the sense that processes in the brain construct them and enable them to appear to a witness, but are they all necessarily pathological products?

The enormously complex brain is all we have with which to apprehend reality, but we have not got the instruction book for the former nor have we by any means fully mapped the latter. To use a well-tried but useful metaphor, Sacks does at times sound like a TV engineer who explains all the people and scenes appearing on the screen solely in terms of the TV set's electronics, ignoring the existence of distant studios, broadcasters and invisible signals flying through the air. All our perceptions are produced within the brain, and even those signals of the "real world" transmitted to us from our sense organs are neurologically clothed; might *some* hallucinations be neurologically clothed "signals" from elsewhere? The Irish artist, journalist, agriculturist and nature mystic, George William Russell, put it well, when he stated: "I was made certain that the images which populate the brain have not always been there, nor are refashioned from things seen. I know that with the pictures of memory mingle pictures which come to us, sometimes from the minds of others, sometimes are glimpses of distant countries, sometimes are reflections of happenings in regions invisible to the outer eyes..."(2) Inside our heads, it might indeed be the case that we are not alone.

Notes

1. I provide a case study of this in "Eye Spirits: Visions of the Blind", in D. Pinchbeck and K. Jordan (eds.), *Exploring the Edge Realms of Consciousness* (2012). Berkeley: Evolver Editions. Also: http://www.realitysandwich.com/eye_spirits_visions_blind

2. Russell, W.G. ("AE"), *The Candle of Vision* (1918), in Raghavan and Nandini Iyer (eds.) *The Descent of the Gods – The Mystical Writings of G.W. Russell-A.E.* (1988). Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe. (104)

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The Only Fear

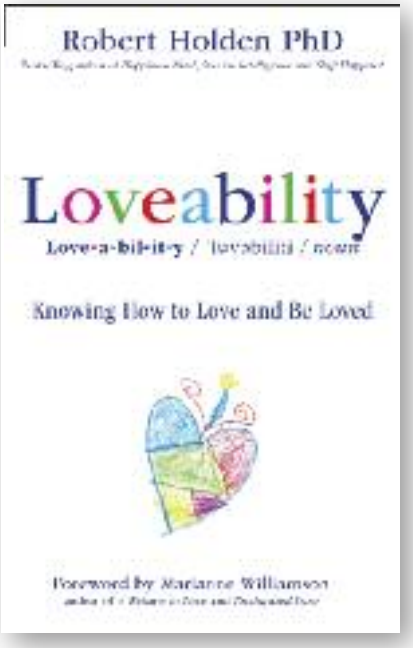
David Lorimer

LOVEABILITY

Robert Holden

Hay House, 2012, 219 pp., £10.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78180-065-2

Robert Holden is well known for his work on psychology and spirituality that has been featured in two BBC documentaries, as well as for his books *Happiness NOW*! and *Shift Happens*. He is also a long-term student of *The Course in Miracles*, which partly explains why Marianne Williamson has written the foreword. She explains that the book is about unlearning the ways of fear and choosing love instead. This may sound simple, but hidden fears lurking in the subconscious mind greatly complicate the matter. Another source of inspiration, which many readers of this review may have read themselves, is *The Art of Loving*, by Erich Fromm. Holden recalls how he re-



read this book on a retreat on Mount Athos, where he also recounts a meeting with a zealous monk, perceptively described by his older colleague as 'too full of religion to know about God.'

The book has a simple message: that the basic fear, 'I am not loveable', is the primary reason why people stop loving themselves and find it so difficult to love others. It reflects the ego's sense of separateness that is identified by Neoplatonism as a fall into separation. This is the profound reason why we all seek to return to a primordial unity. The five parts explore different aspects of love: first, our relationship to love as the real work of our lives; it is not a question of finding love, but rather of being love and loving everyone. The second part considers what Robert calls the basic drama between the Unconditioned Self and the learned self-image. We have to learn to love ourselves before we can truly love others. The third part shares some exercises about loving and being loved. Then he moves on to some common blocks to love and finally to the importance of forgiveness that enables us to make a basic choice between love and fear, pain or guilt. Ultimately, it is about being a presence of love. Throughout the book, there are some wonderful short quotations from many sources, as well as illustrative experiences about love and relationships with which many readers will resonate.

As a teenager, Robert received an important lesson from his friend Adam, who was evidently much less good-looking, overweight and have the worst acne in the class. When Robert asked Adam why the girls liked him so much, he told him that he didn't love himself, and couldn't therefore make girls feel at ease; he, Adam, did love himself, and this feeling was communicated to his classmates. Robert goes into some detail about different facets of self-love, which readers can work through and apply to themselves. In a telling exercise, he explains what it is like to work with a partner who holds a mirror up in front of you and you say out loud 'I love myself' every few seconds, noting any responses and sensations that arise. This is a real litmus test. He asks if we accept ourselves or rather judge ourselves. It is easy to be self-critical, but those same people are often the least accepting and most critical of others. He concludes by saying that 'the more you love yourself, the more people feel loved by you'. It is a simple but powerful insight.

Many of our issues arise in childhood, as they did for our parents in turn. There are many childhood roles that we may have played that influence our subsequent development. Then there is the language we use about ourselves and the need to deepen our understanding of love itself. Robert builds on the concept of unconditional positive regard first elaborated by Carl Rogers, so he asks himself what it is like to love someone with total unconditional acceptance. This is the same discipline referred to by David Hawkins in my review of his book above. The cultivation of gratitude is also central. Then there is important work on the way in which we communicate love in terms of our different personalities. Robert encourages us to complete our own love maps for each significant relationship (p. 116).

In intimate relationships, there is a danger that two egos will project their fear of being unloveable onto each other, so Robert reminds readers that 'to get to love, you have to start with love' and let go of fear. This leads him to re-emphasise his central message that we cannot love another if we do not love ourselves. This can remind us that we essentially bring our own experience to a relationship, which acts as a mirror. The less we love ourselves, the more critical we are, the harder we make it for people to love us, the more we try to control relationships and the more we are inclined to test other peoples love for us. These are profound yet simple insights. I heard of a recent poll conducted among those who only had one week or less to live. These people were asked what their greatest regret was. 90% of them said that they had not loved enough, while second place was taken by those who said they had not been loved enough. This inspiring and instructive book is a timely reminder that love really is the real work of our lives and that our best work arises from loving what we do.

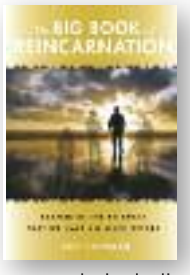
Is Death the Final Chapter?

David Lorimer

THE BIG BOOK OF REINCARNATION

Roy Stemman (SMN)

Hierophant Publishing, 2012, 302 pp., £15.99, p/b-ISBN 978-0-9818771-6-7



As a self-professed 'skeptical believer' and journalist, Roy Stemman is in a good position to examine the whole range of evidence for reincarnation, bringing to bear the best-documented research, including a considerable amount from Ian Stevenson, the most well-known figure in this field, and whose work was highlighted by Carl Sagan as a possible refutation of his materialistic understanding of life. The result is arguably the best recent introductory book that provides enough evidence for readers to come to their own conclusion. Roy takes the view that reincarnation is by far the best explanation to accommodate all the known facts, a conclusion with which I would broadly concur even if the answer to many questions still remains obscure.

The book is divided into three parts - past, present and future. The first section gives a historical overview, including religious affiliations and an account of pioneers like Joan Grant and the psychiatrist Denys Kelsey, who used to come to Network meetings 20 years ago. This leads into a description of cases featured in the 1997 documentary about the Druze, and the first of many detailed case histories involving children who remember previous lives. For those unfamiliar with the field, these memories are detailed and specific, and can often be verified by living people who knew the person whose life the child remembers. They cannot be accounted for by coincidence. This leads into a different area - the procedure for identifying successive lamas in Tibet, with an account of the discovery of the current Dalai Lama. Then there are stories of pioneering Westerners who adopted an Indian view and cases involving fears and phobias that can sometimes be resolved through hypnotic regression.

The status of hypnotic regression is controversial, and Ian Stevenson took a very sceptical view. Drawing on existing literature, Roy also describes people who claim to have been famous in past lives and fascinating facial parallels between these characters. These are intriguing without being in any way conclusive: Voltaire is meant to have

become Bernard Shaw, and Pascal Teilhard de Chardin. Whatever one thinks, these are interesting thought experiments. Further reaches of the topic include life between lives and possible projections into the future. Then there is the serious question of where our memories are stored. The Stevenson data rule out any kind of exclusive storage in the brain, as these are retrieved from elsewhere. Nor is there any conventional explanation for the correspondence of birthmarks with, for instance, entry and eight civilians from a bullet that killed the very person whose life another child remembered.

Roy devotes some space to various alternative explanations, which are also discussed in detail by Stevenson. One of these is cryptomnesia or unconscious recall of the contents of books that one has read, subsequently elaborated into stories. This can account for a few cases, but by no means all. The last part summarises some of the best evidence for rebirth, which has a powerful cumulative effect. None of these cases is perfect, but they will demand an explanation beyond orthodox psychological theory. It is a pity that generations of psychology undergraduates are never exposed to this kind of material. As Roy points out, most sceptics are ill informed, even about Ian Stevenson whose work is mainly published in peer-reviewed journals.

Towards the end of the book, he discusses difficult issues raised by karma and identity. He admits that the mechanics of rebirth elude him, humbly admitting that he simply doesn't know. However, the evidence does point in the direction of some principle of continuity of identity between lives. If there really is an independent soul-like entity, this has tremendous implications for our understanding of life and consciousness, as many researchers have already concluded. Stevenson calls this a psychophore and the researcher Paul Von Ward the psychoplasm. An interesting speculation is that only a percentage of the total energy of a soul is incarnated in any one period. From this wide-ranging survey, Roy concludes that there is very strong evidence that we are indeed spiritual beings, but suggests that we are mostly not meant to remember these previous existences as so that we can make the best of our present life for our own good as well as that of others. Some readers will feel that Roy has overstepped the mark in a few more speculative chapters, but the value of the book is in bringing all types of evidence together for rational consideration.

ecology-futures studies

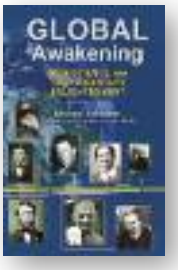
The Regeneration Revolution

David Lorimer

GLOBAL AWAKENING

Michael Schacker

Park Street Press, 2012, 472 pp., $29.95, h/b – ISBN 978-1-59477-482-9



This is undoubtedly one of the most important books I will review this year, and, as it suggests on the jacket, it is a book 'that belongs in the library of every awakened activist.' Michael Schacker's previous book, *A Spring without Bees*, is a microcosm of what he calls the mechanistic dilemma that we face as a culture. He will be pleased to learn that at least some neonicotinoid pesticides have been banned in Europe this week. While he was still working on this major book, he suffered a stroke, but happily has made a good recovery. The trajectory outlining the historical context of our systemic will be novel to most readers as he draws original parallels between the 18th-century Enlightenment and our own time in terms of scientific, spiritual and social development. In addition, some of the thinkers and activists cited were new to me, along with many better-known figures.

The author states starkly at the beginning of the book, that without change there is no hope. Mechanistic science and technology have given us the modern world, but have also thrown up challenges and dilemmas that cannot be solved within this framework, since the framework and its thinking is an intrinsic part of the problem. We are told we live in a meaningless and purposeless world so we may as well get on with consuming as much as possible and despoiling the Earth in the process. Readers of this Review will know that there is an entirely different current of thought represented here as the Organic Shift that is currently marginalised but will need to come increasingly into the mainstream. At the moment, we have an ideological struggle with virtually all the power vested in the establishment, which is using various methods of fear-inducing control to maintain its position. However, as Arnold Toynbee pointed out Fritjof Capra reminded us in his book *The Turning Point* over 30 years ago, there is a creative minority articulating a new holistic worldview, and the Network forms a part of this.

The first few chapters are devoted to staining the historical stages of the 18th-century Enlightenment that replaced the mediaeval theocratic and monarchical worldview. The key figures are Kant and Goethe as the Copernicus and Galileo of the new thinking. With his revolution in epistemology, Kant paved the way for the science of consciousness and participatory interpretations of quantum mechanics, while Goethe invented an entirely new scientific method that is only now gaining widespread acceptance 200 years later. A significant role was played by Voltaire, with his powers of rhetoric and persuasion in formulating a new story. The author explains the importance of Kant's *homo noumenon*, which he interprets both as a moral man and a form of transcendental awareness, a collective spiritual consciousness that we see emerging in our time. The chapter on Goethe also includes his classification and all four types of scientist, which I had not come across before. At the lowest level of the ladder are users, then come knowers, followed by beholders and finally encompassers. The last type of scientist uses a participating method, implying imagination and intuition to see the whole. As Schacker puts it: *'since human beings have within themselves the same essence that makes up the universal being and nature, human intuition had the ability to envision that the essence in its mind.'* (italics in the original)

The next three chapters analyse the organic shift in science and technology, the social and civil rights revolution, and organic counter cultures and the new artist. Here the author uses his extensive sources and powers of analysis and synthesis to produce a fascinating new understanding of the most important ideas and figures. He explains the significance of thinkers like Henri Bergson, William James, Ernst Haeckel, Aldo Leopold, William Dilthey and Hans Christian Smuts. He then moves onto the history of medicine, explaining its evolution in 19th-century America and the takeover by the AMA following the Flexner report of 1913, funded by the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations. This paved the way for modern biomedicine and the hegemonic control of the entire profession by the pharmaceutical industry. It was interesting to learn that the FDA is largely funded by the industry, which helps explain its intense antagonism towards natural medicine. We also learn of early work in solar power, including contributions by Becquerel and Hertz. Enormous progress was made at the turn of the 20th century, much of which was lost following the devastating impact of the First World War. At one point, an electric car held the land speed record.

Shifting to agriculture, Schacker discusses the contributions of George Washington Carver and Sir Albert Howard on soil health, concluding that we have reached a crossroads in the history of science and technology. We can either continue down the road of oil, gas and nuclear power, using up the last of our uranium in the process, all we can go down the path of organic science and low impact renewable energy technology. We all know that the current power structure supports a fossil fuel and nuclear future, but this may be in the process of unravelling.

The civil rights chapter covers the origins of feminism in the late 18th century, then abolitionism and pacifism - key figures are Mary Wollstonecraft, Judith Murray and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Then we reach the suffragettes, Walt Whitman and gay liberation, the emergence of socialism and the labour union movement, then the peace movement and anti-imperialist league supported by Andrew Carnegie, his friend Mark Twain at William James. Carnegie even offered President McKinley $20 million to buy the Philippines and give them their independence. In this and the next chapter, one realises the full psychological, social, spiritual and economic impact of the First World War. On the one hand, we reach a metaphysics of despair, but on the other, the seeds of a new counterculture were already sprouting in that era and have re-emerged as the 1950s and 60s. It is interesting that world trade did not recover its pre-First World War levels until 1980. There is extensive treatment of oil-powered corporatism versus environmentalism, and the role played by PR mind control developed by Edward Bernays in the late 1920s.

The chapter on art begins with William Blake, moving on to the Romantics, the American transcendentalists like Emerson, the invention of voluntary simplicity and civil disobedience by Thoreau, New Thought, the arrival of the Bohemians in New York, the influence of Impressionism, the new spirituality represented by the Parliament of World Religions in 1893 as well as publication of Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* in 1878. Since that time, Eastern ideas have gained enormous influence. The conservation movement initiated by John Muir and taken up by Theodore Roosevelt continues to gain momentum. There is a fascinating account of Bohemia's Queen Mabel Dodge and her role as a full-time change agent in both Greenwich and American Indian cultures. Finally, the chapter converges on Gandhi and his pivotal influence.

The book now moves on to an extensive consideration of Teilhard de Chardin before tracing the historical phases of the current Organic Shift, from 1950 to 1975, the conservative backlash from 1976 to 1990, the intensive phase of 1991 to 2011 and the transformational phase of 2012 to 2050. Once again, these chapters are full of fascinating analysis including sections on Rachel Carson, women's liberation, the antinuclear movement and Vietnam, Abraham Maslow, Esalen, Martin Luther King and the photo of the whole Earth. Then there are sections on Buckminster Fuller, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, Joseph Campbell, Theodore Roszak, EF Schumacher, James Lovelock and many others. Some of the key books are highlighted, almost all of which I have read over the last 30 years. The Reagan administration is subjected to considerable scrutiny, especially its attitude towards the environment and the enormous arms build-up that resulted in a massive increase in national debt.

The last three chapters bring the story up to date, with particular emphasis on the work of Robert Rodale in regenerative agriculture. The core inter-linked areas of crises are: the environment, agriculture, economics, foreign policy, energy, education and health. Each of these has a systemic relationship to the others, which is spelt out in the Global Regeneration Chart that can be viewed at the Global Regeneration Work at www.globalregen.net. Schacker advocates the regenerative zone development method of Robert Rodale, and explains how it works and indeed has worked in Dominica and Senegal. We also need a regenerative medicine, which will be partially driven by medical costs currently spiralling out of control. He sketches out further elements of the Regeneration Revolution with agendas for government, planning, corporations and institutions. This is radically visionary, but it will only come about if enough of us support and implement the changes in our own lives. The reader gains a better understanding of the interconnectedness of these factors through and global regeneration plan chart on page 366, which resembles work done by my International Futures Forum colleague Tony Hodgson on his World Model.

It is clear from this remarkable book that we do have the capacity to regenerate natural systems and achieve a sustainable lifestyle. However, there is a great deal of paradigm resistance and entrenched power structures that are currently pursuing an agenda of global domination, as explained in the film Thrive - see www.thrivemovement.com. One source of hope is the huge demographic transition that is now taking place and which was partly responsible for the re-election of Obama last year. Schacker also sketches out a likely future scenario in terms of causes, trends and events, which requires democratic participation in order to shift the systems. He proposes a New Marshall Plan, setting out the details in a comprehensive series of charts relating each of the major factors to all the others. This requires detailed study. He also proposes a new global curriculum based on an integrated narrative with the meaning of history at its core, then a synoptic history of consciousness and only thereafter what he calls the sea detail. As I have written in my review of William Damon's book elsewhere in this issue, the new education has to show how young people can find a path of purpose in life and understand the world within a multidisciplinary framework.

Even in a book of this scope, I noticed a few gaps. There is no mention of the work of Alfred Russel Wallace or the influence of Tolstoy on Gandhi. Likewise, Hegel and Schelling are absent, as is the contribution of Radhakrishnan to religion in the 20th century and the work of Lewis Mumford. In terms of new science, mention might also have been made of the work of Victor Schauberger. Notwithstanding these omissions, this is one of the most important books you can read this year, and I look forward to discussing it with other Network Members.

Creative Transgression in a Conceptual Emergency

David Lorimer

DANCING AT THE EDGE

Maureen O'Hara and Graham Leicester

Triarchy Press, 2012, 161 pp., £12, p/b – ISBN 978-1-908009-98-2

Both expressions used in the title of this review are likely to be unfamiliar to readers, but they are key innovative concepts to help us understand our complex world. Both authors are core members of the International Futures Forum, with which I have also been working over the last 12 years (www.internationalfuturesforum.com). The approach of the IFF has been based on the assumption that we live in a world that we cannot completely understand or control. Hence the need for more systemic and subtle thinking and interventions. The IFF originated in Scotland, which also produced the Scottish Enlightenment in the 18th century with a far-reaching European influence. It is a small but highly interconnected country where new

initiatives can easily be piloted and communicated.

A conceptual emergency arises when existing thinking is inadequate to the situation, and may require a creative transgression on the part of an individual within the established system. This 'dancing at the edge' can give an initial nudge towards transformative change. The main theme is how to form competent persons of tomorrow within the cultural and organisational context of the 21st-century. The expression comes from Carl Rogers; changing contexts require changing competencies and a re-examination of the cultural assumptions that we make about competence and personal and professional development. The two parts of the book examine the contemporary context and outline a number of essential 21st-century competencies. The analysis is based not only on wide reading, but interaction with individuals and organisations dealing with complex and messy issues and situations. Sometimes the process involves a learning journey where the team gain first-hand knowledge and experience of the situation, and are often able to reframe it in a constructive manner.

In the face of rapid change, widespread uncertainty and baffling complexity, the authors see a breakdown of patterns of consciousness and mentalities based on outdated metaphors and linear thinking. 21st-century competence is not defined as a series of skills but rather as 'the ability to meet important challenges in life in a complex world' according to a five-year study by the OECD. The bottom line is that we need to grow as people in order to become competent at different levels and in a variety of ways. This means acquiring not only cultural literacy but also psychological literacy. The authors use the four pillars of learning outlined in a UNESCO report on education for the 21st-century. These are learning to be, learning to be together, learning to know and learning to do. It is striking that learning to be comes in pole position, but then this is where habits of heart and mind are formed. They recommend humility, balance and faith in the future, while noting that many leaders now devote time to health, exercise and some form of spiritual practice such as mindfulness.

'Being together' is about cultural leadership and a balance between individual autonomy and relational fulfilment demanding the development of a sense of empathy and common humanity. Especially important is the development of trust and new strategies for cooperation and collaboration. They give examples of creative transgression such as Luke Jerram installing battered old street pianos in public places for people to play. Many of these interventions are imaginative and inexpensive but can exert a powerful effect. Expanding one's ways of knowing is also central, so that we can understand multiple worldviews and be comfortable with inevitable paradox and ambiguity. Knowing should also include feeling and intuition as well as an appreciation of process and flow rather than a fixation on structures. All this can expand both the depth and breadth of perspective brought to bear on a situation.

'Learning to do' involves organisations as settings for people to grow. One theorist coined the term adhocracy for a flexible approach, but this can put too much strain on people in the absence of a stable background. The important point is to develop enabling conditions for challenges to be resolved and people to grow. This theme is illustrated by a study conducted by the late Max Boisot on the Higgs boson the experiment at CERN. Learning to do also involves reflection on the process and careful consideration devoted to the most effective form of action, which Graham likens in another book to social acupuncture. The authors consider that action should be both inspirational and aspirational, generating hope rather than fear. At the end, there is a wry reflection of the disappointment of last chapters that do not deliver on the title of the book. They argue that the whole of their book is based on desired forms of thinking and action, so that no further call is required. The value of this succinct book lies in the mirror it provides to our culture and to us as individuals. We gain a better understanding of social, psychological and cultural dynamics and of ways in which we ourselves can grow into some of the essential 21st-century competencies.

A Message of Hope

David Lorimer

WAKE UP AND HEAR THE THUNDER

Eileen Campbell

EC Books, 2012, 194 pp., £9.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-9572386-0-2

Eileen Campbell was my editor Routledge who published my first book nearly 30 years ago. We met at an early Mystics and Scientists conference in Winchester, and I mentioned to her that I was in the process of writing a book (*Survival?*) So I sent her the manuscript when it was completed. In this new book she draws on her wide reading and experience to provide a comprehensive account of the contemporary revolution in consciousness. Many people see only the breakdown without understanding the nature of the new holistic, ecological and spiritual worldview that is coming about. The book is in three parts: an analysis of current uncertainties, the capacity of an age of wisdom to transform the world, and keys to conscious evolution. One gets the same sense of hope from Paul Hawken's *Blessed Unrest* when one realises how much fine work is going on around the world.

Eileen sees the old era as characterised by self-interest, greed and fear being transformed into a worldview based on altruism, compassion and sustainability. By framing narrative in this way, the reader is able to see a coherent story of breakdown and breakthrough, which has also been described by authors such as Ervin Laszlo. Apocalyptic prophecies - some emanating from traditional cultures - combine with grim forecasts of ecological overload to make us fearful of the future, but endings also signify new beginnings: the transition from one age to another. Eileen points out that prophecies can serve as a wake-up call, reminding us to embrace change and act to create a new way of life. If the first chapter looks forward, the second glances backwards at the myths of the golden age - an idealised past, rather than a utopian future. Eileen takes the view that myths represent psychological truths about the inner world, as proposed by Joseph Campbell and CG Jung; she draws on many different mythologies to illustrate her point, suggesting, for instance, that dreams of paradise represent our longing for connection with the eternal.

The next chapter outlines the history of conscious evolution and the contributions of visionary scientists, philosophers and theologians but is also informed by technological forecasts that may enhance our human capacities in various ways. The second part looks at the creation of conscious communities, the development of an enlightened economics and the prospects for a new kind of politics. Fundamental to all of these developments is a growing sense of interconnectedness and interdependence reflected at every level. As a shorthand, Eileen proposes that we are moving towards a culture based on wisdom and compassion, which always been the ideals of the great religions. We also need to move beyond excessive individualism and realise that our well-being depends on harmonious relationships. Well-being and quality of life are key to bringing in new indicators that go beyond growth of GDP; beyond a certain point, material wealth does not enhance well-

being. Eileen's analysis is informed by an impressive range of examples and situations, so that the reader becomes more aware of the synergy of many different initiatives: the charter for compassion, positive psychology and even Slow Food. All this enhances community and connection and represents an evolution of consciousness and empathy. Social networks and activist sites also have the capacity to mobilise people to transformative action.

Economic and politics are also due for an overhaul. Eileen sees the necessity for a number of major issues to be addressed, including reform of the financial system, restructuring laws governing corporations and markets, reduction of global imbalances, achievement of sustainability (also in terms of lifestyles) and the development of new economic indicators. There is a great deal of new thinking going on, but little of it has yet reached the mainstream. At a local level, the transition town movement and local exchange trading systems have had a considerable impact and indicate a shift towards more sharing, caring and cooperative behaviour. In terms of politics, Eileen suggests that we need to seek the highest common and a rebirth of participatory democracy. This involves dialogue and empowering leadership. Finally, Eileen proposes ten wisdom keys: vision, courage, optimism, forgiveness, trust, attention, gratitude, compassion, service and simplicity. She elaborates on each of these, enabling readers to reflect on how they themselves might apply such principles. Ultimately it is a question of changing our mental and emotional habits so that we can create new relationships and a new culture. This is a visionary and deeply humane book, informed by a lifetime of reading, reflection and spiritual practice.

Indigenous Human Experience

Elisabet Sahtouris

RADICAL HUMAN ECOLOGY: INTERCULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS APPROACHES

Editors Lewis Williams, Rose Roberts, Alastair McIntosh

Ashgate, 2012, 452 pp., £80 - ISBN - 978-0-754677-680 (hbk) 978-0-754695-165 (ebk)

Human Ecology is a very broad inclusive academic field with a large literature. However much it has been marginalised and circumscribed within the academic camp, Kansas State University's College of Human Ecology´s short definition of HE is: "It's about Us." In its best sense, Human Ecology is about the wellbeing of people and planet. That is indeed the mission of this remarkable Radical Human Ecology compendium. Its subtitle *Intercultural and Indigenous Approaches* distinguishes its content, at least in identifying its 22 contributors as representing our human root cultures and our human need now for cross-cultural outlooks. Pitting pre-modern indigenous worldviews and social ecological practices against those of modernity and post-modernity, the contributors persuasively make the case that to save ourselves now we must recognise our indigenous heritage as our deepest, longest, most ensouled and holistic human experience on Earth.

The contributors argue that modernity and post-modernity (the latter as *Koyaanisqatsi*, the Hopi term for a disordered life out of balance) have so focused on the outer material world that nature's non-material inner aspect of spirit has been denied and lost as consumer cultures devastated ecosystems and indigenous human connections to our own spirit, destroying our natural communion with each other and all other beings, devolving even philosophy into a meaningless fragmented jumble of deconstruction. This book is a heroic effort to restore balance by offering us healing indigenous perspectives and showing their vital relevance today.

Two of the three editors are indigenous women—Lewis Williams a Maori and Rose Roberts a Lac la Ronge Indian, both teaching at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. The third, Alastair McIntosh of the Centre for Human Ecology in Strathclyde, counts himself indigenous to the Outer Hebrides and well documents his 20-year struggle as a professor of Radical Human Ecology in post-graduate academia, where the "iceberg-like structures of money, power and epistemology" forced Human Ecology into their acceptable areas of "population, resources, environment and development."

Radical Human Ecology from this reviewer's perspective is fighting for its life in academia by conforming to the latter's demand for journalese language. One has to wade through academic argument for the deeply human stories, not only of the struggle for legitimacy but of that ensouled indigenous human experience we so need to save ourselves. I wish there were a book half as long, for less than half the price, that would bring these invaluable messages to a far wider audience than that to which this book's price alone will limit it.

Chief editor Lewis Williams calls the book "an unconventional and timely pedagogy of hope." She is donating all royalties to fund scholarships for underprivileged youth on intergenerational healing and deep ecology. www.kinincommon.com So do convince whatever organisation you are involved in that can afford it to get a lending copy and donate one yourself to wherever it would be read if you can!

*A review by **Elisabet Sahtouris, PhD,** Evolution biologist and futurist; author of **EarthDance: Living Systems in Evolution** and **Biology Revisioned** with Willis Harman; co-founder of the Worldwide Indigenous Science Network*

general

Music and Philosophy: Strange Bedfellows?

Edi Bilimoria

THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO PHILOSOPHY AND MUSIC

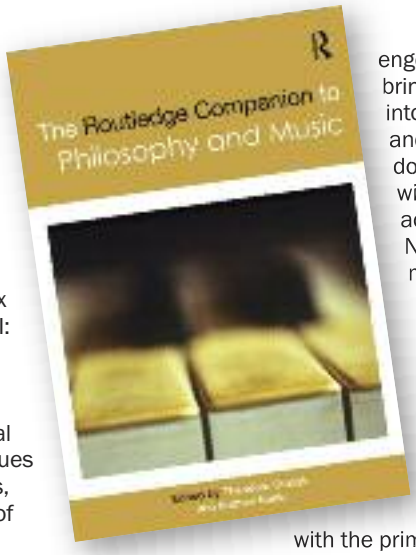
Edited by Theodore Gracyk and Andrew Kania

Routledge, 2011, 654 pp., £34.99, p/b ISBN 978-0-415-85839-7 (Ebk).

On the bookshelves behind my grand piano rest my old favourite musical reference books: *The Larousse Encyclopædia of Music, Man And His Music* and *The New Penguin Opera Guide* amongst others; and now a most welcome addition – *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music*.

A hallmark of the greatest musicians is their deep philosophical and spiritual conviction. One has only to recall Bach's profound words on deity and humanity, or Beethoven's pronouncements on art, life and philosophy, or Liszt's philosophical and religious idealism, to name but three titans whose entire life's work was driven by their philosophy and inner conviction. But philosophy, let alone spirituality, hardly figures in the curricula of our musical schools and academies, nor do they form the backbone of education in general. So an erudite 654 page tome such as this, and the first of its kind, that seeks to marry these two disciplines is long overdue.

The book is edited by two professors of philosophy with contributions from



fifty four scholars and academic fellows chiefly in music, philosophy, linguistics and humanities. The contents are organised into six clear parts. Part I: *general issues* and Part II: *emotion*, contain essays on general philosophical issues that music raises, from the nature of music itself, the various aspects of it (such as melody and harmony) through musical practice (authentic performance, technology) to our experience of music (understanding, value, beauty). Part III: *history* provides essays spanning five major periods of philosophical thought about music, and the related Part IV: *figures* has essays on what the great Western thinkers had to say on aesthetics, music, culture, and social and political philosophy. Part V: *kinds of music* ventures outside the field of traditional concert music into film music, dance music, rock and jazz. Finally Part VI: *music, philosophy and related disciplines* contains essays on the relations between the philosophy of music and the many other disciplines that inform such philosophy such as politics, gender and psychology.

The first chapter is devoted to definitions: a short one on philosophy and a much longer one on music. A 'philosophical definition takes the form of a set of individually necessary, jointly sufficient conditions'. But such a traditional definition of music is not so easy, as the editors freely admit. They settle on an intentional definition of music as opposed to a subjective, aesthetic or intrinsic definition since the former 'relies heavily on the nature of basic musical features but that also allows for avant-garde music which deliberately flouts such features'. Mercifully, this definition is not so liberal as to include works of sonic art that some people choose to call 'music', such as Yoko Ono's *Toilet Piece/Unknown* (quite literally an unedited recording of a flushing toilet).

You will already detect that the approach taken in *The Companion* is strictly scholarly, pedagogical and analytical. Nothing wrong with that per se, other than what is excluded. Is not philosophy also *philo-sophia* or *theo-sophia*, namely, love of wisdom? Where in all this is a 'definition' of music whereby sublime works (Bach's oratorios, Beethoven's symphonies, Schubert's *lieder*, Mozart's concertos, Chopin's ballades) can literally heal, engender courage, inspire and bring countless humans beings into touch with their nobler and Higher Selves? All this, does not, and cannot fall within the purview of academic scholarship. Nonetheless, the latter is no mean gold mine.

A case in point is an insightful chapter on the nature of musical style distinguishing between the genre which provides *what* is stated and style as to *how* things are stated. Then a useful chapter on instrumental technology with the primary focus on the conventional acoustic instruments used in the Western classical tradition, the repertoire that developed alongside them, and the strategies that performers develop to deal with both. Unsurprisingly, Part III is the most satisfying section of the book since the subject matter is history, which is more amenable to objective learning than the sections dealing with topics of a subjective nature like emotion, value and aesthetics. The chapters on the Pythagorean tradition and the classical aesthetic traditions of India, China, and the Middle East are especially discerning in the way that music is shown to form an integral part of the overall rich and varied tapestry that also includes cosmology, poetry, painting, religion, eschatology and esoteric philosophy. Then there are fine expositions on the wider issues on the role of music in film and dance, as also in politics and cultural studies. The forays into cognitive science, psychology and music education are fascinating, but could usefully be complemented by an exposition on music therapy for which there is now ample clinical evidence.

I have no issue at all with essays on the critical interest in music shown by great philosophers, both ancient and modern, like Plato, Kant, Nietzsche and Adorno as contained in Part IV. But other than Wagner, there is no mention of what great *composers* had to say about life and philosophy. The letters of Beethoven, Liszt and the eastern sage-musicians are brim full of philosophical import and not to include this aspect is a significant omission. Furthermore, the operas of Mozart, Verdi and Wagner reflect in their totality just about every aspect of life which could readily be teased out in the chapter on opera which deals almost exclusively with ontological and aesthetic issues.

So now, what is lacking: by 'lacking' I mean as a complement, not an alternative to the fine material in the book. This is best illustrated by example. In the essay on aesthetic properties, take this extract intended to show that music does not have the emotional properties we tend to ascribe to it (such as joy or sadness):

If we say that the Countess's aria "Dove sono" from *Le nozze di Figaro* [Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*] actually possesses the sadness that we hear in it, we face the question whether this sadness is the same property as that possessed by a sad person or *another* property. It surely cannot be the same property; the sadness of a person is a property that only conscious organisms can possess. But it cannot another property, since it is precisely this word – "sad" – with its normal meaning that we apply to the music, and that is the whole point of the description. To say that the word ascribes, in this use, another property is to say that it has another sense – in other words that it is not used metaphorically but ambiguously. If that were so, we could equally have used some other word to make the point....

Does such analytical pedagogy provide deeper insights into Mozart's opera, or assist the nervous prima donna in the Green Room about to go on stage on her first night at Covent Garden to woo her audience, or the opera director in staging the production, or for that matter, a member of the audience in appreciating the music and the psychology of the protagonists?

Another one of many such ratiocinative extracts is this one from the chapter on ontology and meta-ontology:

Let us assume that Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 29 in B-flat major, Op. 106 – the *Hammerklavier* – exists. First, there are questions about its ontological category. For example, is the *Hammerklavier* a type? Or an event? Or something else? Second, there are questions about its temporal location. For example, did the *Hammerklavier* come into existence when Beethoven composed it in 1817-18, or did it always exist? And, third, there are questions about its individuation. For example, is the *Hammerklavier* distinguished from other musical works entirely by how it sounds...or in part by [its] historical context...or by the instrument that Beethoven specified that it should be performed on?

Is any of this going to help the intrepid pianist attempting to scale the dizzy heights of the titanic fugue of the Mount Everest of piano sonatas? Or for that matter his audience in understanding the structure of this most complex work? Or the sound recording engineer who wants to capture the perfect sound? For whom then, other than theoreticians, are the answers to these questions aimed at? And are such answers of any practical value?

To conclude, then, at the outset of the book in the preface, the editors

stress that they take the "and" in their title seriously. This surely implies that by bringing two major disciplines into a joint relationship, a third factor should emerge – something that is not just the 'sum of the two parts' but a new insight born out of the partnership. Personally I do not find this quite happening: the book title could well be (in parts) Philosophy:[colon] Music. The reader who aspires to apprehend Schubert's heart-rending words that 'the magic sounds of Mozart's music show us in the darkness of this life a bright and beautifully remote world to which we confidently look forward' is bound to face disappointment. The chief reason being, as explained above, the lack of insight into actual life experience and philosophy for the performing musician and the music *lover*. But such insights can, and do come, but only from great composers and performing musicians with deep humanitarian and educational aspirations *and* philosophical insights into life and living – Yehudi Menuhin, Charles Rosen and Daniel Barenboim to name but three. To sum up then, whereas academic scholarship provides valuable commentaries about music, only the composer and performing artist can bequeath that added dimension of a living experience which is entirely different from descriptions about it. Nevertheless, *The Routledge Companion* amply fulfils an urgent need in summing up the vast historical tradition on music, the relationship of music with the other arts, and in placing the analytical spotlight on aesthetics for musicologists, and on music for aestheticians, all with great erudition and precision, backed up with comprehensive references.

Besides being a consultant engineer, ***Edi Bilimoria*** *is also a musician, choral singer and pianist having studied at the Trinity College of Music in London and then with several international concert pianists.*

Breaking Through

David Lorimer

LIFE-CHANGING CONVERSATIONS

Sarah Rozenthuler (SMN)

Watkins, 2012, 272 pp., £8.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78028-110-0

Sarah Rozenthuler is a psychologist, spiritual educator and leadership development consultant who has been working with large organisations and government, specialising in dialogue and the development of more creative and powerful conversations about things that matter. If you have not already read her article, I would encourage you to go back and read it before you go on. She has also co-facilitated a number of retreats with Neale Donald Walsch, who contributes a foreword, remarking that many of us have huge resistance to entering into conversations that might be self-revealing or mildly confrontational. We tend to allow situations to fester rather than pluck up the courage to resolve them.

Sarah begins with the story of her own, recalling an occasion when her mother prompted her to realise that she did not want to read architecture at University, as she had previously thought. The big conversations she describes require careful preparation to enable us to stretch beyond our present limits. The first part of the book reminds us of the importance of conversations as a significant medium through which our lives unfold. She then goes on to discuss seven shifts with reference to specific case histories: call up your courage, create a container, intend the message you send, connect with respect, speak your truth, surrender your story, and find closure. The third part offers exercises to help readers initiate their own conversations and make their own shifts. Before she trained as a psychologist, Sarah spent a number of years in Spain developing her skills as a juggler of knives. She received an invaluable lesson from a real pro, who told her not to do time, but rather to do shows using a volunteer. Her finale was juggling flashing knives over the body of the volunteer, a strategy that engaged the audience and enabled her to earn a great deal more. After doing this, one can't imagine Sarah being fazed by even the most formidable corporate environment.

She shows how conversational skills can be developed and create what she calls an expansive emotional state. The best communicators ask questions as often as they voice their own opinions, show as much interest in others as in themselves, and make many more positive than negative comments. This is helpful general advice. Sarah also built her skills through dialogue work based on David Bohm. She points out how technology is changing the way we communicate while reminding us that face-to-face communication is essential when there is a great deal at stake. She advises on behaviours that can kill a conversation, stressing the importance of the way in which we say things as much as the content is of what we say. We can limit ourselves through thoughts expressed as inhibitions. It is crucial to let go of our fears if we are to open up like changing conversations.

The second part provides the real substance of the book, drawing on real-life coaching situations and the ways in which clients prepared for and carried through a big conversation. Some cases involve personal and family relationships, while others are focused on work situations. In each case readers can discern elements that might apply to themselves, especially with respect to handling the emotions brought up by challenging situations. This is where the techniques and exercises introduced in the third part are so helpful, for instance analysing the risks and benefits of staying silent as opposed to having the big conversation. In all cases, it is impossible to move on without this conversation, but it has to be very sensitively handled, taking into account the perceptions and emotions of the other key people. Sometimes, it is our own story and self-image that gets in the way. One case discusses victimisation and bullying at work, which is ultimately traced back to a verbally abusive relationship with the woman's father. In another case, a man is burning himself up in his job without being properly recognised. Our intentions have to be very clear, but we also need to weigh up possible unintended impacts if we are to get things right. In the chapter on finding closure, we explore a family situation with a great deal of unfinished business, but where the parties are able to sit down and work things through to the immense relief of all concerned.

Each chapter has a summary with bullet points and also a box with further reflections, for instance on the need to embrace our shadow. The exercises in the third part are detailed and specific with clear instructions. There are eighteen, and the reader is encouraged to use the most appropriate ones for exploration and self-knowledge. For instance, how do we create a positive texture in a conversation, what are the elephants in the room, and how do we tell the truth about ourselves to another? We need to understand why such conversations matter and what our own part has been in bringing about the challenge we wish to discuss. This is a powerful and potentially life-changing book for those with the courage to embrace and practise its recommendations.