



books in brief

David Lorimer

Note: many of these books are now available in downloadable electronic form

SCIENCE/PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

Exceptional Creativity in Science and Technology

by Andrew Robinson

Templeton Press 2013, 264 pp., \$39.95, p/b.

This volume derives from a conference held at the Institute for Advanced Study and supported by the John Templeton Foundation. It addresses creativity in individuals, institutions and innovations, and is dedicated to Baruch S Blumberg of NASA, who died since the symposium. The first chapter gives an overview of the scientific dominance of different cultures in different historical periods, related to their position in the world. This covers France until the mid-19th century, Germany in the late 19th century, Britain in the early 20th century and the United States after the war. For British readers, the extraordinary output of the Cavendish Laboratory makes inspiring reading, and a later chapter highlights the informality of its structures as a key component in creativity. There are case studies of Niels Bohr's Copenhagen Institute and in Enrico Fermi's Rome Institute, and it is striking to read about Bohr's exceptional vision and commitment to bringing a community of scholars together, starting from nothing.

There is little correlation between formal education and creativity, which does not come as a surprise, and a good analysis of the enabling conditions of technically creative environments. Other institutions covered include the Bell Labs, NASA and the Institute of Advanced Study itself. Freeman Dyson contributes an afterword, in which he identifies four different types of creativity pursued by different kinds of people and therefore requiring different kinds of organisation. To these he adds the ideas of Peter Diamandis of the X-Prize Foundation, remarking that prizes can also act as a driver of creativity. He ends by speculating that future brain science will be based on analogue rather than digital metaphors, and that this will open up new vistas as creative and disruptive as the effects of digital technology today. An informative and stimulating volume.

Faith & Wisdom in Science

by Tom McLeish

Oxford University Press 2014, 284 pp., £18.99, h/b.

In this densely argued and erudite book, physicist Tom McLeish takes a new point of departure in the science-religion debate by pursuing the theme of natural philosophy as the 'love of wisdom of natural things' to reframe these issues by drawing on our theological and cultural roots. He questions the inadequate narrative of science as 'replacing an ancient world of myth and superstition with a modern one of fact and comprehension.' Science certainly illuminates nature with new ways of understanding, and the author feels it is important that science captures both the chaotic and random as well as the regular and smooth. He traces thinking about what might be behind the appearance of the world back to fourth century BC, seeing science as a deeply human activity that is more about imaginative and creative questions than methods. In this context, there is a long cultural relationship between faith and science, which the author examines in considerable detail. His central chapter on the book of Job runs to nearly 50 pages of detailed analysis, although it is surprising that

the commentary by CG Jung and his correspondence with Father Victor White is not mentioned. In developing a theology of science, McLeish focuses on participation in reconciliation with respect to the natural world. This can be restorative and calls for a new kind of narrative of wisdom, especially in relation to the looming environmental challenges, one that focuses on what he calls a softer kind of mastery.

The 4th Revolution

by Luciano Floridi

Oxford University Press 2014, 248 pp., £16.99, h/b.

Subtitled 'how the infosphere is reshaping reality', this hugely well-informed and well-written book postulates that we are living through a fourth revolution after those of Copernicus, Darwin and Freud. The author introduces a number of new terms including 'onlife' for online life and characterising us as 'inforgs', informational organisms who do no longer distinguish so sharply between the online and off-line worlds. He explains the life cycle of information and how a key feature of technology is in-betweenness, with all these communication interfaces. There are interesting discussions of identity and self-understanding, also of privacy, intelligence and agency.

The political, environmental and ethic dimensions are also addressed and there is a wealth of interesting statistical information. The number of SMS messages was overtaken by chat apps in 2010 (19 billion as opposed to 17.6 billion daily), and we learn that it takes on average 224 tweets to start a relationship compared with 70 Facebook messages, 37 emails or 30 phone calls. The average American girl sends 80 texts a day while boys send only 30. Our ability to access information has certainly been democratised, which has had an effect on health consultations. Political processes have also been modified through the development of information societies and online democratic initiatives. Cyber wars are already in process, and pose an additional security threat. We also have to expand our concept of environment to include the infosphere and it is striking to read that data warehouses consumed 30bn W of electricity in 2012, which represents the output of 30 nuclear power stations. Their contribution to greenhouse gases will increase by 6% a year to 2020, overtaking the emissions of the airline industry in the process. The book is an ideal starting point for serious consideration of the many issues raised by the development of ICT.

Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies

by Nick Bostrom

Oxford University Press 2014, 328 pp., £18.99, h/b.

Here the author engages in what one might call prophetic analysis in order to assess the paths, dangers and strategies associated with the development of superintelligence. He begins from the assertion that the human brain has given us our dominant position on the planet, so that the fate of other species depends more on us than them. He projects the possibility some time over the next century that humans will build machine brains surpassing our own general intelligence and that these could pose a threat to their creators. In principle, as he observes, we could build the kind of superintelligence that would protect human values, but an unfriendly superintelligence might prevent us from replacing it or changing its preferences and motivations. Hence the need to understand the challenge presented by this prospect. There are various paths by which this might be achieved and indeed

various forms of superintelligence, which one has to say is a left hemisphere vision gone wild, based as it is on principles of manipulation and control and defining intelligence in narrow analytical and computational terms. Given the history of the human race, the author contends that the prospect is a little like a child with an undetonated bomb in its hands where 'some little idiot is bound to press the ignite button just to see what happens.' He hopes that we can maintain our groundedness and common sense in these circumstances.

MEDICINE/HEALTH

An Amazing Murmur of the Heart

by Cecil Helman

Hammersmith Health Books 2014, 135 pp., £12.99, p/b.

Many years ago I reviewed Jacob Needleman's book *The Way of the Physician* in which he makes the point that great doctors are first great human beings. This book shares a similar perspective articulated by Sir William Osler when he wrote that the practice of medicine is an art based on science. This book is about the differences between healing and curing where healing is about people and curing about patients. Helman identifies a new kind of physician, which he calls a techno-doctor, one more interested in digital data, machines, charts and individual body parts than live patients. Indeed, the title of the book comes from an early medical round where the consultant refers to an amazing murmur of the heart as an example of the phenomenon, and also 'a really interesting spleen' without any regard for the patient. Another important theme is psychosomatic interaction where people can suffer from pseudo-diseases brought on by an overactive imagination in some cases reinforced by a scary diagnosis. The last chapter is on the wounded healer applied to physicians themselves and how they deal with a lifetime's experience of encountering human suffering. Helman's recommendation is that doctors, like shamans, need to heal themselves but also occasionally to receive support from their patients. This is a profoundly human book that will resonate with many physicians as well as general readers.

Plant Spirit Medicine

by Eliot Cowan

Sounds True 2014, 209 pp., \$16.95, p/b.

This book is a journey into the healing wisdom of plants exploring, as Larry Dossey remarks, the intrinsic unity and connectedness of all living things. It is an animistic vision in which plants speak to humans. The original edition of this dates back nearly 20 years, and readers are introduced to many of the author's remarkable experiences. In the second part of the book, the reader engages with the elements of fire, earth, metal, water and wood and they're asking questions to explore in relation to each of these, many of which are essentially about how we feel about ourselves and life. The third part records a number of interviews with plant shamans, among whom is Bertha Grove, who presents a simple and profound view of life where she no longer rushes around in a hurry but rather takes each day as it comes, living and enjoying life in a spirit of gratitude.

Thai Herbal Medicine

by Nephry Jacobsen and C. Pierce Salguero

Findhorn Press 2003, 217 pp., £11.99, p/b.

This is a book more aimed at the practitioner or perhaps the herbalist who wishes to extend their understanding and practice. It is well written and set out, providing a comprehensive account of the subject with recipes, theory and a major compendium of traditional herbs. There is also an overview of the field and some delicious sounding recipes.

Healing Plants

by Markus Sommer

Floris Books 2011, 424 pp., £14.99, p/b.

Markus Sommer has written a classic book, beautifully illustrated, on herbal remedies from traditional to anthroposophical medicine. There are 38 chapters covering all manner of plants and their uses, some as foods as well as medical preparations for both internal and external use. He also covers homoeopathic remedies with indications for usage. All of this is based on extensive knowledge and clinical practice, so the book can be used as a reference for practitioners. There are occasional illustrative case histories and a useful index including one of ailments that practitioners can refer to.

Living Bliss

by C Norman Shealy MD, PhD

Hay House Publishers 2014, 165 pp., £12.99, p/b.

Many readers will already be familiar with the work of Norman Shealy and his working relationship with Caroline Myss. In this new book he focuses on the nature of conscientiousness in relation to health, with its capacity to be responsible and organised in one's habits. He discusses the makings of a conscientious life and its relation to longevity in a major research study. He then gives some guidance about tackling chronic pain and depression, areas in which he has a great deal of experience. There is a fascinating section on hypnotic regression, when he discusses the parallels between his own life and that of a 19th-century physician Dr John Elliotson, who introduced mesmerism into England. Norman gives a number of significant personal details that reinforce this connection. The following chapters give further guidance on lifestyle changes to enhance health and happiness and ways in which oxytocin and DHEA can be boosted, partly through acupuncture. He recounts lessons learned as student, teacher and mentor, and there is an interesting appendix by William Tiller giving a metaphysical diagram of the structure of the human being, with which Norman is an entire agreement. It presupposes that we ourselves require a physical body in order fully to experience the space-time domain so that we can become more coherent and develop our gifts of the intentionality.

Why Am I So Exhausted?

by Martin Budd

Hammersmith Health Books 2013, 291 pp., p/b.

Martin Budd has written what is surely the definitive book on chronic fatigue syndrome, having treated people as a naturopathic consultant for this condition over the last 40 years. The six chapters outline the history of the syndrome, multiple symptoms, common causes, less common contributory causes, diagnosis and treatment including diet, nutritional and non-nutritional treatments, naturopathic approaches and the best means of selecting appropriate treatment. Where appropriate, there is considerable scientific detail and also illustrative case histories. All in all, the book is a comprehensive account that should be on the shelves of every practitioner.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

by Prof Basant K. Puri

Hammersmith Books 2005, 155 pp., £19.99, p/b.

This is an authoritative treatise on how to treat ME in a natural way. It argues convincingly that the condition is organic rather than psychological. It begins by asking what chronic fatigue syndrome is, discussing the role of viral infections and changes in the immune system. He also looks at blood fatty acid levels and brain biochemistry as well as discussing his own research on neurospectroscopy, which showed clear differences in brain chemistry between sufferers and volunteers. He describes how and why fatty acids can help the condition and the role of vitamin and mineral cofactors.

He ends with some recommendations about practical issues. There is also a useful glossary and extensive references. Aimed more at the practitioner than the patient, patients will nevertheless gain important background information from this book.

Breaking Down is Waking Up

by Dr Russell Razzaque

Watkins 2014, 266 pp., £9.99, p/b.

Psychiatrist Russell Razzaque asks if psychological suffering can be a spiritual gateway, answering the question in the affirmative. This is a particularly important question at a time when mental illness is on the rise and the journey recounted here is both a personal and clinical one of knowing oneself, waking up and transforming through treatment. An essential dynamic is the overcoming of the ego's intrinsic sense of separation, which the author considers to be an illusion. This becomes apparent as the journey towards and underlying Self is undertaken. He describes a wheel of awakening towards greater self-awareness and non-attachment. The mindfulness movement is playing an important role within a more secular context, but it is also important to cultivate compassion, both for others and oneself. The message of hope is that we break down so that we may wake up and we get lost so as to find ourselves again. The spiritual journey, as the author observes, is the journey of life itself.

Water, Birth and Sexuality

by Michel Odent (SMN)

Clairview 2014, 134 pp., £10.99, p/b.

Michel Odent was one of the pioneers of water births, and has done similar work around the perinatal period and its fundamental influence on the rest of life. With a new introduction mentioning developments since the original 1990 edition, the text remains unchanged but he does draw on the aquatic ape hypothesis to reinforce his original argument. Some chapters are practical about how to use water during labour, while others discuss the erotic power of water (I remember him talking about this in 1993 in relation to advertising), the role of water in religion and therapy, chapter on man and dolphin. The reissue of this classic work can only be welcomed so that it can be read by a new generation who may well be more open to its important message.

PHILOSOPHY/RELIGION

How The West Really Lost God

by Mary Eberstadt

Templeton Press 2013, 257 pp., \$24.95, h/b.

This stimulating book questions traditional narratives of secularisation by arguing that family decline goes hand-in-hand with the decline of Christianity in a double helix feedback process. The last 50 years has seen a fundamental restructuring a redefinition of the family, brought about by changing attitudes and a decline in birthrate in economically developed countries. Families are smaller and more scattered and less likely to be bound by marriage. One interesting question is whether, in line with an idea from Pitirim Sorokin, the decline will initiate its own reversal. The situation in the US and Europe is very different, and, as remarked in another review in this section, Christianity is now overwhelmingly a phenomenon of the South. I think it is also true to say that there is more diversification of spirituality, and one should also note that surveys in the UK indicate that two-thirds of people have had a spiritual experience of some kind. So we are still what the author calls 'theotropic.' It is also good to be reminded of the research indicating that believers seemed to enjoy better health, both mentally and physically. However, this would likely also apply to those with an individual connection with the Divine and a supportive social environment. Overall, the book is an important contribution to the sociology of religion.

Meeting with Our Lady of Medjugorje

by Finbar O'Leary

The Columba Press 2014, 167 pp., £8.50, p/b.

Many readers will have heard of these visions and visitations dating back 30 years with a powerful message for our time of the need for prior and following the heart. It is set within a Catholic context, but contains universal insights such as the exchange between Jelena and the Blessed Mother when she remarks how beautiful Mary is and Mary replies 'I am beautiful because I love, if you want to be beautiful, love.' She also says that she wants to engrave in every heart the sign of love. There is a beautiful inspired prayer on page 128 and the final message is 'if you want to be very happy, live a simple, humble life, pray a great deal, do not delve into your problems, but let yourself be guided by God.' Good advice whatever the source.

Handbook for the Spirit

by Richard Carlson, Ph.D. and Benjamin Shield Ph.D.

New World Library 1990, 201 pp., \$14.99, p/b.

Originally published in 1990, this book contains the writings of many well-known authors reflecting on their experience of God. It begins with the Dalai Lama's message of love, compassion and kindness, then Matthew Fox explains his theology - I had not realised that he had polio at the age of 12 and how formative this experience was in his life. I enjoyed the essay by Wayne Dyer when he is always assessing whether he is loving, giving or serving and writes that the highest spiritual act in life is to see yourself in everyone else and everyone else in you. Barbara de Angelis aims to be in a relationship with God through everything she does, especially intimate relationships as a profound opportunity to recognise what is unloving in us and replace it with everything that is loving: 'nothing can make you feel less enlightened than being in an intimate relationship.' Readers may recognise this? I also enjoyed the essay by David Steindl-Rast on longing and belonging in love. There are many short personal reflections for spiritual sustenance.

Eve and Mary

by Frank Shapiro

O Books 2014, 101 pp., £9.99, p/b.

Subtitled 'the search for lost beauty and sensuality', this book is a personal pilgrimage and reflection on the way in which feminine beauty and sensuality have been treated by the Church, with particular reference to Mary Magdalene. The author begins his journey in Vezelay, which is dedicated to her, looking at a sensual statue of Eve offering the apple to Adam. In the sixth century, Pope Gregory reinforced a new female stereotype associating sex with sin, as had Paul and Augustine, and leading to a climate of fear depicted in many mediaeval cathedrals with their images of the last judgement. Greek culture had developed the ideas of harmony and beauty and also gave birth to Aphrodite. In the early Christian era, Mary Magdalene was characterised as a representative of the path of Divine Love and overcame Roman dedication to the Vestal Virgins, but her significance was eclipsed for several hundred years after the edict of Pope Gregory referred to above. In addition, there is the general subjugation of women by men represented in the tension between Peter and Mary Magdalene. The fact that Vezelay (1112) was dedicated to Mary marked her cultural renaissance. The author also describes other places in France like Ste Baume associated with her and the rise of courtly love - she was also the patron saint of the Knights Templar. By the 15th century with the work of Italian artists, the ideal of feminine beauty has returned although many undercurrents from our Christian heritage remain.

Your Simple Path

by Ian Tucker

O Books 2014, 106 pp., £6.99, p/b.

This simple and directly written book invites the reader to stop and consider what is really important in life and to take small steps towards inner peace and happiness, which are arguably the true measure of success. This also includes being grateful for little things and listening to the inner voice on a path towards authenticity. We have to navigate opposites and the ups and downs of life as a whole, living one day at a time. In taking care of ourselves and others, are we kind and do we remember what we already have? As another author says about the book, it is beautifully simple and simply beautiful. See also www.iantucker.co.uk

The Spirituality of Carlos Santana, Richard Gere and Bono

edited by Nicholas Nigro

Backbeat Books 2014, 84 pp., \$14.99, h/b.

These are all individual pocket books about the people listed above, and are arranged in the same format of short extracts on the following themes: spirituality and purpose, humanitarianism and obligation, art and inspiration, self-discovery and virtue. The individual messages and journeys come through very strongly, for instance the Buddhist orientation of Richard Gere, but also their common commitment to helping create a better future. They encourage us to ask big questions, engage in spiritual practice and translate this into meaningful social action. Richard reminds us that the needs of our children our very straightforward – we want them to be happy, educated, fed, clothed and housed. Bono states that if we do not follow through on our ideals, we betray something at the heart of who we are. Carlos Santana feels that the most important thing that we can do individually is to elevate, transform and illumine our own consciousness. These are all inspiring messages.

The Inner Rainbow

by Henk van Oort

Temple Lodge Publishing 2014, 103 pp., £14.99, p/b.

This is an unusual book by way of an illustrated history of human consciousness from ancient India to the present day. It is based broadly on the evolutionary understanding of Rudolf Steiner where he argues that humans lost contact with their divine nature in the course of evolution but are now recovering it at another level. The illustrations include photographs, texts and paintings and as are some interesting stages along the way with quite long sections on Egypt and Greece. Moving into the Middle Ages we have Chartres then the invention of perspective. The 16th century is represented by Copernicus and Holbein and the 17th by Rembrandt, Isaac Newton and still life painting. The 18th-century features Blake and Robinson Crusoe while modern times herald the advent of the World Wide Web and Google. It is a bit of a whirlwind tour and greatly enriched by the selection of paintings as a representation of the development of consciousness.

The Northern Enchantment

by Margaret Jonas

Temple Lodge Publishing 2013, 109 pp., £12.99, p/b.

Drawing on the work of Rudolf Steiner, this book explores the archetypal idea of the North by means of a survey of ancient history and Norse mythology as a background to the development of Celtic Christianity. The author is hugely knowledgeable in the field, and also draws on the work of Steiner himself. Few readers will be familiar with the background from Norway. There is also an interesting chapter on the number five and the etheric body, which draws on studies of geographical alignments related

to earth energies. There are some striking images from Externsteine relating to the God Vidar overcoming the Fenris Wolf, one of which comes from a Christian context of St Andrews.

The Francis Factor

by John Littleton and Eamon Maher

The Columba Press 2014, 211 pp., £12.50, p/b.

There is no doubt that the Francis Factor referred to in the title of this collection of essays has been a phenomenon since the papal election of March 2013. Contributors come from a wide range of backgrounds as theologians, historians, journalists, clergy and other commentators from Ireland, UK and the USA. They are well qualified to write about various aspects of his formation, including his Jesuit background and the importance of the Spiritual Exercises. The sense of renewal recreates the atmosphere of the second Vatican Council under Pope John XXIII, some of whose qualities Francis shares: humility, simplicity, sympathy and an emphasis on love rather than authority. His agenda is the gospel and his concern the poor. A process of perestroika seems to be going on. As some writers point out, Francis has drawn the line against the ordination of women while reflecting on the overall role of women in the Church. Reform of governance structures is critical, and it still remains to be seen how successful Francis will be in this respect. The spirit of Francis is clearly expressed in an early interview when he remarks that the Church needs the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity, which he himself has embodied. There is enormous hope and a profound sense of renewal.

Reclaiming Francis

by Charles M. Murphy

Ave Maria Press 2014, 142 pp., \$13.95, p/b.

This is an inspiring book about how the Saint and the Pope are renewing the Church. The author had completed a manuscript about St Francis of Assisi before the election of Pope Francis, so this version is completely recast in the light of the events since that time. The Pope himself explains how he arrived at the decision on the name. The author draws on the original biography of St Francis by his follower St Bonaventure and then a series of chapters sets out his vision for renewing the church, which means a gospel way of life, loving God and the poor, imitation of Jesus, love of the Earth and love of peace. At the end, we are reminded that some of his contemporaries regarded both Jesus and Francis as mad but they were deeply aligned with the spirit, a state totally foreign to most people in most epochs - the prophet is always a suspect figure and the prophetic stance is a dangerous and necessary one.

God's Fingerprints

by Jody Long

White Crow Books 2014, 186 pp., £14.99, p/b.

Subtitled 'impressions of near death experiences', this book is a compilation of some of the most significant experiences collected by the Near Death Experiencer Research Foundation (www.nderf.org). Most readers will be familiar with the field but this book adds further detail not only with the collection of experiences, but also with answers to a number of standard questions. I have always felt that the NDE can give us insights into the deeper nature of life, and this is certainly the case with this book. There are a series of insights derived from a life review including the importance of being true to one's values and to oneself and to be and act in love with the heart. One experiencer writes that 'these angels taught me that we are all connected, that all of life is precious, but finding love within us is hard work, that we must generate more love more often, for human love pales before Eternal love. I am smaller than a candle being held at the sun.' An inspirational read.

Freedom through Love

by Nick Thomas (SMN)

Temple Lodge 2014, 54 pp., £7.99, p/b.

Here Nick Thomas asks some very basic questions about what it means to be human, the nature of knowledge and freedom. He writes practically from the viewpoint based on Rudolf Steiner's Philosophy of Freedom and begins from the nature of our relationships and our search for meaning and truth. He explores the dimensions of freedom as love in thinking, feeling and in the will, arguing that thinking is the bridge between the objective and subjective. This helps us recognise a higher spirituality grounded in love and very real in terms of our inner lives, especially feeling. It is a reflective and thought-provoking essay.

God in the Machine

by Liel Leibovitz

Templeton Press 2013, 144 pp., \$19.95, h/b.

With the unlikely subtitle of 'videogames as spiritual pursuit', this book will open up a completely new field for most readers. The author has been playing games since the age of seven and now researches the field at New York University. It turns out that we spend more time and money on videogames than on books, television or film, so this is certainly a legitimate new area of research. The games are coded with the end in mind, allowing for a progressive mastery or 'grip' to be acquired. The uninitiated reader may be amazed that some of these games are designed to take between 60 and 100 hours to complete. The author likens them to ritual and analyses his own engaged and absorbed states of mind while playing. The third chapter is devoted to rules and breaking them, and I learned that one can insert cheat codes into the programme so as to create some shortcuts. Heidegger makes an appearance in the final chapter in a discussion of rule-based environments and the embodiment of tension on the way to resolution. I'm not sure that all readers will be convinced of the author's conclusion that 'videogames provide that rarest of havens, an environment in which to learn, without fear of consequence, how to live differently.... experiencing not anxiety but joy, not doubt but faith, not just the prickly self but the world entire.' However, the book makes for an intriguing perspective.

The Meaning and Practice of Faith

by Diarmuid O'Murchu

Orbis Books 2014, 136 pp., \$16, p/b.

Diarmuid O'Murchu has written a perceptive analysis of the issues surrounding adult faith, following his earlier work on the same topic. It takes a mature approach to the meaning of adult faith and in particular to the issues raised by faith in God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Church and the future. He points out that there has been a huge shift in Christian demographics over the last 50 years. In 1960, 66% of the Catholic population lived in the West, with 34% in the South. By 2012, out of a total Catholic population of 1.2 billion, an estimated 80% now live in the South. This is a seismic transformation. The author is well aware of wider social trends with respect to religion and spirituality, and regards the challenge of atheism as one means of purifying religion. Many of the traditional categories are no longer relevant, so that new categories of understanding need to be defined that recognise the struggle and questioning that thinking deeply about faith involves. O'Murchu provides plenty of material for reflection and group discussion.

Philosophy, Literature, Mysticism

by Emanuel Swedenborg

Swedenborg Foundation 2014, 485 pp., £24.95, h/b.

I first became aware of Swedenborg 40 years ago when reading the poem *Correspondances* by Baudelaire. I found that Swedenborg was referred to in the notes, and I was sufficiently intrigued to borrow a biography from the University

library. I remember the evening when I began reading it and soon became fascinated. I subsequently bought quite a few volumes of his work and started reading them over the summer. As it happens, this anthology of essays on the scope and influence of Swedenborg contains an essay on Baudelaire and symbolist poetry. The volume is wide ranging, with essays on Kant, CS Peirce, Schopenhauer, Coleridge, Emerson, Blake, Balzac, Dostoevsky, William James, Rossetti, Boehme, and CG Jung. Most of these were originally published in the *Journal of the Swedenborg Society* but there are six original contributions. Schopenhauer seems to have been fascinated by Swedenborg's clairvoyant capacities but, curiously, could not share his view that the soul survived physical death. Swedenborg was one of Emerson's representative men, while Balzac coined the term 'Buddha of the North.'

There are two essays by Nobel Prize winner Czeslaw Milosz, one on Blake and the other on Swedenborg as mystic. The term mystic is frequently derogatory, especially in humanist circles, but many distinguished writers are in fact mystics, including a number of those influenced by Swedenborg. Jung was one of the 20th century figures influenced by Swedenborg who might be seen as a pioneer of depth psychology and an accomplished traveller in other worlds, which Jung himself penetrated. The editor has performed a great service in bringing these contributions together in a single volume to show the extent of Swedenborg's influence on major philosophical and literary figures. It is surely time for a revival of interest among contemporary writers and intellectuals in this major 18th-century figure who has been unjustly neglected and who represents a synthesis of science and personal spiritual experience.

Magic In Christianity

by Robert Conner

Mandrake of Oxford 2014, 460 pp., £14.99, p/b.

Dedicated to the memory of Morton Smith, who did so much scholarly work in this field, this is a very considerable work of scholarship giving a different view from the orthodox perspective on Jesus, with over 2,000 footnotes. One can readily understand why conventional theologians balk at any associations with magic and tend to explain many of the miracles away as a form of allegory. This is influenced by our sceptical culture, but it is surely clear that Jesus was seen as a miracle worker in his time. Apollonius of Tyana is perhaps the best-known example of this genre. His contemporaries shared the view that human fate is under the control of spirit forces, which are no longer seen as relevant except by psychiatrists with a spiritual understanding, especially in relation to the culture of Brazil. The book provocatively defines religion as magic for the masses and magic as religion for the individual. It spends a considerable time examining the sources of magical texts and their relationship to Gnosticism. A 'magos' was one versed in astrology, dream interpretation and the occult arts and esoteric practices. Some of his Jewish opponents accused Jesus of magical practices and it is very clear that he was an exorcist. The overall structure of the book takes the reader through Jesus's life and explains the cultural background of the first few centuries in which Christianity developed. The reader emerges with a very different understanding of Jesus and his background.

Hardwired to Heaven

by Joan Cerio

Findhorn Press 2014, 143 pp., £9.99, p/b.

This interesting book written by a trained scientist has a very wide range of reference, but focuses mainly on the power of the heart as the ultimate source of creativity at the cutting edge of human development as we draw increasingly on our multidimensional capacities. This also helps us blend heart and mind, mysticism and science with love as a guiding principle within the unified field of life. It is interesting to learn that the heart is the first organ or tissue to form in embryogenesis, shaping spinning energy. The author identifies the heart's main purpose as orchestrating the soul in human form in

connection with our original Divine blueprint or template for this incarnation: 'when you live through your heart, you follow your hardwired connection to the intelligence of the Universe and to the heart of matter.' In this respect, both blood and water are important as carriers. Coherence in our feelings and alignment with the Divine within are also important, and especially gratitude as opening up flow from the Source. This process enables us to achieve our true status as co-creators, for which the author provides some detailed instructions. The last chapter also contains a beautiful meditation on the nature of love as the greatest force in the universe. We know a lot more about the brain than we do about cosmic love, which is equally important and a science in its own right. The book is an empowering journey towards uncovering our true nature and creative capacity.

Got Religion?

by Naomi Schaefer Riley

Templeton Press 2014, 165 pp., \$24.95, h/b.

The analysis in this book arises partly from changes in family formation where people in their 20s are now in a stage of emerging adulthood since they are marrying and settling down later, and a substantial number cohabit rather than marry. They prefer to remain unaffiliated. This book draws on the experience of a number of faith traditions and the efforts they have been making to attract young people. The most important factor is a diverse community and a sense of belonging, which they can also derive from close neighbourhoods. The other important factors seem to be stability and a sense of responsibility within the community. They are also looking for a critical mass of people their own age and to find a way to serve. It is also an advantage if the community can offer support to tackle practical challenges.

Angels 101

by Doreen Virtue

Hay House Publishers 2006, 124 pp., h/b.

Doreen Virtue has written many books on angels, and this one is her most introductory, as the title suggests. The word itself means messenger of God and the book opens up an inner dimension for those who are ready for a new form of subtle communication. Traditionally, everyone has at least one guardian angel, which Doreen is able to see clairvoyantly, explaining that one is there keep us working on our divine purpose while the other is more of a comforter. Various forms of communication are discussed and readers are encouraged to open a line of communication, especially if they are in need. One section relates many cases of feathers appearing, which I remember hearing about also from the late David Fontana. Perhaps the most striking stories are connected with travel where people are inexplicably saved from dangerous situations. This section reminded me of the excellent books by Dr Hans Moolenburg published some years ago.

PSYCHOLOGY/ PARAPSYCHOLOGY

The Pauli-Jung Conjecture

by Harald Atmanspacher and Christopher A. Fuchs

Imprint Academic 2014, 336 pp., £19.95, p/b.

In this context, the Pauli-Jung conjecture is a form of dual aspect monism with antecedents in Spinoza and 19th-century German nature philosophy stating that the mental or psychological and the material or physical are aspects of one underlying reality which itself is psychophysically neutral. Jung and the alchemists referred to this as the *unus mundus*, from which mind and matter are derived. In physics, this entails the concept of the participatory rather than the detached observer, and meaning replaces causation as the connecting principle, which Jung elaborated in his concept of synchronicity. These

essays are derived from a conference covering many aspects of the topic, including history of ideas, quantum theory, symbolism, the nature of synchronicity and even business leadership. Joe Cambrey writes about the influence of German romantic science on both Jung and Pauli, tracing this back to Spinoza via Goethe and especially Schelling.

Apart from one mention in an essay on hidden variables, the work of David Bohm is conspicuously absent, which is surprising given that his implicate and explicate order is an exact reflection of the psychophysical conjecture, as is his explanation of the relationship between mind and matter. He too was trying to find a new language as well as new concepts. Four essays discuss synchronicities as psychophysical correlations and member Roderick Main contributes some interesting reflections on the impact of scientific rationalism on meaning. There is a fascinating quotation from Jung himself remarking that his term synchronicity cannot be accepted because it shakes the security of our scientific foundations '*as if this were not exactly the goal I am aiming at*' (his italics) - adding meaning as a fundamental category alongside space, time and causality. There is also an interesting article on synchronicity in psychotherapy, which formed the context of Jung's famous experience with the scarab beetle. Overall, the volume is a useful contribution to current debates on the mind-matter issue.

Don't Die with your Music Still in You

by Serena J. Dyer and Wayne W. Dyer

Hay House 2014, 176 pp., £8.99, p/b.

This is an unusual book written by Wayne Dyer's daughter about her response to her father's wisdom, with comments from Wayne and at the end of each chapter. The structure follows the principles of Dyer's earlier book *10 Secrets for Success and Inner Peace*, which was based on the most important principles he wanted his children to live by. She originally found that the advice that her friends were getting about fitting in, listening to adults and following your parents' example was completely different from her family philosophy, and the book opens with a touching letter sent by Serena to Wayne. The title suggests that we each have a special purpose that we must find and this can only be achieved by following your heart and intuition rather than the herd. It also means finding your passion and for parents to believe wholly in their children and their capacity. There are many nuggets in the book, such as 'if you have a choice either to be right or kind, choose kindness.' This is also illustrated by a story of Wayne changing a relationship with a grumpy waitress by turning her around with kindness. Despite the busy family schedule, her mother always found the time to meditate and put a sign outside her door meaning she should not be disturbed. One of the most moving episodes in the book takes place at Lourdes when Serena set the intention to become an instrument of love and realises that we must all know ourselves as divine creations worthy of love: 'you must become love in order to give and receive love.' This is a book of wisdom that will appeal especially to families.

Heaven and Hell Unveiled

by Stafford Beatty

White Crow Books 2014, 159 pp., £10.99, p/b.

Stafford Betty is a scholar who has read extensively in channelled literature received over the last 160 years and has distilled from these sources a coherent picture of the many dimensions of the afterlife. Chapters include the nature of dying, the divine source, the human self, religions, judgement, karma, suicide, prayer and reincarnation. This approach is an update of the work of Robert Crookall carried out in the 1960s and 1970s in his retirement from geology. The material is instructively compared with various religious understandings of the same topics, in other words theology with reported experience. An interesting read, especially for those less familiar with the field.

FUTURE STUDIES/ECONOMICS/ ECOLOGY

The Essential Amory Lovins

edited by Cameron M. Burns

Earthscan 2011, 382 pp., \$35, h/b.

In case you have not heard of him, Amory Lovins is a leading authority on energy issues as they relate to the economic, environmental, developmental and security concerns. He is the author of 31 books and over 450 papers in various disciplines. This book charts the development of his thinking with selected writings on the 1970s onwards, beginning with some beautifully written reflections on climbing in North Wales. The theme running through the book is applied hope, which has certain similarities with the concept of active hope formulated by Joanna Macy and referred to in my review of the book the same name. Amory has followed the advice one of his mentors Edwin Land who remarked that one should not undertake a project unless it is manifestly important and nearly impossible. His 1976 article on long-term constraints on human activity is prescient, as is his forecast of US energy strategy from the same year, with an afterword dated 2011.

One of his creative areas has been the development of the hypercar, initially realised in hybrids but now being further elaborated. He is also a specialist on building design and his own house is nearly 100% energy efficient. His 2006 presentation to the US Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is radical in its vision of eliminating reliance on oil from any source using drivers from market economics. Towards the end of the book, there is a roadmap of natural capitalism and an inspiring address called 'Imagine a World' depicting his vision for the future and I end with a short extract: 'Imagine a world where reason, diversity, tolerance and democracy are once more in the ascendant; where economic and religious fundamentalism are obsolete; where tyranny is odious, rare, failing, and dwindling; and where global consciousness has transcended fear to live and strive in hope.'

Active Hope

by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone

New World Library 2012, 272 pp., \$14.95, p/b.

In this remarkable and inspiring book, the authors provide a means of getting to grips with the challenges that face us collectively through the important concept of active hope. Whatever situation we face, we can choose our response. Active hope does not require optimism, but rather intention, choosing what we aim to bring about and acting in that direction. True to his approach is the Work That Reconnects consisting of a cycle of honouring our pain for the world, seeing with new eyes, going forth, and coming from gratitude. The framework sets out three stories of our time: business as usual, the great unravelling and the great turning; the first leads to the second while third is already underway in some quarters, consisting of holding actions, life-sustaining systems and practices, and a shift in consciousness. The authors analyse various forms of resistance to engaging in change, defining a wider sense of self in circles of identity and community. They also present two models of power, the second a form of empowerment in acting together with courage and compassion. Throughout the book are boxes inviting the reader to try a practical experiment. Uncertainty will remain, but we can choose to embody active hope and become instruments of transformation.

Occupy Spirituality

by Adam Bucko and Matthew Fox

North Atlantic Press 2013, 250 pp., \$17.95, p/b.

This powerful dialogue between two radical thinkers from different generations highlights the connection between contemplation and action and calls for a more radical engagement with the great issues of our time. Today's students face multiple challenges in finding a meaningful place to contribute to society, burdened as they are with record debt. One of the most striking aspects of the book is the digest of thoughts from young people at the beginning of each chapter on themes such as replacing the God of religion with the God of life, radical spirituality, finding your calling, spiritual practice, and elders and youth working together. Their approach is eclectic and universal, blending thought with engagement. Two chapters recount the personal stories of the authors, which represent parables for their generations. Readers are encouraged to trust their powers to give birth, taking responsibility, standing up and setting out with others to challenge and change our systems. I enjoyed Matthew's story about what the octogenarian poet Mary Oliver said recently about lessons for living at a poetry reading: pay attention, be astonished, share your astonishment. And, as Andrew Harvey says in his foreword, the last and best hope for an endangered humanity is a worldwide, grassroots revolution of love in action. With this in mind, the book is an inspiring, invigorating and important read.

Environmental Security

by Rita Floyd and Richard A. Matthew

Routledge 2013, 302 pp., £25.99, p/b.

Surprisingly, this is the first multidisciplinary volume on the developing field of environmental security dealing with the interaction between economic development, population growth and resource management - of which the food security book reviewed below is an example. The first part of the book is largely theoretical and includes contributions on environment conflict research, the political ecology of environmental security, cooperation as a tool for peace building and environmental dimensions of human security. One can see how readily scarcity can become more challenging as a focus of conflict. It is useful to be aware of the various dimensions of ecological security, including the relationship between human societies and natural resources, populations of other animal species and, last but not least, pathogenic microorganisms - many of which are generated by our agricultural practices. The second part of the book looks at various topics such as water security, population, sustainable development, food security, energy security and climate change security. One essay situates the issues within the eight Millennium Development Goals and serves as a useful reminder of these targets measured by 60 indicators. The final chapter addresses some critiques of the notion of environmental security and makes a useful point that 'threats' from the natural environment do not imply an aggressor; also that ethical considerations will come increasingly into the foreground. The book should certainly be read by policymakers and the civil servants in the relevant departments.

Environment and Food

by Colin Sage

Routledge 2012, 320 pp., £27.99, p/b.

Although written as a textbook, this is a highly accessible and comprehensive account of the relationship between environment and food, both now and potentially in the future. The overall agenda has to be the creation of a sustainable food system, which the current agri-industry model is certainly not, especially when tied in with the global food industry and its pursuit of profit at the expense of the health of their customers. The very act of eating engages us in the global food system by our choices. The book explains the

structure of the global agri-food system including technology, manufacturing and food retail. It then points out the value of ecosystem services in relation to the types of agricultural systems. Among the global challenges to food production our climate change, water scarcity, peak oil and the impact of livestock production.

We need to rethink food security, where the starting point is that over 920 million people do not have enough to eat, while, at the other end of the scale, there are in fact more obese people than there are starving. Continued population growth and high energy costs will have an impact on food security, as will globalisation. In my view, it is essential that producers receive a fair return for their products, especially in view of the fact that farm receipts have declined sharply due to the power of multinational corporations. For instance, the internationally traded price of tea fell to 47% of its 1980 value by 2002, cotton to 21%, cocoa to 19% and coffee to just 14%. In many countries it is difficult to diversify into other commodities and, paradoxically, increasing production simply drives down prices further. As an indicator of future trends, the reinsurance group Munich Re itemised 960 major natural disasters in 2007, with 90% being the result of extreme weather-related or climate-related events and resulting in over \$60 billion of economic losses. This book is an essential briefing for the future.

Ecological Restoration and Environmental Change

by **Stuart K. Allison**

Routledge - Taylor & Francis Group 2014, 245 pp., £25.99, p/b.

This is a technical work about renewing damaged ecosystems based on the author's own experience of restoration ecology with a number of case studies. Ecological restoration is defined as the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged or destroyed. One issue arising is whether to restore the habitat to its original state, or whether human choice entails some modification of the historical state, since nature itself is evolving. The restored ecosystem should have ecological integrity and be free to realise its evolutionary potential. It should also help restore the human-nature connection. In some senses, the term regeneration might be more appropriate as this places a strong emphasis on the healing process where there is a partnership between humans and nature. This has happened dramatically in the case of the Aral Sea and also in restoration of marine ecosystems through reserves. If we help the restorative powers of nature, the effects can be dramatic. With the impact of climate change resulting in shifting environments, the question of how to restore ecosystems will become more challenging.

Holonomics

by **Simon Robinson and Maria Moraes Robinson**

Floris Books 2014, 255 pp., £16.99, p/b.

The authors of this ground breaking book dedicate it to Henri Bortoft, who was teaching at Schumacher College during the MSc in holistic science pioneered by Brian Goodwin and Stephan Harding. It has a foreword by Satish Kumar, who calls it a manifesto for mindful living. The word holonomics was first coined in 1894, and it surely now coming of age. The authors emphasise the importance of the wholeness of nature, the complementarity of analysis and intuition, and the need to restructure consciousness. Their section on holonomic thinking is particularly helpful with diagram showing how it is related to mechanistic thinking in terms of quantity and objects, systems thinking in terms of quality and relationships and holonomic thinking focusing on meaning and coming into being.

This leads on to chapters on knowing and seeing and introduction to Goethe's science, both in terms of his theory of colours and the metamorphosis of plants. The second part presents the dynamics of nature, with good explanations of various aspects of living systems and the principles of

life. This leads on to the third part about the dynamics of business, with illustrations from a number of forward-looking companies including Puma working out the ecosystem services incorporated in manufacture of their products, chaordic organisation in Visa and systems management at Toyota. There is a useful diagram contrasting mechanistic with holonomic business thinking, and a good chapter on mindfulness and consciousness in business, showing how ego-system awareness can shut off eco-system awareness. Forward-looking business leaders as well as holistic thinkers will gain enormously from the insights in this highly informative book.

Spindrift

by **Peter Reason (SMN)**

Vala Publishing Co-operative 2014, 191 pp., £16.99, h/b.

A wind-swept Peter Reason peers out of the back cover of this beautifully written account of his wilderness pilgrimage at sea - he retired from his position at the University of Bath in 2009 where he was a leading figure in action research. As such, this book represents a new departure as an experiment in autobiography and travel writing. The voyage covered in the book begins in Plymouth, sailing across to Kinsale in Ireland and then round the west coast and back. The deeper agenda of his journey is about how we experience ourselves as a member of the community of life on Earth, building on the work of other ecological thinkers such as Thomas Berry, David Abram, Brian Swimme and Gary Snyder, whose works are referred to. Consistent with his earlier academic interests, Peter explores the practice of participation more directly in his relationship with the sea and the land. The vividly described daily events of the voyage are interspersed with autobiographical reflections involving not only his family but also significant conversations with like-minded thinkers. His doctoral studies in the United States are vividly evoked, as is an early visit by Henryk Skolimowski, who invited people to go out into the university grounds and find a tree or flower with which to enter into dialogue. His encounter with Thomas Berry and the importance of a new story is fundamental, and the reader gains a very distinctive sense of his presence. Readers who are sailors will resonate particularly with this book, but its message is one that deserves a wide readership, not least because of the quality of the writing.

Divided Nations

by **Ian Goldin**

Oxford University Press 2013, 207 pp., £9.99, p/b.

Ian Goldin is Director of the Oxford Martin School, which includes over 300 leading Oxford researchers from medicine, physical and social sciences and humanities working in teams to address critical global problems. The book addresses why global governance is failing, and what we can do about it. The starting point is the paradox of globalisation as a progressive force that is also likely to create the most severe crises of the 21st-century. We therefore need to work out how to manage these threats in view of the fact that our management capacity has not kept pace with the growth and complexity of global issues. This leaves a governance gap between yesterday's structures and today's problems. What he calls our hyper-connectivity resulting from accelerated technological change makes us vulnerable to financial crisis, pandemics, cyber attacks and dangers resulting from the failure to manage migration and climate change. He gives an analysis of these issues in the first chapter, followed by a consideration of how to reconcile global, national and local interests that require an unprecedented level of cooperation.

The organisational profiles of UN institutions need updating, for instance in terms of attracting midcareer specialists and building interdisciplinary teams with long-range perspectives. Appointments systems need to be reformed and issues of legitimacy and effectiveness addressed. The establishment of supportive groups transcending national interest is also crucial, as are the potential contribution of the private sector and the formation of coalitions of the willing.

Ultimately, it is about the relationship between hard and soft power. In our connected world, individuals can play a new role, especially in terms of innovation and mobilising social activism. The emergence of digital democracy is an important trend, as is the use of social media in driving change. There is also an important downside to this development, which the author identifies.

The final chapter addresses what can be done to prevent globalisation from sowing the seeds of its own destruction. It needs to be sustainable and inclusive, and ethical issues will need to be included as they arise naturally from our growing interdependence, complexity and fragility. Change is inevitable, but the question is whether we address our central challenges pre-emptively or wait to patch together solutions after some kind of global systemic crisis. We are by no means out of the woods so far as our financial system is concerned, as the quantity and nominal value of derivatives indicates. The message of this hugely informative book is hopeful in stressing our capacity to create and collaborate to address these pressing concerns of global governance.

Is the Planet Full?

edited by Ian Goldin

Oxford University Press 2014, 245 pp., £30, h/b.

This multi-author volume examines the impacts of population growth through many disciplinary lenses from departments within Oxford University. The flyleaf refers to the Julian Simon argument about the potential benefits of increased numbers of people in the world in terms of more scientists and inventors to understand and respond to global challenges, an argument that I find frankly specious, as if we do not already have sufficient numbers of people to address our problems. 1 billion people currently live in slums, and it is estimated that, by 2040, this number will have risen to 2 billion. However, it is noteworthy that fertility rates are falling in two thirds of countries, so that the increase in population will occur principally in the least developed countries that are already crowded and where quality of life is compromised. This is also reflection of persisting inequality and lack of access to reproductive health. Although many authors speak about inclusive globalisation, it is not at all clear how this will come about.

The book contains perspectives from welfare economics, zoology, gerontology, Earth sciences, ecosystem sciences and public health. Sarah Harper addresses demographic and environmental transitions while Charles Godfray considers how over 9 billion people can be fed sustainably and equitably by 2050. There are also discussions of the metabolism of human dominated planet, water scarcity, healthcare and mineral resources. Perhaps the key relationship is between population, consumption and the environment, a theme addressed by Ian Johnson in his consideration of the arguments from *The Limits to Growth*. The final chapter, written by the editor, recaps the thesis of his book *Divided Nations*, reviewed above, namely that we need new governance structures to minimise the overexploitation and degradation of the global commons and to address the systemic crises likely to arise from environmental pressures and hyper-connectivity in our Anthropocene era. It is also important to recognise the fall in poverty due to globalisation, but this in turn drives higher consumption and brings us up against the well-known equation that for the whole world to have a European standard of living, we would need three planets. We should all be pressing for radical reform of our global institutions so as to make them fit for purpose for the challenges of the 21st century.

Bankrupting Nature

by Anders Wijkman and Johan Rockström

Earthscan 2011, 206 pp., £ 30, h/b.

This report to the Club of Rome by authors with a background in politics and environmentalism is one of the most thorough analyses of the systemic challenges facing humanity. The title is indicative of the challenging content about denying our resource boundaries and insisting on business as usual while we continue with completely unsustainable economic growth. Unlike native Indians, our decisions are not made with the seventh generation in mind, and it is astonishing to read that over 500 international environmental agreements have been signed. As noted by other commentators, the gap is between recommendations on science and the short-term constraints of politics. We will eventually be forced into a sustainability space where per capita ecological footprint is below per capita planetary bio-capacity, currently overshooting by 40% a year. The focus of the book is on cultural and lifestyle issues and the way in which we have organised our economy in relation to ecosystem services.

Both political and environmental perspectives are represented, and the relations between them. The result is a thorough investigation of inhibiting and potentially progressive factors in moving towards a sustainable economy. In addition, new forms of the special education are required in order to help young people think in a systemic way. This is not currently the way in which universities are organised. The authors identify nine interacting planetary boundaries and devote considerable space to a discussion of climate change. Agriculture is another critical area since the demand for food is expected to increase by 70% by 2050 and climate change may reduce yields by between 25% and 50%. Hence the need for sustainable intensification, which I do not believe will be attained through the agri-industrial model. The Arctic is, rightly in my view, highlighted as the canary in the mine. Discussion of overall temperature rises omits the data from global dimming, which suggests that there has been a 16% decrease in solar radiation reaching the Earth, which means that global warming is in fact worse than it appears. The authors identify weaknesses in our economic model and suggest new forms of indicators with less emphasis on production and consumption. They outline the necessary components of a new approach based on reconnecting our societies and economies with the biosphere. Planetary solutions are essential, but as yet the necessary government structures are not in place. This is one of the best-informed overviews of our planetary situation and should be compulsory reading for all political representatives.

Snake Oil

by Richard Heinberg

Clairview Books 2014, 146 pp., £10.99, p/b.

Subtitled 'how fracking's false promise of plenty imperils our future', this is the latest in a series of informative books that I have reviewed by Richard Heinberg. Its appearance in the UK is particularly timely as the debate hots up between proponents and opponents of fracking. For Heinberg, the hype has been overdone and the promises exaggerated, creating a distraction from the real agenda of achieving a sustainable energy system and reducing dependency on fossil fuels. In Britain, the geology is less favourable than in the US, and even in the US, in the view of the author, there will be a steep decline in output over a ten-year period, forcing companies to find yet more drilling locations. Hence the long-term significance of this development has been overstated and the hidden costs downplayed. The book is a well-researched corrective to industry propaganda and conventional wisdom. For instance, the energy return on energy invested is significantly higher than conventional resources, the production from shale gas wells typically declines 80 to 95% the first three years, and the environmental effects on water can be serious. All in all, the industry has purchased a few years of respite but the overall sustainable energy agenda remains unchanged, especially in view of the relationship between burning fossil fuels and climate change.

Water Resources

by Joseph Holden

Routledge 2014, 371 pp., \$69.95, p/b.

Written as a textbook for students, this is an excellent interdisciplinary reference work on all aspects of water and its management. A summary of contents gives a good idea of its scope: water fundamentals, the changing water cycle, river basin hydrology, surface water quality, groundwater, aquatic ecosystems, water demand planning and management, water and health, potable water and wastewater treatment, water economics, water conflict, law and governance, and the future of water in terms of water footprints and virtual water. There are extensive tables, figures and boxes together with learning outcomes and reflective questions. Some of the boxes highlight crucial economic and political issues, such as the trends in India with an anticipated 1.6 billion population by 2050. Another key issue is irrigation in relation to food security. Then there is the question of long-term nitrate trends in rivers with accompanying dead zones at the mouth. Groundwater is also very important, especially since 22% of the world's population rely solely on it and 10% of this consumption is unsustainable, leading to rapid drops in water tables and the potential for conflict over water resources. Virtual water and water footprints provide an analysis whereby we can calculate how much water our lifestyle entails and take steps towards reducing our footprint. In short, this book provides a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of water.

Capitalist Realism

by Mark Fisher

Zero Books 2009, 81 pp., £7.99, p/b.

This is the author's preferred term for the economic structures within which we live, especially since 1989. He asks if there is no alternative to accepting the domination of systemic and growing inequality. He calls on the left to deepen its analysis of our current predicament and encourage green shoots of new thinking embodied in alternative communities and the new economics. Perhaps the most interesting reflections concern the attitude of young people in the further education college in which the author has taught. He writes of their 'reflexive impotence' – the knowledge that things are bad and that they can't do anything about it. This is a state of interpassivity that it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. He writes that most of the teenagers with whom he worked had mental health problems and learning difficulties, and he characterises them as existing in a state of depressive hedonia whereby the pursuit of pleasure is the only imperative, while sensing that some deeper connection is missing. There is also a tension between the old world of educational institutions as disciplinary and the new status of students as consumers of services. The implication is that they can get away with doing very little work and even listening to music during class while complaining that any small amount of reading is simply boring and that they can't do it. Add to the mix that they are all hooked into entertainment and have short attention spans. The crisis is exacerbated by the facts about 25% of 16 to 24-year-olds are unemployed so they can't see the point of education or indeed of life. This issue requires a fundamental rethink of our values and social systems.

Beyond Flying

by Chris Watson

Green Books 2014, 204 pp., p/b.

It is perhaps surprising to learn that only 5% of the world population has flown, when nearly every reader of this publication will be a regular flyer. The impact of travel on climate change has given many people pause for thought and encouraged minimising or giving up air travel altogether. Developments in communications make this easier so far as meetings and conferences are concerned, and in one of the contributions we learn that all four finalists for an environmental award in California had refused to travel, so their presentations took place by Skype. Airline companies

enjoy subsidies on fuel, which should really be removed to reflect the true cost of flying - even so, fuel surcharges are now commonplace since the rise in oil prices. It is easy to calculate one's carbon footprint and the contribution that air travel makes to this. For my part, I go to London by train whenever possible but I can't say that I have thought systematically about this, which this book encourages readers to do. Susan Krumdieck describes a Signs of Change teleconference in which 250 delegates were hosted at seven venues. The third part consists a series of essays describing various epic journeys such as going by bicycle to Beijing, walking from England to Turkey, and even travelling overland from Australia to a UN climate conference in Poland. One common experience is the hospitality of strangers when undertaking journeys of this kind, which I myself experienced as a student walking in France - I was taken in one evening by a peasant family (I always say I am Scottish when in France) and given a delicious meal rounded off with Eau de Vie de Mirabelle 1938. Readers glean recommendations about how to fly less as well as enhancing their travel experience.

EDUCATION

Making Grateful Kids

by Jeffrey J. Froh and Giacomo Bono

Templeton Press 2014, 274 pp., h/b.

Sir John Templeton identified gratitude as one of the key attitudes to life, and the research reported in this book has been supported by his Foundation. There is a nice definition as 'a sense of thankfulness and joy in response to receiving a gift, whether the gift be a tangible benefit from a specific other or a moment of peaceful bliss invoked by natural beauty.' As such, gratitude can be considered either as an emotion, a mood, or a personality trait. This book focuses on the latter, with a number of key themes: prioritise raising a grateful child (they give 32 suggestions), model and teach gratitude, spend time with your children and be mindful with them, support your child's autonomy, use their strengths to fuel gratitude, help them achieve intrinsic rather than extrinsic goals, encourage generosity as helping others, help them nurture their relationships, and to find out what matters to them. An important theme is how best to deal with consumerism, media and materialism, a question I was asked at a recent school presentation. The answer seems to be setting reasonable limits and offsetting commercial activity with experiential pursuits. Grateful children are less affected by these messages, and are less envious and depressed with more motivation. An interesting research finding is the four basic patterns of gratitude development. Thrivers enter teen years with a moderate amount of gratitude that increased, deficients start low and remain low, squanderers start high and decrease, while late bloomers start low and increase. Overall, the message of the book is that parents can undoubtedly influence their children to become more grateful, and by doing so they will become happier and more engaged adults. Many stories throughout the book reinforce this important message, and I would recommend every parent to read this book.

GENERAL

Luminous

by Mike King (SMN)

McFarland and Company Inc 2014, 272 pp., £37.95, p/b.

This ground breaking book is a tour de force by any standards as Mike has watched over 400 films on spiritual themes in researching it. He draws on all of these in his analysis and recommends 60 must see films at the end. The book serves as a companion to watching films as an adjunct to the spiritual life and its title, based on a metaphor of light,

indicates 'a moment of insight or understanding' that may be conveyed in a film; more especially, 'a film that contains within its dramatic presentation both the potential for spiritual transformation and the aesthetic mastery of light in the moving image.' The book is organised around 12 themes including spiritual aesthetics, the esoteric, death and dying, ghosts and the afterlife, reincarnation and resurrection, teachers of wisdom, people in spiritual community, violence, forgiveness and atonement, East versus West and secular versus spiritual. This only conveys the barest outline of the richness of Mike's discussion of specific films within these overall themes. Importantly, he defines the core of spirituality as a profound connectedness, and its opposite as an anguished alienation. He provides useful summaries at the end of each chapter, and his last two chapters also provide a commentary on our times, especially around the secular text of much of modern life. Overall, Mike reminds us of how special film is as a medium expressed through moving light and how it can make an important contribution to our understanding of spiritual life.

Hearing Our Calling

by Gill Coombs

Floris Books 2014, 204 pp., £16.99, p/b.

This is a book about rethinking work and the workplace at a time when work has become problematic for many people. It considers the larger context and history of work including the ascent of the rational mind, destructive work such as weapons research or work that leads to environmental deterioration, the nature of community and the importance of finding one's calling. We don't have to accept the current model and can find a means of work being joyful, creative and fulfilling. Finding one's calling is the most important theme, which the author defines as the action arising from our context, eliciting our natural desire to contribute our skills. She cites the example of her father who was asked to edit a booklet about ecological awareness for churches, which he set about with energy and enthusiasm in spite of advancing age and illness. There is an interesting chapter on factors that may inhibit hearing our calling and an emphasis on the relationship between being and doing: 'when we are doing right work, we do what we are.' Our work shapes our day and can also give our lives meaning. The last chapter considers three central themes of reconnection, response and reciprocity. There is no shortage of work in the sense of needs that require responding to, but our structures are set up for jobs and therefore the dichotomy of employment and unemployment. For the sake of our children, this model has to change if they are to find the meaningful work that they deserve.

Make Your Job a Calling

by Bryan Dik and Ryan Duffy

Templeton Press 2012, 278pp., \$24.95, p/b.

Ronnie Davidson writes: The authors define a 'calling' as the work you feel compelled to do. They fully explore how the concept of a calling can transform our thinking on career development. This book could be an important contribution to our understanding of career development and purpose in particular. There is a deep and rare exploration of both the scientific and the spiritual dimensions intertwined with research findings, useful anecdotes and practical sections. This is much more than a book about how to find job satisfaction and is a must read for those yet to have the confidence to say that they have found their vocation in life.

Modern Miracles – Satya Sai Baba

by Erlendur Haraldsson (SMN)

White Crow Books 2013, 390 pp., £14.99, p/b.

I reviewed an earlier edition of this book as *Miracles are my Visiting Cards* well over 15 years ago. This new edition is updated with a further 12 chapters and more interviews. It covers experiences with Sai Baba since the 1950s until

his death in 2011. The author himself has witnessed many extraordinary feats, as have many other people reported in this book. It is clear that Sai Baba possessed a full range of siddhis including the capacity to appear and disappear as well as extensive and well-documented healings and materialisations. Some of this data are summarised in an interview table. The author considers a number of possible explanations for the range of phenomena reported. The most plausible is that Baba did indeed possess psychic powers that were under his control, although this explanation would not appeal to hardened sceptics.

When he died in 2011, his body lay in state the two days, and he was accorded a full state funeral attended by some 500,000 people including the Prime Minister and Sonia Gandhi. Some readers may be unaware of the extent of his charitable work, including schools and two hospitals with a staff of 290 people who treat 160,000 patients every year for free. His teaching is also inspiring, focusing as it does on love and service: 'the sign of a person of wisdom is infinite love'; 'love should be considered as the very breath of life.' This is certainly the most comprehensive and balanced treatment of Baba and his work.

The Truth Agenda

by Andy Thomas

Vital Signs Publishing 2009, 400 pp., £14.95, p/b.

This is a revised and updated edition of a book about unexplained mysteries and global cover-ups first published in 2009, which I reviewed at the time. The author is level-headed and well-informed, steering a middle path between the extremes of interpretation and relating his analysis to the available evidence. He covers a vast range of topics from pyramids to crop circles, UFOs, Marian apparitions, moon landings, false flag operations, Iraq and 9/11. Some of the areas he considers are more or less respectable in the mainstream, while others are considered fringe and wacky. The main contention is that things are never what they seem to be and that governments and conventional thinking manipulate and deceive the public, ridiculing alternative explanations as implausible conspiracy theories.

Each chapter contains a Truth Agenda summary at the end. The chapter on 9/11 is comprehensive and draws on the extensive analysis of David Ray Griffin, which I have reviewed in these pages. The third part discusses tools of control in a war against liberty of which the Patriot Act is a prime example, implemented following the atrocities of 9/11. The fourth part outlines a positive response to the advent of the New World Order in terms of the power of collective thought and positive action. I know of no other volume that sets out this vast field so clearly and in such a balanced way. Readers are left free to make their own minds in an informed fashion.

Conspiracies

by Andy Thomas

Watkins Books Ltd. 2013, 292 pp., £9.99, p/b.

This is a companion volume to the book reviewed above and dealing with the facts, theories and evidence of various types of conspiracy: historical, false flag, political, assassination, 9/11, extra-terrestrial and new world order. The author precedes his analysis with a detailed consideration of the nature of conspiracy theory and the derogatory ways in which the term is bandied about, for instance on the official US government website. Similarly to his earlier book, the author seeks a middle ground between polarities of thought, summarising the arguments for and against alternative views before stating his own conclusion at the end of each chapter. Academic views of the conspiracy mind-set are patronising, while those sympathetic to alternative interpretations see themselves in a very different light. In my view, rational analysis of the available evidence is essential in order to draw an informed conclusion. This is precisely what Andy does in this book, which makes it a reliable source for those unfamiliar with this kind of material. There is inevitably some overlap with the previous book, but it is neatly self-contained and can be recommended as a useful introduction to many controversial topics.

The Hidden Hand

by Richard H. Immerman

John Wiley & Sons Ltd 2014, 248 pp., £23.50, p/b.

Written by a history professor with some direct experience of intelligence work, this book has been endorsed by his peers and traces the history of the agency since its inception in 1947. It was the subject of editorial review by the agency itself, which means there are several blanked out passages, especially dealing with more recent events. An important figure in the early days was George Kennan, who gives a good definition of a covert operation as one that does not precipitate an armed conflict involving recognised military force, but is designed to influence the thought, morale and behaviour of people in such a manner as to further the accomplishment of national aims. With this in mind, many key operations are described, including those surrounding the Shah of Iran in 1953 and the Cuban missile crisis. Significantly, the section on Carter is described as a calamity and that on Reagan as a revival. It is interesting to read that Clinton was much more concerned about Al Qaeda than his successor was initially, since Bush's advisers were more concerned about Saddam Hussein. The treatment of 9/11 and especially of the 9/11 Commission is entirely conventional, and does not raise any of the concerns detailed in the work of David Ray Griffin, which I have reviewed in these pages. The discussion of the events surrounding the 2003 invasion of Iraq is balanced, observing that the key report conflated fact with assumptions and failed to identify grass in intelligence. The author does not believe that Colin Powell took sufficient responsibility for his role in promoting the invasion. The book is arguably more suitable for policy analysts than general reader.

Himalayan Sound Revelations

by Frank Perry

Polair Publishing 2014, 492 pp., £12.99, p/b.

Subtitled 'the complete singing bowl book', this is no exaggeration - it is a truly extraordinary sourcebook drawing on the experience of 40 years of working with sound and collecting instruments. As Jim D'Angelo says in his endorsement, the book is bound to become a classic and belongs on the shelf of every serious student of Eastern music, meditation and spirituality. The author gives a good deal of historical background and describes in detail over 250 instruments, especially the acoustic features of singing bowls. He also explains mallets and wands, and how to strike or stroke a bowl, giving various exercises in the process. One of the most extraordinary features is the cymatic photography of John Stuart Reid, especially the patterns featured above the bowls in full colour. He has an extensive background in esoteric literature, which makes the text all the more informative. I can only agree with Jim that the book belongs on the shelf of everyone who loves these bowls and their sounds.

Poetry of the First World War

edited by Tim Kendall

Oxford 2014, 312 pp., £8.99, p/b.

This highly acclaimed new anthology brings new names into focus, as well as reproducing the best of the better-known poems. The editor believes that most soldiers believed the war to be necessary, but wanted the costs acknowledged and the truth told to power in a way that reunited art and ethics. The anthology begins with Thomas Hardy and also includes poetry by civilians and women poets like May Sinclair and Charlotte Mew, which I had not seen before. The latter reminds us that spring will come again to the scorched, blackened woods and wounded trees. I remember visiting the battlefields in the 1970s and remarking that no tree was more than 50 years old. There is also a section on music hall and trench songs, and each poet is introduced with a biographical note. This is a superb collection that should be in the library of every enthusiast for war poetry.

The Beatles – The BBC Archive

by Kevin Howlett

BBC 2013, 336 pp., £45, h/b.

I received this extraordinary document without having requested it but it is quite remarkable. There are two parts, a folder with some classic facsimile documents including the original form for an audition with the BBC in 1962; also some audience reports where it is clear that viewers of the 1967 Magical Mystery Tour were completely nonplussed. There is a letter explaining that the BBC could not support performance of 'A Day in the Life' with its reference to being turned on. The main part of the book follows the chronological development of the Beatles story from 1962-1970 with interview transcripts, analysis and photos. It is quite striking how rapidly things developed during the 1960s and the changes of style over 8 years – I enjoyed the photo of them with the Maharishi when our own Peter Fenwick was measuring their EEGs – a real pioneer!

The Oxford Companion to Food

Alan Davidson, edited by Tom Jaine

Oxford 2014, 931 pp., £40, h/b.

The first edition of this magisterial work appeared 15 years ago, the fruit of over 20 years of labour by Alan Anderson, who retired early from his diplomatic career as ambassador to Laos to pursue a new career as a food historian and writer. This edition contains a tribute to Alan by the editor, which conveys a vivid impression of his personality. The current edition contains alterations of some 250 entries and 43 new ones. It is a most extraordinary volume that deserve space on the shelves of any food enthusiast. There are entries on individual countries and their traditional foods, a huge array of individual foodstuffs, history of English and French cookery books (also individual food writers), cheeses, fish, sausages from various countries, meats, puddings and generic dishes. At the end, there is a 20 page bibliography in three columns, which gives some indication of the erudition behind the volume. The book is also very well written and a source of all kinds of quirky facts. We learn, for instance, that the croissant only makes its first appearance in a recipe book in 1905. There is also a lengthy explanation about the difference between an ordinary croissant and a croissant au beurre, which is actually sure to have butter in it, although Alan observes that the cheaper version is preferred by some people because it is easier to dunk in coffee.

DEATH AND DYING**The Animal Communicator's Guide Through Life, Loss and Love**

by Pea Horsley

Hay House Publishers 2014, 278 pp., £10.99, p/b.

Woven around the story of the life and death of her own dog Morgan, this book records many communications between humans and animals along with some touching messages and insights such as the fact that we are all connected, all the time, across any distance. Animal communication is defined as an intuitive exchange of non-verbal information between humans and animals, which is more than just reading body language. There is considerable detail around the death of Morgan and the reader comes to a new appreciation of animal intelligence as well as gratitude for the beauty of life.