

ISSN 1362-1211 | No 120 | Spring 2016

Network Review

JOURNAL OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK



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NETWORK CALENDAR 2016

June 18	Alister Hardy Trust/Scientific & Medical Network <i>Joint one-day conference on Health and Spirituality</i> Speakers: Dr Jeff Leonardi and Dr Peter Fenwick, Open Panel discussion with speakers and Dr Natalie Tobert and Dr Dagma Corry.
July 2	7-9pm , Colet House, Lecture and Dialogue: <i>Space Time and Consciousness</i> with Prof Bernard Carr and Dr Alan Wallace
July 3	11am - 4pm , Colet House. <i>Paths to Presence: An exploration of Sufi and Dzogchen</i> with Omar and Suzanne Inayat Khan and Alan Wallace
July 8-10	Annual Gathering , Horsley Park, <i>Human Evolution at a Time of Global Crisis</i> , with Dr Mick Collins and Dr Chris Thomson . See leaflet enclosed.
July 29-31	<i>Is Heaven for Real? The Significance of the NDE</i> . University of Winchester, with Prof Paul Badham , Sue Brayne , Dr Peter Fenwick , Dr Shirley Firth , David Lorimer , Dr Pim van Lommel , Marianne Rankin , Dr Penny Sartori .
August 1	Alister Hardy Trust/Scientific & Medical Network <i>The Logic of Enlightenment</i> : A cognitive theory of spirituality with Dave S. Henley MD , 6 for 6.30 at The King and Queen PH, 1 Foley Street, London, W1W 6DL.
September 24	Albert Schweitzer Institute day conference in Cambridge – see website.
September 30-October 2	Continental Meeting in Rome – <i>Convergent Evolution, Attractors and Love</i> – leaflet enclosed.
November 19	<i>Conscious Ageing and the Wisdom of Elders</i> A day conference with Colet House with Diana Clift , Anne Geraghty , Dr Peter Fenwick , Dr Tim Read and contributions from participants – more detail on the web soon.

2017 dates for your diary: **Mystics and Scientists 40th Anniversary conference 7-9 April** (Dr Fritjof Capra, Prof Ravi Ravindra and Amoda Maa already confirmed). **Beyond the Brain in London September 23-24.**

LOCAL GROUPS

LONDON - CLAUDIA NIELSEN – 0207 431 1177 OR EMAIL claudia@cnielsen.eu

We meet at 38 Denning Rd NW3 1SU at 7.30 for an 8pm start when parking restrictions are lifted. Nearest tube station is *Hampstead* (Northern Line) or *Hampstead Heath* (Overground). Cost is £10 for members and £12 for guests. Please confirm attendance so I can anticipate numbers. Friends and non-members are always welcome.

For more comprehensive information on presentations (to include synopsis and biographies) plus summaries of past ones, go to the *London Group* page of the SMN site at www.scimednet.org.

Please note that sometimes talks have to be rescheduled and information is sent via email so even if you are not in London but would like to be kept informed of changes, please send me an email and I will put your address on the circulation list.

June – Monday 13th	John Hands: <i>Human Evolution from the Origin of the Universe</i>
July – Monday 25th	Sheik Usama Hasan: <i>The ISIS Crisis</i>
August – Friday 12th	Gary Lachman: <i>The Secret Teachers of the Western World</i>
September – Monday 5th	Ravi Ravindra: <i>Eternal Wisdom</i>

OTHER GROUPS

(SEE UPDATES IN EMAIL NEWSLETTER AND UNDER LOCAL GROUP REPORTS)

Notice to Contributors

All proposed contributions should be sent to the Editor by email as a Word and/or PDF file.

For further guidelines please email: dl@scimednet.org

NETWORK REVIEW is published three times a year by the Scientific & Medical Network, generally in April, August and December.

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(Members may apply to the SMN Office for password to access the Members Only area of the web site).

Editorial Board: John Clarke,
Paul Kieniewicz, Denise Gurney

Printed by:
Kingfisher Print & Design Ltd,
Devon

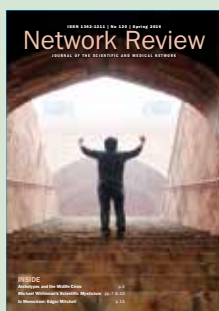
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Company limited by guarantee,
registered No. 4544694 England
Registered charity No. 1101171 UK



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The SMN needs You!

Dr Paul Filmore, Chairman
chairman@scimednet.org

In my last editorial in January, I said that things were settling down. All the news is good: we are getting to grips with our administration systems, we had an excellent visioning weekend with 17 directors and officers, and our Mystics & Scientists conference in April was a sell out!

It was good to meet so many of you at the Mystics & Scientists conference. We had a rare visit from Jenny Blaker (daughter of one of our founders), who was over briefly from the USA. At the conference we started to introduce some changes of approach, which we hope will allow all of you an equal voice. To this end we organised café style seating and, at appropriate moments, the 'tables' discussed amongst themselves the latest session, then gave feedback/ dialogue online, as well as via the microphone. The online

comments worked well, after a few initial teething problems. We would like to develop this further, so that in the future we have good feedback, questioning, and dialogue from everyone who wishes to be involved. This has the potential to continue after the conference or meeting has finished. At an appropriate point, such comments can be formulated into a 'White Paper', a publishable paper synthesising all views and key points. This may, for example, highlight specific research that needs to be undertaken. I believe this is the way to help our meetings have a focussed joint publishable output. For this to happen effectively in the future, it will help if you are able to bring your iPads, internet enabled phones etc., and to check in advance that you can log into the SMN website. We will then make sure we hear from everyone and your views are captured!

To develop the SMN website facilities further, please look out for an email with details of how to login to the new web site. It is important you follow these instructions [to create a new login name and password](#), unless you have done this recently. Your old login name will not work on the new system. This change has to be made for technical reasons. Note that when you set up a new login name, you will be directed to our <https://explore.scimednet.org> site, but when all the current upgrades have been completed, our present site <https://www.scimednet.org/> will automatically take over.

Some of the directors have been working on a new draft of our vision (see the box). We would be interested in your feedback.

The Scientific and Medical Network: Our Vision (draft for comment)

We believe that a better, more intelligent and more heart-led world is possible – a world in which the wisdom of spirituality and the thoughtfulness of philosophy balance the power of science and technology.

We recognise that our world is still plagued by deep problems and enduring conflicts. Many of these are caused by dogmatic, superstitious or ill-informed worldviews. However, we believe that individuals and societies can transform themselves. The key is learning to integrate evidence-based science, born of rational philosophy, with the love and inner peace cultivated by spiritual practice. The Scientific and Medical Network is a community of professionals dedicated to this task.

It is our view that no single idea or solution has a monopoly on truth. Our events and publications therefore create spaces for the sharing of different ideas and experiences in a fellowship of deep listening, dialogue and mutual trust.

We invite you to join us in co-creating new paradigms to bring truth, beauty, health and well-being into harmony, and so help heal our fractured culture.

Further on the theme of 'the SMN needs you', there are many opportunities for individual members to be more involved directly. There is always need for more help at the conferences, for example in manning our popular book stall. At Mystics we had a full house and so all the help members provided was greatly appreciated. Other opportunities for being involved range from: sponsoring a young person to attend a conference, becoming a director (for instance to help develop our programme of events), helping instigate a new subject specialist online forum, and editing or classifying our video database for online improvements. In addition, we need a new treasurer to help advise the Board. If there is any way you may be able to help, then please contact me (or Chiara in the office). I will be pleased to hear from you.

Finally, I very much look forward to welcoming you to our annual gathering meeting, starting on the 8th July, at Horsley Park, in Surrey.

Delegates at Mystics & Scientists





Archetypal Penetrance and the Midlife Crisis

Dr Tim Read



Most readers are in the second half of life and will be familiar with some of the processes that Tim describes below in terms of a crisis of meaning. He forms his own bio-psycho-socio-archetypal (BPSA) model, adding the archetypal to the more familiar categories, and explains his theory of archetypal penetrance.

Bringing archetype in from the cold

SMN members will probably be familiar with the concept of archetypes as the great weather systems of meaning. Archetypes represent deeper organising systems of meaning rather than the superficial pattern of a stereotype. An archetypal experience invariably brings an intensification of meaning, a concentration of essence, but there is a spectrum of this intensification.

Attempts to define archetype present us with some difficulties if they are inherently unknowable and impossible to adequately describe. Historically we tried to understand them by personalising them as our Gods and Goddesses. Our understanding is deepened by the following five concepts:

- Plato's parable of the cave shows how we, the cave dwellers are transfixed by the flickering shadows, the pale watered down version of the fundamental reality that lies beyond our everyday experience. The goal of the philosopher is to gain experience of the primary (archetypal) reality outside the cave. Ultimately everything emerges from the Sun, which represents the Self archetype.
- The theologian Rudolph Otto gives us the crucial notion of numinous experience as an *overplus of meaning*. The numinous is bivalent, having both light and dark manifestations, blissful or dreadful.
- Carl Jung learned from *synchronicity*, where there is a correspondence of meaning between the internal and external world, that archetypes are truly transpersonal constructs.
- The physicist David Bohm developed the *soma significance* model where meaning is an integral part of the physical universe. We could think of meaning as a fifth dimension which can be concentrated to an intensity that is beyond our capacity.
- Aldous Huxley popularised the concept of the brain as a *reducing valve* so that our experience of meaning remains digestible and we are not overwhelmed.

There are a number of ways in which this hypothetical reducing valve can be bypassed to bring a greater intensity of meaning into our consciousness. We know that this occurs in various abnormal mental states that we classify as psychiatric illness. We also know that there are various techniques developed over millennia that have been prized for the ability to induce heightened meaning. These

techniques include ritual, the use of sound, movement, meditation, fasting, prayer and psychoactive substances. Sometimes, these intense meaning states may come upon us spontaneously.

Turning to our current (mis) understanding of unusual mental states - I do not actually know any psychiatrists who fit the current caricature of the medical reductionist where any unusual psychological experience becomes squeezed into a diagnosis according to the ICD10 or DSM5 classification bibles inevitably leading to the prescription of a drug. But I am sure such biological fundamentalists exist. There are psychoanalytical fundamentalists and social fundamentalists too, but mostly mental health professionals work to a thoughtful and considerate bio-psycho-social framework.

If we add an archetypal component – while avoiding an archetypal fundamentalist position – we form a *bio-psycho-socio-archetypal BPSA* model of the psyche. This adds the crucial missing dimension that helps us to understand states of heightened intensity of meaning, numinous experience and non-ordinary states of consciousness. Not only does this avoid unhelpful pathologising but the BPSA model also points to practical methods that can harness the power of archetypal crises so that the experience becomes useful and growth orientated.

Archetypal penetrance

Although they cannot be known directly, archetypes permeate our daily lives. They are the hidden forces that shape our conscious experience and patterns of thought; they leave their traces and images in the fantasy material that flows through our dreams and our daydreams. But archetypes cannot be separated from the physical world; they are inextricably linked with the bio-psycho-social unit that we usually consider constitutes our self as an individual person, being expressed through the hardware that is our body, our nervous system, our sense organs and our genetic inheritance.

Penetrance is a term used in genetics to describe the likelihood of an underlying genetic predisposition (genotype) being translated into a characteristic of the organism (phenotype). Some genes have complete penetrance in that anyone with that gene will show the physical trait associated with it. Most physical traits are polygenic, associated with a variety of genes that are expressed in variable degrees and subject to environmental influences. I suggest that we can apply the concept of penetrance to describe a similar effect with archetypes. If we are indeed influenced by a polyglot archetypal ocean with tides, currents, waves and undertows,

then this may be more active – or penetrant – in some people than others and each person may be more receptive to different archetypal flavors at different times.

The degree of *archetypal penetrance* is highly variable. Sometimes the degree of archetypal penetrance is overwhelming for the psyche and the ‘overplus of meaning’ may cause a crisis. From this perspective, those mental states that we term psychiatric disorders occur when there is a failure of the homeostatic mechanisms that normally maintain archetypal penetrance within a comfortable range. The morbid fear associated with paranoid states, the excitement and amplification of manic states, the self-loathing and constriction of severe depression, the imminence of catastrophe found in post traumatic stress disorder all have an awe-filled quality, that could be called numinous.

Of course high archetypal penetrance (HAP) states often arise where the individual enters a numinous state without developing an archetypal crisis. This may be a life enhancing HAP state or it may be unintegrated and cause some turbulence downstream. Some conditions lead to a depleted range of archetypal sensitivity with low archetypal penetrance (LAP) so that the person endures a dull and grey world with a diminished intensity of meaning. Sometimes there is an unstable state where predominantly low archetypal penetrance is interspersed with breakthrough HAP experiences and archetypal crisis.

Most of us exist in a comfortable and tolerable level of archetypal intensity state mediated by our brain and our psyche. There are some peaks and troughs of meaning that add some spice and richness and which are usually tolerated without much difficulty. We could call this the normative range of archetypal penetrance (NAP) that represents consensus reality.

Foundering ego and the mid life crisis

Birth, aging and sickness flow ever onwards
A river without ford or bridge....
Have you prepared a boat?

Mahasidda Padampa Sangye

I will focus here on the mid life crisis, perhaps one of the more common and potentially productive archetypal crisis that we can experience. Indeed, I suspect that a many of us have been drawn to and found sustenance from the SMN as a result or as part of this process.

The idea that I will explore here is that the archetypal midlife crisis is essentially a crisis of meaning. The term *midlife crisis* is potentially misleading as the process I am describing can occur at any age from adolescence to old age. However, the midlife crisis is most likely to occur in middle age when a person has successfully navigated many of life's hurdles, managed the basic issues of adult independence and achieved security. But somehow these things are not enough. There is a lingering feeling of dissatisfaction, of disease. As Joseph Campbell once said, ‘you may have got to the top of the ladder, but perhaps the ladder is leaning against the wrong wall’. Surely there is more than this. But what else is there?

The midlife crisis classically occurs in association with a threat to the ego. Death is the ultimate threat and, by definition, the midlife period brings the realisation that we are closer to the exit than the entrance. We are on the downward slope to our extinction. The ego structures that have served their purpose well over the first part of life become less useful and need to be re-arranged. Sometimes this process flows smoothly, but the ego is nothing if not tough and resilient, and often it resists this process strongly. The midlife crisis then develops as a battle between the ego that was and the reconstituted ego that needs to be brought into being. It is a battle of ego death and rebirth. There is often a trigger that brings matters to a head as a challenge to the established ego regime. The trigger may be an important relationship change involving partner, family life or employment or there may be a change of role such as retirement or children leaving home. It may involve illness or an encounter with death. It may be a numinous experience or an archetypal experience of some kind.

I don't think many are spared one of the many manifestations of the midlife crisis. Often it is a nagging grumbling presence with mild dis-ease. For some of us it may be more severe. On the various retreats and transpersonal workshops that I have

done
over the
years, many of my
fellow participants had
certainly undergone some form of
midlife crisis, and it was this crisis that led
them eventually to some form of spiritual practice
and thence to the retreats that we shared. A few of them have
had encounters with psychiatry, which often left them feeling
misunderstood and frustrated.

Many of them seemed to instinctively gravitate towards a community that seemed to hold some integrity and a promise of a deeper way of understanding and relating. Such a community may be simply an organisation that provides occasional seminars, a forum for some discussion and the proximity of like-minded people. It may be a more formal structure such as a church, a Buddhist centre or a training programme. It may be a yoga class or a meditation practice. The function of such a community is to provide a safe, encouraging and nourishing setting, a compass to show which way is North, if North symbolises the Self. It is much harder to navigate this territory alone and sometimes people get very lost.

The philosopher Michael Washburn describes a model that describes this process in *The Ego and the Dynamic Ground*. For Washburn, there is an underlying layer of undifferentiated archetypal energy that he calls the Dynamic Ground. This is primal life force, the source of energy and creativity, the bedrock of consciousness. In this model, the ego is a personal construct that emerges from the Ground and, as the ego takes shape, we increasingly identify with it so that we repress the Ground, which becomes the deep unconscious. Washburn describes how the over-identification with ego eventually becomes counterproductive, as we become disconnected from the nutritive energy of the Ground. We lose vitality and our mood tends to become depressed. For Washburn, the midlife crisis holds the difficult but essential task of loosening the grip of ego and reconnecting to the dynamic potentials of the Ground so that psychospiritual growth can continue.

The problem is that the ego is a crucial part of who we think we are, the very basis of our identity — so it is not surprising that the death throes of our ego structures can be associated with such a profound sense of meaninglessness and alienation. This is a low archetypal penetrance state bringing a bleak flatness of spirit; an anhedonia where pleasure is lost. This is the long dark tunnel of life with no light at the end of it. We may redouble attempts to find some pleasure in the things that have served us before. We may buy the red sports car, go partying or have an affair. But these attempts to support the foundering ego by rekindling the relics of our youthful ideals don't work for us any longer and the consequences of such behaviour may deepen the crisis.

Thus the midlife crisis is part of an important developmental process that allows the redundant ego structures to properly perish as a prelude to a regeneration or rebirth. This can be a complicated process.

Egolescence

For many of us, the turning away from the flickering shadows of our cultural trance is not an intentional process. We do not stride confidently through Plato's cave towards the exit; we hesitate, we slouch and we stumble. In mid life crisis there is likely to be a powerful undertow of low mood. It is a state of unstable archetypal penetrance, where the pervasive greyness of the LAP state may be interspersed by periods of higher archetypal penetrance. These higher penetrance states hold the potential for various forms of numinous experience that may accelerate the mutative process.

In mid life crisis, the ego has to begin to fail significantly to stop the repression of Self. So the process needs to be supported in two crucial ways, firstly to allow the ego to fail in a safe and supported way and secondly to allow an emergence, an uncovering of Self. A developed mid life crisis has elements of both — while ego is foundering, the Self may be beckoning — if we can only become aware it. It follows that any practice that amplifies the beckoning Self by increasing archetypal penetrance, may be very helpful, but correct *mindset (set), setting and integration* are absolutely crucial for this endeavour.

This is so important that it deserves repetition. The lessons from therapeutic work with non-ordinary states of consciousness emphasise set, setting and integration as the most important determinants of outcome. The mindset needs to be orientated towards understanding and growth. The setting needs to be supportive, altruistic, containing and compassionate. The set and setting pave the way to integration, which is often neglected. Integration requires a sustained effort, it means going after the high hanging fruit; Jung's own heroic endeavours during his own crisis show that non verbal methods of integration tend to capture the symbolism of the archetypal in a way that mere words cannot. The more the archetypal material can be brought into consciousness, understood, worked on and integrated, the greater the reward. Integration takes time and effort, as there is layer upon layer of meaning to be mined. An experience without the integration is an experience wasted.

The midlife process fundamentally changes the ego. The familiar ego structures are found wanting and new ego structures, new ways of being in the world, are tried on for size. Sometimes this is a straightforward process, following the examples set by role models or by a community. Sometimes, it is a more precarious process that can amplify and perpetuate the midlife crisis before a more stable equilibrium is found. Ego death and rebirth are like the weeding of a garden. The constricting and growth depleting parts of ego, like the weeds, have a powerful tendency to grow back. Sometimes it is the same type of weed that reappears and sometimes they are different weeds. The point that I want to make is that the weeding process needs repeating.

Egolescence is a term that captures that period of precarious uncertainty between two phases of ego. As we move uncertainly from dying ego to ego reborn, there is great potential for mistakes as we veer off the established pathway with its familiar stability towards the less certain path of the new ego structure. The natural tendency is towards a more organised state, but once again much depends on mindset, setting and integration. Egolescence is the adolescence of

the midlife crisis. However, the direction of ego travel is in opposite directions; the fledgling adolescent fledgling moves towards establishing strong and viable ego structures, while egoscence is towards diminishing redundant aspects of ego, in favour of an enhanced relationship with the Self.

HAP states often include epiphanies, to a greater or lesser degree. If we are lucky enough to have an epiphany we pass through a threshold, we cannot go back to the pre-epiphany state, although some people may try. Epiphanies are by their very nature antagonistic to ego structures. The spiritual awakening, as opposed to the sexual awakening of adolescence, affects fundamentally how you see the world, your place in it and your interpersonal relationships.

Both adolescence and egoscence tend to be periods of intellectual and moral awakening with a compelling shift in perspective and relational attitudes towards the world and its people. In egoscence there is inevitably a revisiting of some of the unresolved themes of adolescence. Both phases are typically suffused with a heightened archetypal imagery and a numinosity that may be vague but pregnant with potential. Both phases are prone to introspection and narcissism. Both represent a shift from the concrete. Both can lead to a cynical alienation from norms, parental ideals and society. Both can predispose to naïve idealism, looking to abstract principles and ideals as offering solutions to ethical difficulties.

The Italian psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli has something very interesting to say about the complications of peak experiences. The influx of energy from the Self, he says, will cause the sharp edges and less agreeable traits of the personality to recede into the background and we see a new and lovable individual. Sometimes the integrative energy of the Self and the maturity of the ego is sufficient to allow a permanent transformation. However, sometimes, as the energy of the Self recedes, the personality traits reassert themselves with renewed force. All the rocks and rubbish of our ego and personality, which had been covered by the high tide of energy, emerge again.¹ Of course, the advantage can be that this shadow aspect is now available to be worked upon, if it is recognised for what it is.

Emergence

How does one start to emerge from midlife crisis? How does the failing dispirited ego respond constructively to the whispers from the deep? Sometimes the charge of archetypal energy and spiritual insight can be followed by a disappointment, an alienation and abandonment, as the connection to the numinous is lost. For some who go through this process, it can indeed be a long dark night of the soul

that seems interminable and never-ending. The reassurances that this is a natural healthy process, that the dark night will be followed by bright dawn, sound naïve and fantastic. Yes, it makes sense to practice kindness, to do yoga or meditation, to listen to beautiful music and to spend time in nature. But sometimes this just doesn't seem to work. What, then, is there but to wait and hope that there may be something inchoate, something emergent, and something gestating?

This is where the idea of pilgrimage is helpful. It could even be a physical pilgrimage such as the Camino or a more nebulous non physical pilgrimage. The key points are that the pilgrimage, whichever form it takes, is a journey that is well supported, clearly signposted and done in good company. The journey has an intended endpoint while recognising that the real fruit of the journey is likely to take an unexpected form and will emerge from different sources. Above all the pilgrimage allows a letting go, a surrender and an opening.

In modern times we have the advantage of plurality of approaches and we each need to find a form of pilgrimage that feels right for us. Perhaps because of my own background as a psychiatrist, I felt naturally drawn to the high intensity of non-ordinary states and trained with Stanislav Grof in holotropic breathwork – although nowadays I prefer my retreats to be silent. Grof's method deliberately raises archetypal penetrance in a highly supportive setting that is geared towards integration. I think such methods, if done properly, have the advantage of allowing a more complete integration of shadow materiel. Many of the younger generation are drawn to ayahuasca workshops, where I fear the integration is often sub optimal. Others will prefer a more traditional, contemplative approach.

And what of institutions? Perhaps we should start with our own dear Scientific and Medical Network. Bernard Carr's editorial in the Spring 2015 Network Review was entitled *crisis and opportunities* and highlighted divisions, declining resources and uncertainty of role and direction in a changing environment. Is this a potentially fruitful mid life crisis or is it ossification and senescence? Are we in a low archetypal penetrance state?

If there are redundant aspects of ego then clearly the SMN structures (representing ego) need to be carefully considered and addressed. But are we neglecting the aspect of the mid life crisis that involves opening to Self? Yes, we can all agree to the vision of a rigorous open-minded approach to science and spirituality, but do we need to tweak our archetypal penetrance? And if this is so, how indeed can we best address this crucial task together?

Tim Read: *Tim is a medical doctor, psychiatrist and psychotherapist based in London. He was Consultant Psychiatrist at the Royal London Hospital for 20 years. He has trained in psychoanalytic therapy (IGA) and in transpersonal therapy with Stanislav Grof. He is a certified facilitator of Holotropic Breathwork. Tim is co-founder and commissioning editor for Muswell Hill Press and his book **Walking Shadows: Archetype and Psyche in Crisis and Growth** was published in 2014.*

“Happiness often sneaks in through a door you didn't know you left open”

John Barrymore

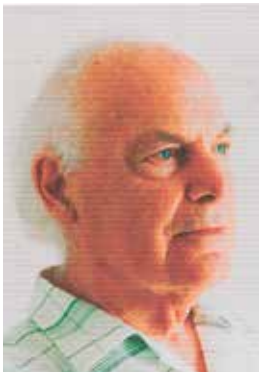




Michael Whiteman's Scientific Mysticism

John Poynton

Michael Whiteman (1906-2007) was Emeritus Associate Professor of Applied Mathematics at the University of Cape Town, South Africa (and an early Network Member). His work is unique in combining physics, psychical research, Eastern and Western mysticism, ancient and modern philosophy, depth psychology, and music. He treated the subjects with utmost rigour yet from the level of personal knowledge, having had a life-time of psychical and mystical experience.



Author of six books and several book chapters, articles, papers and editorials, Michael Whiteman was able to integrate these fields in the unifying idea of 'scientific mysticism'. He was critical of conventional scientific materialism, which is unwilling (or even incapable) of coming to grips with non-physical experience and life in worlds other than physical. His methods rested on observation, conceptual analysis and insight, in tune with Edmund Husserl's phenomenology. This aims

at gaining face-to-face self-evidence, shedding the usual 'cloak of ideas' that conceals the essential character of things. Science in Whiteman's usage was not an exercise in theorising; he was a radical empiricist.

Born in London, he won a scholarship to Cambridge University in 1926, where he obtained a first class in the mathematics tripos. He and his musician wife emigrated to South Africa in 1937. Appointed a junior lecturer in the Department of Pure Mathematics at the University of Cape Town, he was also active in music, taking on editorship of *The South African Music Teacher*, a position he held for 55 years. He was awarded Trinity College diplomas in composition, also a B.Mus. at the University of South Africa in 1943. In the same year he was awarded a Ph.D. by the University of Cape Town for a thesis on the foundations of mathematics.

In 1946 he was appointed lecturer in the Department of Applied Mathematics at the University of Cape Town, then promoted to Associate Professor of Applied Mathematics, and given the title of Emeritus Associate Professor on his retirement in 1972. His activities in music continued, conducting his own piano concerto in the Cape Town City Hall with his wife as soloist. In 1947 he was awarded a M.Mus. by the University of Cape Town. He lectured on mysticism at the University of Cape Town's Summer School, and conducted several study groups on mysticism, Sanskrit and related subjects. His first publication in the field of psychical experience was on angelic choirs in *The Hibbert Journal* of 1954. It was a wide-ranging account of non-

physical states in which music, mostly song or chanting, has been reported. Its importance was in 'pointing to the unique source from which all wisdom and goodness springs.' In 1956 he published his first paper in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* on out-of-body experience. He joined the Society for Psychical Research in 1953, and was elected an honorary life member in 1999. He also had close connections with the American SPR.

He came to the attention of the newly-formed South African SPR, centred at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, and was invited to give lectures there; he also took part in conferences on parapsychology held at the university in 1973 and 1980. The South African SPR awarded him the prestigious Marius Valkhoff Medal and elected him a vice-president of the Society.

His experience, insight and scholarship extended beyond the general range of experience and thought; a reader may have difficulty following him on account of a relatively limited personal context in which to place his work. A summary like this, which presents some of his main ideas without much of the evidence and reasoning behind them, might give the impression of dogmatism, which is expressly what Whiteman strove to avoid. The purpose here is to give some kind of background to his work, hopefully to encourage further reading.

Scientific mysticism

Whiteman defined mysticism in an early work, *The Mystical Life*,¹ as, 'the study of everything non-physical, including the other worlds and their archetypal governance, as well as our spiritual bodies, the facts and their relationship being known by the self-evidence of direct observation and not by reasoning or speculation.' Mysticism was taken to be fact-finding, not concerned with theorising or religious belief. The definition indicates an empirical science, sharing territory with psychical research. Mysticism was distinguished from the latter by involving a 'sense of ultimates', 'openness to guidance', and 'transformed being'.²

The term 'scientific mysticism' appeared as a title in the trilogy, *Old and New Evidence on the Meaning of Life*.^{2,3,4} Volume One was entitled *An Introduction to Scientific Mysticism*.² He aimed to bring mysticism into the field of science as being 'open-minded, rigorously tested, rationally

coherent, and illuminating. The importance he attached to direct evidence was emphasised in *The Mystical Life*,¹ whose subtitle is *An Outline of Its Nature and Teachings from the Evidence of Direct Experience*. The word 'evidence' also appears in the title of his trilogy *Old and New Evidence on the Meaning of Life*; his methods rested on observation, conceptual analysis, and insight regarding what he termed 'the inner constitution of nature.' This is a phrase from the subtitle of his book, *The Philosophy of Space and Time*,⁵ which was also subtitled *A Phenomenological Study*. Phenomenology was understood in Husserl's sense, as noted earlier.

A sixth book is entitled *Aphorisms on Spiritual Method: The 'Yoga Sūtras of Patanjali' in the Light of Mystical Experience*.⁶ This is a unique presentation of the Sanskrit text with interlinear and idiomatic English translations and commentaries. Based on his wide knowledge of classical Indian languages, he recognised that the Sūtras incorporated an abundance of Buddhist technical terms, a fact underplayed in standard translations made within the Hindu tradition. He revealed close connections between thinking in the Sūtras and Husserl's phenomenology. The non-mystical, physical interpretation of passages in the Sūtras and other ancient texts, as generally encountered in English translations, was rigorously criticised in his radically authentic treatment.

All this was linked to a 'universal theology' connecting Minoan, Vedic, Upanishadic, Buddhist, Hebrew, Pauline and Johannine mysticism as one coherent tradition. Subsequent Christian attribution of divine status to Jesus compromised a 'universal theology', he believed; most later writings were considered to be corrupted by dogma and theory. To him theology simply meant 'the application of the phenomenological method to our awareness of the Divine.' So, 'the word "God" must be taken to stand for Archetypal Reason in all.'⁴

Potentiality and actualisation

A key to Whiteman's scientific mysticism is the idea of potentiality and actualisation, as developed by Heisenberg. Behind a physical event one may recognise what Heisenberg called 'an objective tendency or possibility, a "potentia" in the sense of Aristotelian philosophy.'⁷ This introduces a hierarchy, composed of underlying reason or substructure – potentiality, and appearances – actualisation. It is in opposition to what he termed 'one-level naturalism', the conventional idea that there is a single physical level in which all things, events and their causation happen. In his understanding, appearances are manifested only on an occasion of observation, when all potentialities, from the universal to the individual, are integrated to produce a unique actualisation. The state of the observer is itself part of the potentiality governing any appearances, so the process of actualisation will be different for different people.

Whiteman saw a potentiality-actualisation hierarchy to be self-evident. Experience taught him that actualisation does not take place only at a physical level: there are different kinds of experienced non-physical spheres, as in thought and imagination, and out-of-body, near-death and mystical experience. Thought and images are non-physical actualisations in the consciousness of an individual's 'thought-image sphere', as he called it, which includes memory and imagination. Subconscious elements are part of a potentiality field contributing to such mental actualisations.

A potentiality-actualisation model relieves the futile attempt to 'explain' mental and psi phenomena in purely one-level physicalistic terms. Whiteman saw telepathy to result from the interaction or resonance between the thought-image spheres of individuals; the interaction is not actualised at the physical level and so transfer of information occurs independently of physical space and time. Clairvoyance is resonance between the potentiality-sphere of a physical object or event and the thought-image sphere of an individual, resulting in the actualisation of impressions in the individual's thought-image sphere. Once again, resonance or interaction happens

independently of physical space and time, as there is no physical actualisation. Psychokinesis may be regarded as a reverse clairvoyant interaction; potentialities usually linked in some way to an individual result in physical actualisations.

Precognition

Whiteman saw precognition as actualisation in an individual's thought-image sphere of potentiality-fields that may affect future physical events. The individual may intervene in the physical actualisation of these events by an action that alters the potentiality-fields, so allowing prevention of a precognised event from happening. Moving a child from a 'felt' area of danger is an example. Even if potentiality-fields are time-ordering, resulting in a succession of events actualised in the physical world, the ordering is not fixed; fields are accessible in states of physical detachment, and so allow limited alteration, and the exercise of free will. Such potentiality fields may be directly experienced as if space-like, not progressing or measurable like physical clock-time.

Other spaces

His understanding of out-of-body experience also rested on potentiality-actualisation principles. All such experiences were considered by him to occur in a space other than physical, even though they are often so similar to what is actualised physically that they are mistaken for the physical. The prevailing one-level naturalism assumes there is only one 'real' space that can be manifested, namely the physical world; this fixed idea will contribute to the potentialities governing a separative experience, and lead to the actualisation of a physical-like 'duplicate' scene. Close empirical examination usually indicates that such scenes are not strictly physical, as is commonly shown in subtle differences in lighting. Yet this does not necessarily imply a hallucinatory state. Potentiality-actualisation processes that are different from a physical presentation must be involved in an out-of-body state, and therefore some differences from a physical presentation must be expected.

This is a subject full of complexities. A one-level physicalistic interpretation of out-of-body experience is illogical: the separated 'body' does not have the equipment to actualise physical objects, and is itself not actualisable in physical space. Therefore, what is actualised in the experience cannot be located in physical space, even if the surroundings may closely match a physical presentation.

For someone free of the constraints of one-level thinking, Whiteman wrote of an 'inexhaustible variety' of appearances in other spaces. The highest lead to 'perfectly acceptable forms of transcendent unified beauty,' where 'the surroundings, correspondingly, are distinguished by the quality of the light, and gain in *intelligible* character, perfection of beauty, depth of glowing heart quality, unitive freedom and sense of blending with other minds, as the highest condition, which is that of Mystical Form Liberation, is approached.' In these descriptions, Whiteman cautions: "'I" and "me" do not stand for the familiar consciousness of self in the physical personality, or, in fact, for anything that can be known in an ordinary physical state of mind. To understand what is meant, the characteristics of the merged ordinary *self* must be ruled out.'¹

Spiritual skills

This requires the development of 'spiritual skills', which overcome the limiting fixations and attachments of ordinary life. We cannot achieve a heightened spiritual state, Whiteman believed, 'without psychological and spiritual faculties of attention, judgement, purposiveness and self-discipline', based on three 'foundational skills' named Active Recollection, Continuous Recollection, and Faith + Obedience.²

Active Recollection aims to recall or recover the essence in what is perceived, 'and thus the attainment of objective

insight and release.' Husserl termed it the phenomenological *epoché* or time-stoppage, 'the necessary operation which renders pure consciousness accessible to us.'⁷ It is termed *samadhi* or *sati* in Indian literature;² regrettably, Husserl was evidently unaware of the close parallels between his and classical Indian thinking. Stoppage advocated by Husserl involves a 'bracketing off' of the 'cloak of ideas', beliefs and assumptions: it is entering a state of 'alienation from regular life' to access 'pure consciousness', to bring 'to *complete clearness*, what at any time floats before us shifting and unclear and more or less far removed intuitively.'⁷

The skill of Continuous Recollection is 'the freely stabilised ground of release at which Active Recollection has been aiming.' Obedience is not a state of subservience but orientation to 'the transcendent Source of Right and Good.' It operates in conjunction with Faith in this transcendence. He did not follow or advocate any set meditation practice in developing these skills.

Personality

Personality was regarded as existing in the realm of potentiality, actualised physically as behaviour. His own experience, combined with and classical Indian texts, led him to believe that personality has a corporate structure, centred round a largely unrecognised 'core identity'. It falls under influence of various 'contributory minds', also largely unrecognised in ordinary life. It is the task of the individual to have knowledge and command of these minds, and to discern his/her core identity as the origin of inmost disposition.

Personality as a corporate structure can survive physical death, Whiteman considered, being composed of imperishable minds; but sooner or later the structure disintegrates. Fragments, either the core identity or contributory minds, may re-enter physical life, either as 'strict reincarnation' in the case of core identity, or 'loose incarnation' in the case of a contributory mind.² They can carry memories of a former life, which may suggest 'past life recall'. But Whiteman recognised alternatives to reincarnation interpretations: other entanglements of minds such as retrocognition and psychometry, do not entail memory of successive lives assumed by reincarnation.

He placed importance on number systems in groups and cycles, expounded in ancient thinking and in physics. He recognised three time dimensions, one of which operates as potentiality and is space-like, noted above in connection with precognition. Another is physical clock-time; a third is an actualising function. Combination with the three spatial dimensions produces a sixteen-fold system that corresponds with the sixteen *kalās* ('operational parts in creation') of the Upanishads. From this he developed a system integrating physics with psychology.^{2,4} He also developed 'the mystical derivation of quantum theory and physical laws in general'⁴ from tensor calculus, sedenion algebra and other mathematical procedures.

Conclusion

Scientific mysticism was a revolutionary attempt to discern and characterise the hierarchy of potentiality and actualisation. The existence of the hierarchy accounted for different levels of physical and non-physical actuality, so yielding psi phenomena and the immense variety of altered states of consciousness. He was convinced that behind any particular observation there is an intelligible structure 'operative in and analysable out of the total experience.'⁵ He did not accept Kant's idea of the unknowability of things-in-themselves. Instead, we can

attain intellectual or perceptual knowledge which transcends in a certain clear and unmistakable way the onward urge of time, the rigid apartness of spatial objects, and the apparent isolation of the individual mind in its state of fixation on bodily impressions. It is a state of *release*. Fixation being overcome, the mind opens out into universality... Two courses are open to us: to say that the power of analysis reaches so far and no further, and to cease all effort or hope to develop them; or to watch insight gradually developing in us because instead of rigidly fencing off mind from matter, we seek always for participation and the Higher Reality in a hierarchical universe.⁵

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Isaac Newton's Spiritual Search for Truth

Hugh Murdoch

Hugh Murdoch was a prominent member of the Australian Theosophical Society and here he describes a less well-known aspect of Newton's work in theology and alchemy, which made up around two-thirds of his library of some 1,752 titles, which included 30 Bibles.

In this article I concentrate on the spiritual aspect of Newton's search for truth. In another article (see Members' Articles section) I discussed his monumental work in mathematical physics. Newton's extensive interest in alchemy was not widely known until his voluminous private papers were auctioned in 1936. These have since been widely studied by academic scholars and others. I rely here largely on a sympathetic book by Betty Jo Dobbs from the University of California, *The Janus Faces of Genius – The Role of Alchemy in Newton's Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1991). This is a scholarly work with over five hundred references. She had published an earlier book on Newton's alchemy in 1975. She sees Newton as a Janus figure with one face looking towards the future with his foundation of modern science through his mathematics, and the other facing the past in his search for an ancient wisdom. J. E. McGuire, professor of the history and philosophy of science at the University of Pittsburgh, says:

For Newton, the incorporation of ancient wisdom into his vision of nature is more than a ritualistic deference to tradition: it constitutes an active appropriation of the tradition into the structure of his understanding of nature.

When Newton wrote as a scientist or mathematician he used exclusively mathematical language and idiom; when he wrote on alchemy, he spoke as an alchemist using exclusively the terminology of alchemy. Critics have seen this as evidence of a schizophrenic mind but there is plenty of evidence that to Newton it was all part of a unified search for truth. Quoting Dobbs:

Because his goal was Truth that encompassed not only 'the mathematical principles of natural philosophy' but divinity as well, Newton's balancing procedure included also the knowledge he had gained from theology, revelation, alchemy, history and the wise ancients ... Newton's conviction of the unity of Truth and its ultimate source in the Divine (was) the fountainhead of all his diverse studies.

Newton's alchemical studies

As an alchemist, Newton believed that one substance could be transformed into another. He copied out alchemical texts and formulae. In his laboratory at Trinity College, Cambridge, he had furnaces, crucibles and all the necessary paraphernalia for his alchemical experiments. He spent long hours at the furnace sometimes staying up most of the night. Some of his experiments can today be regarded as primitive chemistry but most were mainly alchemical and did not really achieve anything useful in the modern sense. It is easy today to regard this as wasted effort but the theory which drove

his efforts was an important component of Newton's overall spiritual worldview. Yet Newton was very secretive about his alchemy and also his religious beliefs. He belonged to a Puritan sect, known as the Arians after their founder Arius, a fourth-century Alexandrian priest. He kept his Arian views to himself, as these were considered heretical. He did not believe, for example, in the Nicene creed of a co-equal trinity. The supreme God was transcendent and Christ as his son was the first created and acted in the world on his behalf as his agent and in God's name, both in creating the world as in Genesis and also continuing to act in the world on his behalf. 'God does not do himself that which he can do by others,' said Newton many times. God's will is supreme and the natural laws are chosen by him. He can do anything which does not involve a logical contradiction.

Newton believed in the Genesis story of creation but with a few twists based on his scientific knowledge, to make it a little more plausible. A day is the time the earth takes to make one complete revolution on its axis. But it might have taken God a long time to get the earth spinning at that rate, so the length of the first days could have been very much longer than our day. Newton also saw a symbolical account of the creation of the world in an alchemical tract entitled *The Emerald Tablet* from the Hermetic literature of Hermes Trismegistus. In his commentary on this tract, Newton suggested that Hermes was himself a symbol for the activating spirit. This active spirit was also seen as the source of the chemical changes observed in the alchemist's crucible. He believed in an Ancient Wisdom which had been lost or corrupted. According to Dobbs, Newton aimed through his various pursuits to restore the true religion, that is, the worship of God for His activity in the world, in creating it and governing it according to his will.

The alchemical concepts and terminology are somewhat difficult for us moderns to grasp. Newton used the alchemical concept of 'vegetation' for an ensouling spirit in all things, animal, vegetable and metallic. The term vegetation comes from the Latin *vegetare*, to animate or enliven. This vitalistic alchemical spirit was given various terms in different contexts, for example, 'vegetable spirit' or 'fermented virtue' or quite often, his own coded term, 'magnesia'. This spirit was an active principle; in other words, it was an agent for God's action in the world. But Newton's view of the manner of that divine action varied as his search for truth proceeded through his efforts in both science and alchemy. He wanted to know to what extent does God manage by active principles or alternately by purely mechanistic principles. What does he mean by this distinction? With our modern mindset, it is not easy to grasp but it was very significant for Newton, and was important to him in his efforts to understand God's role in the world. To him mechanical laws are those which are instituted by God once and for all at the outset and hence operate

automatically without constant Divine intervention. On the other hand, there are other situations which require constant active participation by God through his agents on his behalf.

The vitalistic ensouling spirit so important in his alchemical studies was such an active principle. However, he tended to change his mind as his studies progressed about the nature of God's action. At one stage this spirit which exemplified God's action in the world was attributed to the aether, then the aether was seen as merely the vehicle for the spirit; later he saw the spirit acting through the medium of light which he saw as corpuscular in nature. Nowhere is this struggle more evident than in his efforts over a very long period to understand the nature of gravity. It is here that his science and his alchemical-cum-religious studies most interact. Newton's first concept of gravity was that it was caused by mechanical action of very small particles to which God's presence caused no obstacle. Next he considered a mechanical aether as the agent of gravity. Air moves up and aether moves down. As his thought progressed, the gravitational aether became more entangled with the active animating spirit.

Universal gravitation

When Newton showed mathematically that the observed orbits of planets and comets were determined by his universal gravitation acting through empty space, he was forced to abandon his concept of a material aether filling all space. This would have retarded the planetary motion and destroyed the excellent agreement of his theory with Kepler's empirical laws of planetary motion which were based on actual astronomical observations. Although as a good scientist, he found it imperative to yield to the dictates of a mathematical theory which accurately predicted the results of observations; this was obviously a very uncomfortable realisation for Newton. While he must have been pleased that his calculations so accurately predicted the observations of planetary orbits et cetera, he would not have been satisfied with our present attitude of simply accepting universal gravitational attraction as action-at-a-distance, even across empty space. He needed to find a deeper cause of gravity in terms of God's providence. Rather than a material aether in space, he now spoke of a non-material aether which flows through bodies without producing any resistance. For the remainder of his life, he continued to seek an explanation for gravity that fitted in with his religious and alchemical studies. No doubt today, he would see our concept of a gravitational field in otherwise empty space as a vehicle for divine action.

Newton tended to believe that he had not discovered anything fundamentally new in his mathematical theory but believed rather that he was rediscovering ancient knowledge. Hence in his attempts to understand gravity, he was driven to immerse himself even more in what he could discover in the ancient texts, believing always that the older they were the less they were corrupted. At first he said gravity must just be due to the arbitrary will of God, and then that it was a result of God's omnipresence throughout space. No longer was it a purely mechanical law operating without God's continuous activity, as it appeared to be in his scientific magnum opus the *Principia*. I quote from Dobbs who says:

He also renewed his immense efforts to demonstrate divine activity in micromatter. If gravitational phenomena demonstrated macroscopic divine activity, and if his own mathematical principles of natural philosophy helped restore true cosmic natural philosophy and thus led humanity closer to the restoration of true religion, then to complete his system, he must also restore solid and irrefutable evidence of divine activity in the microcosm.

Divine activity in micromatter

When carrying out experiments on electricity and light, he was convinced that his 'particles of light' were active and could interact with matter (anticipating modern physics). He

came to see the electrical 'effluvium' as a new source of activity in micromatter, another component of the alchemical vegetable spirit. Finally he created a new version of the aether as an explanatory cause for gravity ... an exceedingly active aether, intermediate between the incorporeality of God and the full corporeality of body. Dobbs says:

Though one can hardly argue that Newton's speculations upon electricity and upon the new active aether achieved full scientific fruition, they certainly did serve to bring more coherence to his physical system. If Newton had wavered in his Arianism during the period when he thought the Supreme Deity subsumed the operations of gravity directly, the new aether allowed him to fully reinstate his Arian convictions. In Newton's final *credo* God Almighty once more has His agent, His Viceroy, by whom He creates and governs, and through whom humanity has been redeemed.

For us it is not necessary to approve all aspects of Newton's theology in order to appreciate the power of a life-long devotion to a search for Truth at all levels from the Supreme God to the behaviour of earthly matter, according to the dictates of his mathematical laws of mechanics which have stood the test of time. It is the latter, together with his serious work on optics which entitle him to widespread recognition as probably the greatest scientist of all time. Taken as a whole, including both his monumental scientific work, his religious aspirations and his search for the Ancient Wisdom, I believe he bids fair to being regarded as the greatest **all round** seeker after truth of all time.

Adapted from *Theosophy in Australia*, vol. 65, March 2001.

Dr Hugh Murdoch (1924 - 2015) excelled on three fronts: as a Chartered Accountant, a Reader in Astronomy at Sydney University and a leading member of the Science Group of the Theosophical Society.

Hugh Murdoch's career as a chartered accountant was interrupted by conscription into the army during the Second World War, where he served in Signals in the Asia-Pacific campaign. After the war he abandoned his earlier career and returned to University as a mature-age student to study science, gaining his PhD in the field of cosmic rays. Hugh served the School of Physics at the University of Sydney for many years as Head of Intermediate Physics, as a member of the Science Faculty Standing Committee, and as Reader in astronomy. His active research interests included radio astronomy and optical astronomy, specifically the spectroscopy of radio-loud quasars; but his crowning achievement was his final, highly-cited paper that established unequivocally the presence of strong evolution in the density of hydrogen clouds along the lines of sight to distant quasars.

But it was as a scientist in the Theosophical Research Centre that I have long memories of Hugh. This Centre was formed in England in the 1920's and worked actively for over sixty years. It comprised a group of eminent scientists who were also senior members of the Theosophical Society under the Chairmanship of E. Lester-Smith, a Fellow of the Royal Society and a leading exponent on consciousness. Topics researched and actively experimented included occult chemistry, the etheric plane, clairvoyance, psychical research, cosmology, geology, and medicine. In the 1980's Lester-Smith handed the torch to Dr Hugh Murdoch in Australia in view of his high regard for the distinguished scientists working in the Australian theosophical section, such as Prof. Victor Gostin (the current Chair) in geology and Prof. Richard Silberstein on mind and brain.

Finally on a personal note, although Hugh and I crossed many sharp swords on doctrinal issues, we maintained our friendship and mutual regard for one another for over three decades – never more so than when I participated in the Theosophy-Science Group discussions in Sydney for some two years during my term as Education Co-ordinator for the Theosophical Society in Australia. **Edi Bilimoria**



Unknowing

Jennifer Kavanagh

It was 2002, and I was writing the end of my first book. As I wrote about my intention to let go of a settled home, the sculptor Antony Gormley was being interviewed on the radio. To my astonishment I heard him speak of what I was writing. I heard him refer to “the profound experience of unknowing”. In my book I quoted what he’d said, then added, “I wish to embrace my unknowing”.

Fourteen years and seven books later, I am finally addressing a subject that is central to my life and faith.

The word “unknowing” is familiar to us from the anonymous Christian fourteenth-century text, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, but the concept has its roots in the earlier and influential Dionysius the Areopagite, and in the austere spirituality of the fourth-century Desert Fathers and Mothers. It is at the heart of what is called the *via negativa*, an approach to God through emptiness, through a stripping away of concepts or images, through an acceptance of the fallibility of the ego-driven life.

Knowing

All the emphasis of modern life is on the rational acquisition of factual knowledge. Facts are a mainstay of our understanding of the world. Ignorance, not knowing, is uncomfortable; we feel it puts us at a disadvantage. We have such a need to find out, such a hungry need to know. Certainty is a comfortable position. In religion, in all aspects of life, we like to stand on firm ground. But even on subjects where we feel secure, our certainties are continually challenged: by the limitations of the current state of knowledge, the subjective nature of experience, and what scientists now tell us is the fluid quality of the material world.

We also seem to think that we know what is going to happen. We confidently make plans and continue blindly according to our expectations, but unexpected occurrences often dash our preconceptions. Whether we see these intervening life events as caused by chance, destiny, an interventionist God or the working of the universe, there’s no denying that they occur.

To know is not a simple act. In other languages there are separate words to suggest different ways of knowing. In French, for instance, *savoir* is used to indicate knowledge of facts; *connaître* means to know in a deeper way: to be acquainted with a person or a place. Knowing in this latter sense is an act not merely of the brain but indicates an experience that might take place on many levels. But can we say that we actually know anyone else? Even our life partner? Do we know ourselves? If we don’t know those whom we encounter with our minds and senses, nor ourselves with whom we live all the time, how can we expect to know something beyond ourselves? How can we know the ultimate mystery? Any attempt to define or describe God is to distort, to impose our own limitations of time and space. We can only describe our own experiences thus far.

And those are experiences that don’t lend themselves to rational explanation.

Unknowing

Unknowing should not be confused with doubt (though the two may co-exist). Unknowing is a not knowing of what, how or why, but it may co-exist with a firm knowledge *that!* We may know from experience that something exists, but have no idea how to explain its nature. The author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* acknowledges this state:

By “darkness” I mean “a lack of knowing” - just as anything that you do not know or may have forgotten may be said to be “dark” to you, for you cannot see it with your inner eye. For this reason, it is called “a cloud”, not of the sky, of course, but “of unknowing”, a cloud of unknowing between you and your God.

The use of the word “dark” is interesting. It continues to be used colloquially, as in “I’m in the dark”, but in “dark matter” and “dark energy” it is used too to describe the vast tracts of the universe that are not yet understood. As Oliver Robinson writes in a work in progress, “Science is now being forced to accept that great swathes of reality are beyond its reach, at least for now. It has bumped into the transcendent, and called anything to do with it “dark”.

Yes, in many ways we are “in the dark”: we need to acknowledge the limitations of our cognitive knowledge. But to the mystic, indeed to any seeker after religious truth, there is another reality and another, intuitive, way of knowing. Most mystical experiences, as William James describes in his seminal work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, have in general four common qualities, one of which is that they are “ineffable”, that is, they cannot be described; and another, paradoxically, that they are “noetic”: that they bear an intrinsic quality of knowing.

The *Cloud* author admits that both the process and the aim are clouded in mystery: “It is not your will or desire that moves you,” he writes, “but something you are completely ignorant of stirring you to will and desire you know not what.”

How can we penetrate such mystery to embrace a condition of unknowing? We cannot make it happen: it comes to us through grace. Our only responsibility is to prepare, to be ready and willing to open ourselves to what might come. If we give time to meditation, prayer, periods of silence and other forms of spiritual practice, we will give ourselves a chance. In our busy, preoccupied lives, there needs to enter a little pause, a breath; there needs to develop a more spacious consciousness, and a willingness to connect with that that is. It is only when we let go of our dependence on cognitive reasoning, when we trust our experience and inner rather than outward certainty, that we are able to access this different, intuitive, quality.

But unknowing is not just a state, but a way.

The Cloud of Unknowing

Unknowing as a way

We need to let go of assumptions about what is going to happen, and admit that “life often gets in the way”; to acknowledge that the unpredicted occurs, and is often so much richer than our expectations. Daily life demands that we make plans of some sort, but we can do so in an open and flexible way, admitting of the possibility that something unexpected may happen. Acceptance that this is the reality allows us to go forward in faith, and trust that we will be shown what to do.

It isn't easy. We are making ourselves vulnerable. We are opening ourselves to a place of risk and unpredictability - but also to a place of infinite possibility. If we can loosen the ties of habit, let go of routine, comfort blankets and addictive patterns, who knows what might emerge?

I have practised walking meditation for some years, walking slowly, meditatively, being aware of each part of my foot as it touches the ground. But only when I discovered a version given by Thich Nhat Hanh did the practice expand into meaningfulness. It begins:

Walk without a destination. Wander aimlessly without arriving, being somewhere rather than going somewhere.

Allowing my feet to take me where they will, allowing the body to take over, has been a revelation. And so it can be in the rest of life. If we allow randomness a place in our lives; have, for instance, a day without a plan, walk without a map, without a watch, open ourselves to unforeseen possibilities: that is a challenge that can bring riches.

But what about action in the world? If we start from a premise that we do not/cannot know everything that will happen, how do we move forward, how do we make decisions? Many years ago, after many decades of priding myself on my decisiveness, I was surprised, no, overwhelmed, to find myself in a different place. I found that the way forward was not a question of making decisions, but of allowing things to unfold, realising that matters would become clear. It was not a cerebral understanding, but an understanding reached, as in most spiritual development, in the act itself. Realising that I needed to give up the career of some thirty years, and with preparation to safeguard my clients, I sold my business. I had no idea of what I would do, *and it didn't matter*. This first experience of letting go was one of the most influential events in my spiritual life. Why did it take me so long to understand that this was the way to live? I became aware - it became clear - that I no longer needed to know. I would be guided; it would be shown.

In moving forward, we supply the intention, and then look for confirmation, which may come in many forms: sometimes from a phone call, a newspaper cutting or a suggestion from another. These events, incidents and material assistance are often called synchronicity - seeming coincidences which are glimpses of an existing connection, hitherto unnoticed. The more open we are, the more these seem to appear. Synchronicity, said a friend, is “a conspiracy of grace”. Or, as Einstein put it, “Coincidence is God's way of remaining anonymous.”

This is particularly evident when we find ourselves in a time of transition. We will often find that we have to wait for clarity. We are an impatient species, and the Spirit's time is often not our own.

Judy Clinton has written of this state,

If we act too quickly out of our fear of being in “don't know” we only superimpose on our lives that which we have already known. If we can have the courage to stay in the not knowing state a new reality will come up out of the circumstances within which we find ourselves.

If we have the courage, we can learn to live with unknowing, to live, as the American Quaker Thomas Kelly wrote, as if we are “walking with a smile into the dark”.

Contemplation

As we move into the realm of the heart and open it, as we give ourselves over to a place of ultimate vulnerability and trust, we find ourselves in a state from which a deeper knowing arises.

But the *Cloud* author asks us to go further: not just to acknowledge our ignorance, but actively to “un-know”: to strip ourselves of all our sensory experience, even any previous experience or concept of God, even the awareness of our own existence, under what he calls “a Cloud of Forgetting”. Only when the heart and will are focused entirely on a desire for God will transformation be possible. As he says, “By love he can be caught and held, but by thinking never.”

Few of us will attain such a continuous contemplative state, but we may catch an occasional glimpse. We need to move beyond the small world of personal preoccupation and be willing to connect to the life-force and the mystery of the universe. And that takes practice. We need to spend time away from our habitual actions and the tyranny of our thinking mind. In celebration, in awe, in joy at what is, we are stilled. If a glimpse, an insight, occurs, that's a bonus. We can't make it happen but in that wordless space, there might form a sense of presence.

It is only by creating a space in which anything can happen that we allow God to speak, allow the unpredictable Spirit to bring us gifts beyond our imaginings. Without that space, we are wedded to our habitual expectations and busyness, our ego-enhancing preoccupations. We can't hear; we can't listen. “God”, says Abhishiktanada, “dwells only where man steps back to give him room”. Unknowing is at the centre of spiritual life.

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In Memoriam: Edgar Mitchell, ScD, PhD

Cassandra Vieten

I was sad to read about the passing of Edgar Mitchell, whose obituary appears below. I had the privilege of sharing a platform with him a few years ago at a meeting in Bruges where he was speaking about his vision for a science of consciousness. Most of the official obituaries mention his founding of the Institute of Noetic Sciences in the same year as the Network. However, they do not convey the breadth and depth of his interest in the way that Cassandra Vieten does below. While at the conference, he related some extraordinary stories about psychic experiences connected with his mother – he combined analytical rigour with intuitive insight in an exemplary way, very much in tune with the ethos of the Network, of which he was an honorary member. When we inaugurated the Beyond the Brain conferences in 1995, Ed was among the speakers, along with Willis Harman, Stan Grof and Charley Tart. You can access these talks on the member side of the website.

When he returned from space forty-five years ago, Apollo 14 Astronaut Dr. Edgar Mitchell committed his life to supporting a sustainable future. He worked tirelessly to understand and promote what he viewed as an absolutely necessary collective shift in consciousness. To those of us who knew him well, Edgar was an enthusiastic, loving, dedicated, courageous, generous, and brilliant man who inspired us to be bold in our exploration of the further reaches of human potential, to fearlessly challenge inadequate paradigms, and to carry his spirit of adventure into investigating our inner lives.

Most people know Edgar Mitchell best as an Apollo 14 astronaut and sixth person to walk on the moon. A US Navy Captain, MIT-trained aeronautics engineer, recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the NASA distinguished service award, and 2005 nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize among many other honors, Edgar Mitchell was a hero in the truest sense of the word.

What fewer people know is that Edgar's spirit of exploration extended well beyond space travel to his lifelong dedication to increasing our scientific understanding of the nature of consciousness.

Space exploration symbolized for Mitchell what it did for his nation—a technological triumph of historic proportions, an unprecedented demonstration of scientific achievement, and extraordinary potential for new discoveries. What Mitchell did not anticipate was a return trip that triggered something even more powerful. As he gazed at Earth floating in the vastness of space and contemplated the history and hopes of humankind on that lonely blue sphere, he was engulfed by a profound sense of universal connectedness.

"I realised that the story of ourselves as told by science — our cosmology, our religion — was incomplete and likely flawed. I recognised that the Newtonian idea of separate, independent, discreet things in the universe wasn't a fully accurate description. What was needed was a new story of who we are and what we are capable of becoming."

That moment was an epiphany for Mitchell. As an accomplished scientist and engineer, he had grown accustomed to directing his attention to the objective world "out there." But the experience that came to him while hurtling through space was profound.

"My understanding of the distinct separateness and relative independence of movement of those cosmic bodies was shattered. I was overwhelmed with the sensation of physically and mentally extending out into the cosmos. The restraints and boundaries of flesh and bone fell away. I wondered if Stu and Alan [companion astronauts] were experiencing it as well ... Somehow I never felt the urge to ask."

The experience led him to a startling hypothesis: Perhaps reality is more complex, subtle, and inexorably mysterious than conventional science had led him to believe. Perhaps a deeper understanding of consciousness could lead to a new and expanded view of reality in which objective and subjective, outer and inner, are understood as complementary aspects of the miracle and mystery of being.

That realisation sowed the seeds of Mitchell's next mission. A few years later, in 1973, he founded the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS). Edgar was troubled by the prevalence of a dualistic worldview in Western thought and science that separates mind and matter and that typically posits matter as the fundamental basis of reality. Fortunately, the advent of quantum physics provided scientific evidence that challenged this dualistic worldview. Experiments at the subatomic level revealed that (under certain conditions) one particle of matter will instantly "respond" when something happens to another particle, even though the two are separated from each other in space. Edgar interpreted that phenomenon as meaning that "awareness" might be present at an elemental subatomic level.

Building on this notion and affirming a learning, self organising principle in the universe, he proposed that awareness can evolve through many levels of complexity and that at an

advanced stage of complexity, say, at the human level, an aptitude for self-reflective awareness begins to emerge. This includes the capacity to make conscious choices and to be held accountable for how actions affect others and their physical environment. Given the deepening problems of today's post-industrial society, in which most threats to our society and planet are rooted in how we view the world and the actions we take as a result, learning how to increase people's consciousness becomes crucial. Edgar, along with many others, maintained that human activity is on an exponential growth curve that cannot be sustained globally under current conditions. He believed that a paradigm shift is underway, but cautioned that the outcome is as yet unpredictable, and survival of humanity on our planet is in question. He believed that the same amount of effort and ingenuity that has been dedicated to the exploration of outer space should be directed toward the investigation of the inner world – our consciousness.

Inspired by Edgar's vision, over the past four decades, the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS) has had a catalytic influence on the frontiers of scientific inquiry. Our investigation into the role of consciousness in healing has significantly contributed to the scientific understanding of how the mind influences health. Our work helped to transform mind-body medicine from a fringe idea into a vital component of

virtually all major medical centers in the United States and, increasingly, worldwide. Our original research on the benefits of meditation and compassion sparked the development of new scientific methods and insights into how we can cultivate our highest potentials. Our pioneering scientific work on interconnectedness through time and space has challenged traditional notions of the nature of reality and is now making its way into mainstream physics. Our frontier research into perennial mysteries, including precognition, life after death, the role of intention in healing, and transformative experiences, continues to broaden the range of acceptable topics for scientific inquiry. IONS continues to expand the boundaries of our understanding of ourselves and of reality.

Today, IONS maintains a team of seven scientists dedicated to the study of frontier topics in consciousness, an education team and innovation lab that translates our findings into real-world applications, a global community of 80,000 with nearly 200 regional community groups who meet regularly worldwide, and a transformative learning and retreat centre an hour north of San Francisco at which 5,000 people per year engage in transformative workshops and trainings.

We honour the life and work of Edgar Mitchell, astronaut, scientist, scholar, and visionary leader, and are proud to carry on his legacy.



Cassandra Vieten, PhD, is President and CEO of the Institute of Noetic Sciences and a scientist at the Mind-Body Medicine Research Group at California Pacific Medical Center Research Institute. Dr. Vieten, a licensed clinical psychologist, has been with IONS since 2001, previously serving as its Executive Director of Research. Portions of this post first appeared in the article "Edgar Mitchell: Cosmic Activist" by Barbara McNeill in the Institute of Noetic Sciences Shift Magazine, Volume 12, 2006.



Conscious Evolution:

Taking Personal Development to Higher Levels

Chris Thomson and David Lorimer

Are we still evolving? Or has human evolution stopped? There is much to suggest that we are still evolving. Indeed, we may have a long way to go. We are probably still evolving physically, and we are almost certainly evolving in other ways too

Although it often seems otherwise, as we lurch from crisis to crisis, there are good reasons for thinking that, as a species, we continue to evolve in three important respects: (i) in consciousness and understanding; (ii) in ability and capacity; and (iii) in character and maturity.

Evidence that we are still evolving can be seen in the huge, and growing, world of personal development. It is huge, because it applies to so many aspects of our lives, and it takes so many forms. At one end of a very wide spectrum it could simply be doing what you can to stay in good physical shape, by eating wisely and exercising regularly. One the other hand, it might consist in some kind of spiritual renewal, in which you completely reassess your way of being, your life's purpose, your relationships and your fundamental beliefs. One thing is clear – personal development is very popular. At least in the circles in which we move, it is rare to come across someone these days who is not engaged, in one way or another, in trying to improve himself or herself.

It may be helpful to boil down personal development to its bare essentials. We think it fairly safe to say that it normally includes one or more of the following:

- a. Growing in consciousness and understanding
 - b. Growing in ability and capacity
 - c. Growing in character and maturity
- a. You are growing in consciousness and understanding when you are more aware of what is happening around and you and the world in general, and when you are more aware of what is going on inside you. It also means that you may understand better why things are the way they are, and why people behave the way they do. To be clear, this is not so much about growth in knowledge, but more about growth in wisdom and life understanding.
 - b. You are growing in ability and capacity when you learn to do new things, such as a new language (Dutch in David's case and Spanish in Chris's) or a new skill; when you can now do things that you did not do before, perhaps because you were afraid to do them or because you felt they were beyond your capacity; and when you do the same things as before, but you now do them more effectively and efficiently.

- c. You are growing in character and maturity when you are better able to cope with the vagaries that life brings your way; when you are more emotionally intelligent; when you are more ethical and truthful, especially to yourself; when you are calmer and more content; and when you are kinder and more tolerant. This growth is not only of the mind and will, but also of the heart in terms of compassion.

This does not claim to be a comprehensive summary. Our intention here is simply to draw attention to what we believe to be the three main categories of personal development, because this is relevant to what we are about to say.

It is surely no accident that these three strands of personal development coincide with the three ways in which we seem to be evolving as a species. What seems to be happening is that large numbers of people, by engaging in their personal development, are, in effect, influencing the shape and pace of their own evolution. It hardly needs stating that, since this is taking place on a very large scale, it is surely a major factor in the evolution of humanity as a whole.

In addition to what is now a worldwide movement of personal development, a small but significant number of people are trying to take things to higher levels in a variety of ways. They are trying to achieve higher levels of consciousness and understanding, much greater character and maturity, and much more ability and capacity. Sometimes, their achievements would be considered "paranormal". We suggest that they are paranormal in one sense only – they are not widespread. That said, these higher levels of consciousness, character, and ability are perfectly natural, and available to anyone willing to put in the time and work to achieve them. What follows is designed simply to give you a sense of what we are talking about.

Higher levels of consciousness and understanding can mean being able to perceive things that most people do not see, such as the non-physical ("spiritual") aspects of the world and ourselves. It can mean the ability to see across great distances in space or time, without the aid of technology (e.g. telepathy or precognition). And it can mean being able to "read" people (diagnosing their condition and the deeper causes of any problems) just by looking at them or by thinking about them. These abilities are seen not only in psychics, but they also emerge naturally as 'siddhis' when a person reaches a certain degree of spiritual maturity (for example, Sri Yukteswar (the guru of Yogananda), Peter Deunov and St Padre Pio).

Higher levels of ability and capacity can mean being able to heal people simply by focusing attention and energy on them, wherever they happen to be. It can also mean being able to manifest things or influence events, just with the power of your being. The masters cited above could also do this, suggesting that these are natural extensions of our normal abilities (although being psychic does not necessarily equate with being spiritually advanced).

Higher levels of character and maturity can mean having the emotional strength and courage to get through challenges and difficulties that most people would never get through. In this sense it can mean growth through adversity, but also the exceptional development of moral virtues such as kindness and compassion, as well as so-called performance virtues like resilience and determination.

This integrated process of achieving much higher levels of consciousness, character and ability has in the past been called “esoteric training”. It took place in “esoteric schools” that were situated in Egypt, Greece, India, Tibet, the Andes, and elsewhere. Only a very few people were admitted, which is why we use the term “esoteric”, which means “for the few”. The graduates of these schools came out with greatly raised levels of consciousness, ability and character, and many went out into the world, as “initiates”, to help society in some way. Essential to their training was the personal realisation that they were more than their bodies and that death was not the end of consciousness.

These schools were, in effect, “accelerated learning institutes”, because they greatly accelerated the personal development (or evolution) of students, to the point at which their abilities would be considered by the modern world to be paranormal. (Dean Radin makes just this point in relation to the Yoga Sutras in his latest book *Supernormal*) We suggest that a good term for the process of going well beyond the normal parameters of personal development might be “conscious evolution”. In fact, we have given this title, Conscious Evolution, to a new project that has as its main aims:

- To explore and demonstrate how personal development can be taken to the higher levels achieved in esoteric training
- To build on the esoteric trainings of the past and present, and to construct a new training that will be in the modern idiom and that will take account of the many advances in knowledge and understanding over the past few centuries
- To make good use of technology (such as online courses and webinars) to make this training “exoteric” – i.e. available to the many

We suspect the time is right for this, for several compelling reasons:

- We know and understand so much more these days. Although not everyone has detailed specialist knowledge, the general level of knowledge today is far greater than it has ever been. This much wider, deeper knowledge base is, we believe, a necessary building block for more advanced personal development
- We seem to be going through a protracted consciousness revolution, which is opening up new vistas and perspectives. This, in turn, is making people much more open to new beliefs and possibilities, about the world and themselves. This greater openness is also essential to higher levels of personal growth
- A lot of people are actively engaged in their personal and spiritual development, and are probably ready and willing to take things to higher levels, for their own development, but also for the common good.

If the thoughts in this article strike a chord with you, then do let us have your thoughts and examples of conscious evolution in practice. Christhomson1000@gmail.com and dl@scimednet.org

Chris Thomson is speaking at the Annual Meeting in July.

“That man is richest whose pleasures are cheapest”

Henry David Thoreau



The SMN and the Alef Trust: Nurturing Paradigm Change through Online Learning

Jessica Bockler and Les Lancaster

From 19th November 2015 to 28th February 2016 the Wellcome Trust in London hosted 'Tibet's Secret Temple,' an exhibition which explored Tibetan Buddhist yogic and meditational practices and their connections to physical and mental wellbeing. As we perused the exquisite displays of scroll paintings, ritual artefacts and 17th century murals from the private meditation chamber of Tibet's Dalai Lamas in Lhasa's Lukhang Temple, we were struck by a short film, revealing the ancient secrets of *trul khor*, a series of yogic exercises, intended "to clear hindrances to the flow of energy and awareness and to expand the body and mind's capacity for unitary experience, or 'Great Perfection'" (Laird, in Garde & Baker, 2015). These exercises, concealed and preserved for an initiated few over most of their history, were here on public display for all to see.

We are living at a time of seismic shifts. Insights and practices associated with the world's wisdom traditions, long hidden and accessible only to a select group of disciples, are now widely available for us to explore. As the reach of the world wide web expands, websites and social media pages concerned with the proliferation of esoteric knowledge abound. Yet the discourse on many of these pages appears superficial or distorted, dislocating deep-rooted practices and reframing them in emaciated forms for contemporary purposes in education, health, economics, and politics. The spiritual supermarket booms, drawing upon profound teachings to offer solutions to personal and social quandaries. The dangers of spiritual materialism lurk in the virtual shadows of many online learning courses which focus on offering self-improvement programmes.

Yet when we come to reflect on the contemporary (online) proliferation of practices from the world's religions and indigenous traditions, not all paths lead to spiritual tourism and New Age pseudo science. In this age of information and online connectivity, new possibilities are emerging, combining spiritual practices with modern communication technologies for personal and societal good. Within the field of higher education we are experiencing, as Otto Scharmer (2014) puts it, "a profound moment of disruption" as online learning environments offer us ways to reshape and reinvent how university programmes operate. Constructive approaches for the future of education are exemplified by the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) concerning transformation in business, society and self, that have been developed by the *Presencing Institute* at MIT, of which Scharmer is founding Chair (<https://www.presencing.com>). Inspired by encounters with The Chinese Zen master Nan Huai-Chin and the late Francisco Varela, Scharmer and colleagues have forged a social and organisational change framework that projects principles of mindfulness and compassion in broader educational contexts.

Following considerable experience with online teaching at Liverpool John Moores University and many years at the forefront of international developments in transpersonal psychology, we wanted to move beyond the constraints imposed by the generally conservative frameworks that dominate in our universities. In 2012 we founded the *Alef Trust* (www.aleftrust.org), a not-for-profit enterprise which aims to provide educational and cultural programmes for personal and societal change that engage with both the frontiers of modern science and our rich spiritual heritage. Recognising the synergies between our vision and that of the SMN, we built—and continue to expand—links with the Network, for example enabling our students to work with the SMN archives. Operating through online learning environments, the Alef Trust provides frameworks for personal and professional development in postgraduate programmes combining consciousness studies, contemporary spirituality, and transpersonal psychology. In addition, the Alef Trust has a growing community of Open Learners, who can join many of the courses without working towards university accreditation.

A central thrust of the Alef Trust's educational approach is to nurture learning through multiple ways of knowing, embracing creative, spiritual and somatic practices alongside intellectual study. Exploring the ideas of writers, such as Leonard and Murphy (1995/2005), Ferrer (2003), and Wilber (e.g., Wilber, Patten, Leonard & Morelli, 2008), students have the opportunity to design their own programme of Integral Practice, establishing a schedule of practices intended to deepen awareness and exercise the full spectrum of the body-mind across physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal and spiritual domains of being. On their experiential journey with us students engage with live webinars and online forums, examining the underpinning frameworks of integral practice approaches, their origins, value, potential and pitfalls. Working online, aiming to foster experiential opportunities alongside intellectual engagement, is not without its challenges. Webcams and microphones can inhibit full immersion in a meditative practice, a faltering broadband connection may disrupt a flowing discussion, yet surprisingly in this virtual space much vital immersion, exchange, and creative play can happen, if the space is held with presence and compassion.

Back at the Wellcome Trust exhibition, watching the film of Tibetan monks perform the *trul khor*, the series of secret yoga exercises, we appreciate that spiritual practices are not a tool for quick self-improvement, but a lifelong dedication to the pursuit of refinement and to that quintessential sense of service to the Other beyond ourselves. The perennial search for an approach that does justice to the cultivation and dissemination of wisdom leads many back to the great traditions. And the efforts of those—such as the Wellcome Trust in this example—in making the past accessible in the



present is of huge value. But something more is needed. The dialogue between science and the wisdom traditions has certainly progressed in recent years. But, with very rare exceptions, the 'progress' has come on terms dictated by contemporary science. 'Mindfulness', for example, is studied in ways that focus only on those aspects that fit with the dominant paradigm—aspects that bring about quantifiable physical changes, but leave out more transcendent qualities.

We believe that a paradigm shift will open our culture to increasing possibilities. Science will evolve into *sacred science*, a term that hints at the merging of past and present to generate an emergent future. Education will grow beyond

our “moment of disruption” to encourage unification globally. And psychology will retrieve that small word that the twentieth century squeezed practically into oblivion: *soul*. Since its inception the Alef Trust has been attracting an international constituency of learners who are motivated to apply their learning in their personal and professional lives, working in education, business, coaching, therapy and counselling, medicine, journalism, ecology and sustainability, and many other professions. More than this, we have been building a community of those who share our vision of an extended paradigm, and who recognise the importance of research and scholarship in fostering this enrichment of our culture. We welcome all who may wish to join us.

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Tribute to Prof Reginald Kapp (1885-1966)

John Kapp

Inspired by the SMN tribute in November last year to Albert Schweitzer on the 50th anniversary of his death, I have written this to honour my father, who died 50 years ago (on 20.2.1966). The photo shows him when he married my mother (Dr Dorothy Wilkins) in 1932.

He wrote the following books: *Science versus Materialism* (SvM) 1940, *Presentation of Technical Information* (PTI) 1947. *Mind, Life and Body* (MLB) 1951. *Facts and Faith* 1955 (Reith lectures) *Towards a Unified Cosmology* (TUC) 1960

PTI was written to teach his students how to write technical reports when he was professor of electrical engineering at University College London. It describes the process of 'teaching him to think about the person addressed', and became a best seller. The Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators (ISTC) republished it in 1997, claiming that it founded their profession. He learned how to teach this by struggling for 2 decades to express the complex ideas in SvM.

His life's work was in his other books, which got few reviews and failed to sell their initial print run. He said he was 50 years before his time, which I believe this to be true. Now that time has elapsed, I hope that this tribute will attract scientists to consider his insights about both microcosm (SvM, and MLB) and macrocosm (TUC).

He asked: 'how can *non-material* influences (defined as lacking location) act on matter to control action?' These influences include mind, spirit, life force, chi, purpose, gods, God, intelligence, consciousness, which words tend to carry emotional charge which prevent objective meaningful progress. He coined the word 'diathete' as a distraction-free collective word to describe all non material influences, which simplified his question to: 'how diathetes control matter?' and opening up a new science of 'diathetics'. The nearest equivalent is 'consciousness studies' but these tend to be stuck in the materialist paradigm. He concluded in SvM that: 'matter is a diathete'. Quantum physics has since confirmed this, although I have not seen it stated in these terms.

As an electrical engineer, he was well versed in servo mechanisms, and in MLB he explored how a diathete (thought) can trigger what he called the 'primary relay' in the synapse of the brain to cause an action. He concluded that they control: 'the moment in time when an electron changes orbit'. Quantum physics double slit experiments seem to confirm this by showing that the diathete of observation controls the moment in time when non-material waves collapse into material particles.

In one chapter (26) of SvM he discusses the two theories of creation, which he calls: 'once upon a time' (now known as the 'big bang'), and 'at-any-time' ('continuous creation', published by Fred Hoyle in 1948, 8 years after my father). He concluded that the former 'bristles with absurdities, of which the latter is free'.



In TUC he develops the latter theory, combining it with continuous disappearance after an average half life of matter which he estimates as 300-400 m years. He shows how this theory can explain gravity as pulses when a particle of matter disappears in a star or planet. He also (appendix D) explains the origin of the earth and other planets as the remnants thrown off from Jupiter when it exploded, having previously been a binary twin of our sun. This seems more convincing than accumulated dust falling together, as much of the earth's core is molten and contains the heavy elements.

'It was over thirty years ago (in the 1920s) that I first came to believe that this principle [of minimum assumption, Occam's razor] deserved to be applied in the physical sciences with uncompromising consistency. I can trace this conclusion, or at least the clarification of it, to the impact made on me by Eddington's writings shortly after the First World war. Thus stimulated, I was led to notice how often in physics a scientist would, though perhaps hardly consciously, apply this principle and how fruitful the result invariably was. (TUC p 13)

He formed a close friendship with Arthur Koestler (an early Network Member), to whom he wrote a letter in 1964 setting out what he hoped from his life's work: *'First I want to bring about a change in the attitude of scientists, such as they will be on the lookout for any credo incognitum [paradigm] that stands in the way of progress. I should like it to become a routine matter for those metaphorical fortresses to be the subject of reconnaissance and eventually attack. To avoid metaphorical language, I should like the scientific world to be better aware of the many occasions where something that is accepted blindly as a fact is in truth no more than a hypothesis that needs to be tested for its validity.*

Secondly, I should like those fortresses that I have attacked in my various books to be abandoned by their garrisons. Put differently, I want my Principle of Minimum Assumption, my hypothesis of Symmetrical Impermanence, [non-indestructibility of matter] and my theory about the reality of diathetes to be accepted, together with all their implications.

Thirdly, I should be reassured if the various implications from the above theories that I have developed were proved true, but I regard such things as my Theory of Gravitation, my Theory of the Formation of Galaxies and of Stars, my Theory of the Nature of the Atomic Nucleus, the theory that I have presented very tentatively in Mind, Life, and Body concerning the way in which a diathete may interact with matter – I regard all these primarily as promises of the reward to be obtained from giving up an untenable credo incognitum. '

I have republished his books, articles, and the above letter on www.reginaldkapp.org so that they are freely accessible. I hope that scientists will read them and consider how his work could help them to advance scientific thinking on the nature of reality. I would be pleased to engage with them on e mail to johnkapp@btinternet.com.



A journey towards healing

Henri van Bentum

In this personal essay, the author writes about his experience of healing through creative exploration. Artist Henri van Bentum began painting in 1952 during a long period of illness in a tuberculosis sanatorium in the Netherlands. The doctors later claimed his dedicated involvement with creative activity saved his life.

Remember when we were youngsters, how we used to play for hours with an imaginary friend? Or imagined all sorts of creatures in various cloud formations? I remember being fascinated by spectrum-coloured patterns of gasoline in rain puddles. Or the designs "Father Frost" made on windowpanes. As we grow older, many of us lose this ability of vivid imagination. Yet it is still there, waiting to be re-discovered.

For an artist, imagination is the 'breath of life', and when combined with intuition, is invaluable. Through imagination, intuition and experimentation, we can reach out and explore both the microcosmos and the macrocosmos.

Personal Experience of Healing through Art

Destiny set the wheel in motion for my creative and spiritual exploration during a lengthy period of Tuberculosis in 1952, age twenty-three, in a sanatorium in the Netherlands.

It was November, 1952. A cold I had neglected morphed into pneumonia, then pleurisy, soon developing into tuberculosis on both lungs and all five lobes. Surgery was ruled out.

I was taken to Zonnestraal Sanatorium (Zonnestraal means "Sunbeam"), located in an oak and pine forest.



"Zonnestraal" Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Netherlands

The doctors said it was vital to have something to do, and not to worry. Worry has the opposite effect of healing. We were encouraged to get involved with **doing** things. *Anything* that would stop us from worrying. All the patients made crafts, some even creating album covers from X-rays of deceased patients.

We all had individual rooms with three walls and no windows, but with one side completely open to an outside deck. Each day the nurses wheeled our beds outside so we could breathe the fresh pine air.

One day I asked the nurse if she could set up a string across the foot of my bed. We strung peanuts along it, and soon I had feathered visitors just three feet away, delicately

pecking at the nuts and leaving some of the shells hanging on the string.

Rabbits, birds, clouds, trees — I'd quietly observe and just 'notice'.

Then one day, a local artist visited the sanatorium to give painting classes, and my life changed.

Although bedridden, I found ways to render objects in various media. Sketching and painting came to me naturally even though I'd never held a brush before.

A sense of timelessness arose, never before known. Sometimes, I'd even forget why I was there.

I made sketches and worked in chalk pastel. (Oil pastels weren't available yet.) Chalk pastels made a mess in the bed, and so the nurses were not amused. Then I switched to watercolours and oil. [Turpentine and linseed-oil smells were not a bother since we had the outside deck with lots of fresh air.]

At first, I copied works by van Gogh and Gauguin from postcards. Then, realistic still lifes. Altogether this activity kept me from worrying. Today it's called art therapy. Back then it was just "stay occupied or you'll wither away".

Much later, when I was released from the sanatorium, a doctor confided to my father that I'd taken years off the illness because of my joy in creative exploration.

Since painting came so naturally, I was curious about *where* this ability came from, and even wondered whether such a lengthy illness had come my way in order to discover this gift. Thus my quest for something 'beyond' began. While in the act of painting, I'd sometimes question "Who is creating?" "What or who guides me?" This wanting to know, led to further discoveries and evolving.

From Landscape to Mindscape

For the next few years my focus was on still lifes and landscapes. Then, just two years after emigrating to Canada in 1957, I was given an opportunity by a doctor friend to paint in the pristine beauty and wilderness of the Rocky Mountains. Within a few weeks of arriving in the Rockies, I began to grow tired of the greens, greys, and browns. Intuition told me there was more to explore. So one day, out of the 'blue', I started to use reds, purples, orange or yellow colours.

Immediately a feeling of freedom arose. Joy sprang forth! And colour is always honest, it never misleads. It's impossible to get green by mixing yellow and red. Plus, with just the three primary colours of Red, Yellow and Blue, you can create hundreds of different colours.

A new kind of healing began, a liberation, of no longer being enslaved to rendering so-called realistic phenomena. Art became a vehicle, a journey.

Exploring colour and painting to music

Back in Toronto, 1959, another teacher came my way, Jock (J.W.G.) Macdonald. Jock suggested I listen to music while painting. He said *"Listen with your eyes closed. When the music touches the strings of imagination and inspiration, then start the recording again, and paint. Only when music and imagination blend into one will you be able to transform it visually."*

Again, another new world opened up. Expressing what I was *hearing* evolved into experimenting with various art forms such as Surrealism, followed by Abstract, or what I call the "Object-less" realm. Again, more freedom!

Micro-macro

In the early to mid-1960's, my paintings evolved again. Born from intuition and imagination, it became possible to enter the microscopic world, the submarine world, the dream world, outer space and inner space, without physically going there.

Soon afterwards, photographs taken with the electron microscope became available to the public, unveiling yet even more new worlds. These were followed by the first images from space. Witnessing these photographs was very encouraging, at a time when people would say, *"What's that supposed to be?"* Such images told me I was on the right track, by following my intuition.

The paintings of this era were created **before** ever seeing such photographs, yet they closely evoked the micro-macro worlds unveiled by advances in both the microscope and telescope. What I called "the invisible made visible".

Today, science and art are increasingly converging. Whenever you open a magazine on science or medicine, there are usually at least one or two images showing an uncanny resemblance to abstract or object-less art.

Collaboration with NASA – astronomy and art

One personal example of such a convergence between science and art took place recently through a collaborative project we undertook with NASA's Chandra X-Ray Observatory. (Chandra is one of the six great telescopes of NASA.)

However, the story begins forty-five years earlier, when I created a series of 100 small mandalas in pointillism, called "Organiverse". (Editor's note: one of these paintings from the "Starry Night" edition of Organiverse was featured on the cover of Network Review, Winter 2015-16.) "Organiverse" was painted in 1972 while Natasha and I were living in Morocco and Madeira. The entire series was born from intuition and imagination, the only outer reference was use of a compass to make the spherical outline.

The people at Chandra X-Ray Observatory first became aware of "Organiverse" during the International Year of Astronomy 2009, when the full series was displayed alongside images from space in the cornerstone project *From Earth to the Universe*.

The following year, we collaborated on an online exhibit called *Coloring Space*, juxtaposing five of the Organiverse "Starry Night" images with photos from space. Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield, Commander aboard the International Space Station in 2013, referred to Coloring Space as *"a lovely fusion of discovery between art and science"*.

I am now 86, and a recent cancer survivor. The question still often arises, "What **is** imagination, intuition and inner vision. Where does it come from?" Just like that question posed by Gauguin in his major canvas titled *"Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?"*

Something guides us, an invisible force - - - made visible or audible through the resulting works, be they in science, art, music or other disciplines and manifestations.

Inner joy of questioning and discovery

These processes are of a very personal nature - - the wonder and inner joy, questioning, meditating and discovering - - all born from ceaseless experimentation. Through these processes, my spirit and imagination are transformed, and take flight. Not unlike the life cycle of a butterfly, or what I call a flutterby. The caterpillar is earthbound, while the flutterby flies freely from flower to flower.

This wonder and joy urges me along, always following a creative inner need. The full circle contains the total sum of psychological, physiological and spiritual evolution. Intuition, observations, imagination, thoughts, and feelings steer us onward towards evolving, transcending and healing.

Henri van Bentum was born in 1929 in the Lowlands. His schooldays lasted until age eleven, and the outbreak of WWII. He began painting at 23 during a long period of illness in a sanatorium in the Netherlands. van Bentum emigrated to Canada in 1957. His career followed an upwardly spiralling path "from landscape to mindscape". He has experimented with and works in various media, and is a pioneer in the concept of professional artists visiting schools, giving workshops to elementary classes and also 'inner city angels'. van Bentum has exhibited nationally and internationally. His work is represented in several public and numerous private collections. Driven by a deep interest in other cultures of far-away shores, he learned to speak five languages, and has travelled throughout the world. He was guest artist and lecturer aboard thirty voyages by ship, including three world circumnavigations, where he lectured and gave classes on creative exploration and colour. Henri and his wife Natasha live on the Pacific coast in Victoria, Canada. <http://vanBentum.org>

QUOTES FROM THE ARTIST

"Most visionary art is born from intuition and imagination. Intuition is the highest stage of cognition when rationality must yield to the inner voice. It is vastly quicker than thinking. Some artists may even become harbingers of future discoveries in science".

"We are the telescope and the microscope - the microscope reveals our significance, while the telescope our insignificance."

"When it comes to thinking about the early days of abstract art, or any new revelation, the words attributed to Schopenhauer come to mind: "There are three stages in the revelation of truth. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident."

"Art on the highest level never dies, because its nature is primarily spiritual. In our contemporary times of spiritual poverty and decline, quality art of any discipline could have therapeutic value. It is these powers, the potential for healing within the creative process, that are sometimes overlooked today."

Quotes about the work of Henri van Bentum

"Viewing a painting by Henri van Bentum is a stimulus to the imagination. Perhaps his background as a diamond-faceter's son is responsible for the almost crystalline aspect of his work. The single most extraordinary quality in all his paintings is an incredible luminosity, a radiance that emanates from within." *Marina Sturdza*



The Scientific and Medical Network

Beyond the Brain XI Conference

21st - 23rd August 2015

*Notes by Mark O. Mathews, BSc Hon. Osteopath & Natural Health Practitioner,
Founder of the Sunflower Trust: Registered Charity 1055712*

Introduction

We live in a time when it often seems as though materialism and a very mechanistic way of thinking about the world seems to have become the fashionable norm. Most of our relationships to business, each other and other nations seems to be driven by fear and controlled through a currency that we call money that is bartered in a kind of international gambling casino that is quite out of touch with the creative forces of life. It has to be acknowledged that the tiny little sensory windows through which we can see, hear, feel, taste and smell, are extremely limited in comparison to the infinite spectrum of energy and information that links everything together and transcends time and space. It was a revelation to be able to listen to people of intellectual standing who were able to talk authoritatively about ways of thinking that related to what it is to be a human being with a moral compass and an awareness of being a product and a part of the greater universe.

Professor Richard Silberstein, Swinburne University of Technology, Australia
'The Creative Brain, a Post-Materialist Perspective'

Professor Silberstein talked about the creative brain from a post-materialist perspective. In his view, nearly all the people he listed (of which a great number were outstanding inventors, scientists, artists, politicians and military leaders), if they were around now, would be labelled as suffering from ADHD. Leonardo da Vinci created thousands of pieces of art and invented many different things but only completed 14 of them.

Studies using MRIs of the topographic areas of the brain that are associated with different kinds of activity indicate that ADD is associated with inspiration and greater creativity. It is also associated with dreaming and daydreaming, and an ability to connect with many other areas of the brain.

In his view, consciousness is not just to do with brain activity. The brain is simply the medium through which it occurs. He quoted statistical data relating to nine different pieces of independent scientific research on pre-cognition which collectively indicate (to a level of significance of 10^{11}) that precognition happens. Precognition is when we are aware of something before it happens.

This is not consistent with the generally accepted laws of physical science. In his opinion, "Consciousness may be an irreducible component of the universe, a channel to the deeper transpersonal connection to every bit of the physical world around us."

Dr Ulisse di Corpo and Dr Antonella Vannini
'Syntropy and the Attraction of Love: a Possible Explanation of Non-Locality and Retrocausality'

Retrocausality is considered by materialist scientists to be inconsistent with the laws underlying unitary theories of the universe: the quantum theory and the relativity theory. Ulisse and Antonella pointed out that, although it is widely accepted that each of these theories is able to give a general explanation for certain observable, measurable realities in physics, they are irreconcilable. It has so far been impossible to unite these two different theories into one unitary theory.

They quoted a paper by Luigi Fantappie (1901 - 1956) - 'The Unitary Theory of the Physical and Biological World', first published in 1942 and suggested that we live in a super causal universe, governed by both causality and 'retrocausality', and that life is caused by the future. This concept would explain 'BLACK HOLES' where the light cannot get out because it is going backwards in time. Although the presence of black holes explains a great deal about why the galaxies do not fall apart, mechanistic scientific theory as no explanation as to what they are and how they come to exist. Einstein used the term 'supercausality'. Being aware of the conflict that this was to promote between science and religion, he chose not to pursue this path.

Ulisse and Antonella reported that there were a great number of other experiments which proved to a high degree of statistical certainty that precognition does occur and can be measured.

They suggested that:

- the brain is linked to consciousness: the visible, sensory, physical, causal, entropy, disorder, asymptropy, things that are objectively quantifiable
- the heart is more associated with the autonomic nervous system and the qualities of intuitiveness, syntropy, precognition, subjectivity, feelings, and super-consciousness, the invisible - it is a kind of life force that draws things together, creates evolution, order and complexity

'CONFLUENCE' is the joining together of these two opposites which could be described as a state of peace.

Prof Marilyn Monk***Conscious Constructive Control of the Self: Epigenetic Gene Programming and the Alexander Technique***

What determines who we are:

- genes we inherit – nature?
- genetic reprogramming (genes can be turned on and off)?

Genetic reprogramming can still have an impact on future generations, including epigenetic modification from ancestors, pregnancy, birth and upbringing, all of which can affect us in many different ways. For example, example of this is found in the children born to Dutch women who were starved by the Nazis during the war. These children became obese as the result of epigenetic changes that their mothers experienced as a biological response to help them store and make the most of every bit of food that they were able to find.

In the modern world, many people eat too many high energy foods loaded with sugar, fat and refined carbohydrates, and deficient in essential nutrients. In addition, they undertook insufficient physical activity. This has resulted in one in three children now being labelled (in a medical sense) as obese. We still have the genes for growing feathers and producing reptilian scales.

She explained that we only express a tiny little bit of our genetic inheritance. We still have the genes for growing feathers and producing reptilian scales. Do we have a say in it? What regulates the epigenetic influences of turning genes on and off (Lamarckian inheritance) What about our inner environments?

IMAGINATION and BELIEFS bring about profound changes in our health and wellbeing. Our bodies are constantly changing in relation to what we are thinking, imagining or remembering. In fact, these thoughts can have as big a response neurologically and physiologically as the actual external physical environment. Many of the most prevalent diseases in our society today - such as cardiovascular disease, stroke, cancer, obesity, diabetes and depression - are mostly the result of lifestyle choices, and they are completely overwhelming the NHS. She asserted that we can change our responses. We are able to re-programme our genes via epigenetic processes that are driven by the mind. So why are such turning points so rare? What are the barriers to change?

- HABITS: behaving like stimulus response machines
- FAULTY SENSORY PERCEPTIONS: what is familiar feels right.

Marilyn believes that we do have some freedom. "We are what we think" and that we tend to get what we focus on. A directed mind is the most powerful resource that we have. It can be as powerful as any drug and certainly can enable us to change the future.

She was a living example to us all. She said that we should never use the word "TRY" as it causes stress in the body. Being no spring chicken and despite suffering from a number of medical conditions, she had found the Alexander Technique enabled her to overcome much of the pain and disability in a way that enabled her to carry on with her life and work. Without it, she would have been confined to bed.

In her opinion, "Modern medical science does not give attention to people getting better. It tends to study what goes wrong".

Professor Alfred Mele***Free Will and Neuroscience: What Do Old-School and New-Wave Studies Show?***

With the help of a fascinating series of slides Professor Mele was able to build up a picture of the many interrelated factors that have a bearing on influencing how we think about things and relate to the choices, decisions, actions and responses that are influencing our behaviours from moment to moment.

All the interconnecting arrows involved in explaining the way in which our beliefs, the selection of information, the way in which it flows and the kinds of information that are involved in taking the actions that we do was clearly illustrated.

I have to admit that the amount of information presented and the speed in which the slides were shown did not give me the time to make notes that would in any way do this thought provoking presentation justice. But in summery they seemed to amount to:

INTENTION -> ACTION -> OUTCOME

These factors could in turn be influenced by MOTIVATION. Collectively thee elements could lead to a SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT. At different stages in the process, the influences of CHOICE and BELIEF could have a directional effect on the outcome.



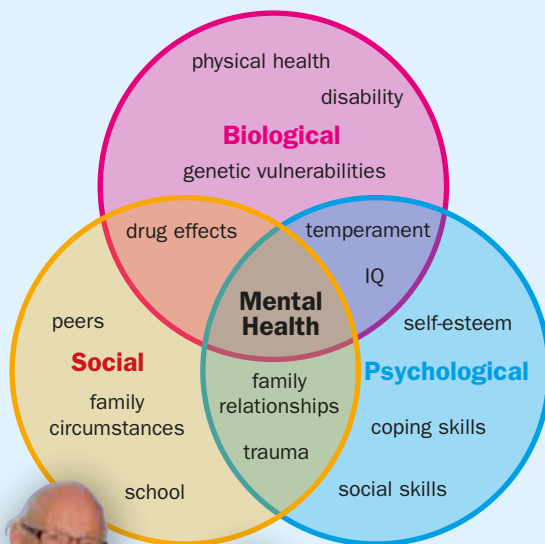
Dr Alison Armstrong, Present Minds
Paying Attention: How Mindfulness Relates to Habits

MINDFULNESS: PAST < - > PRESENT < - > FUTURE:

- present moment awareness
- attention
- empowering
- self-sufficient
- improves judgment
- facilitates choices
- Is secular but of religious origin
- BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL*
- relates to mind, body and environment

PRE-CONTEMPLATION < - > CONTEMPLATION < - >
 PREPARATION < - > ACTION < - > MAINTENANCE

The biopsychosocial model of health



Professor Richard Davidson
Educating the Mind and Heart: Perspectives from Contemplative Neuroscience

Altruistic behaviour changes the brain. It improves people's health physically and biochemically. Markers for inflammation were much less for meditators.

"Memories are constructs. You can go back to them and change their variance."

Research on 'delayed gratification' - the Marshmallow Experiment being the classic, most well-known study on this subject.

Hard work and determination is a much better predictor of academic success than measures of IQ.

The quality of self-control in children was a good predictor of future health and happiness as well as material success. One study found that, by the age of 32 years, such children were on a yearly basis an average \$65,000 better off than their counterparts who had not learned these habits as children.

People who went through a quality pre-school programme of 'kindness education' for 12 weeks improved their ability to cope with delayed gratification and made significant improvements in their school grades compared to controls. The qualities of compassion and perseverance both improved.

It was estimated that \$1 spent in this way was resulted in a \$7 saving of public investment. The authorities refused to respond or to take this evidence on board.





The Divided Brain and its Deeper Meaning: The SMN in Jamaica, 2016

Alison Elliot

Frenchman's Cove has never been simply an exotic holiday resort. It was the setting for a film of *Lord of the Flies*; it was a hideaway for those burdened with the pressures of celebrity status; it was the place where Ian Fleming wrote his first James Bond novel; and, for over a decade, it has been the setting for an annual conference hosted by the Scientific and Medical Network. After a couple of hurricanes and decades of mixed fortunes, it has an air of shabby chic, but the accommodation is still generous and the setting is still spectacular – lush vegetation, expansive parkland, herons and egrets dotted over the grass and Caribbean waves lapping its beach.

The 2016 conference was led by **Iain McGilchrist**, author of *The Master and his Emissary*, which is a study of the way in which the two halves of our brain work together, the dominance of the particular functions of the left hemisphere, and the reflection of that imbalance on our thinking about social and cultural matters. Iain himself has a big brain: he has the distinction of having three times been a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, and his academic interests have ranged from English Literature to Neuroscience. His first loves were philosophy and theology and he spent twenty years as a psychiatrist. He was therefore well placed to lead a wide ranging and rich discussion over the eight days of the conference.

To begin with, he set about pinning down the different functions served by the two hemispheres. This isn't straightforward, because the brain operates as a whole and, in normal circumstances, the hemispheres work together. However, in certain clinical cases, such as stroke patients, the dominant features of the hemispheres become apparent because one hemisphere is not functioning normally, and Iain used cases from his clinical experience to illustrate the points he was making.

A strong picture emerged of the different difficulties stroke patients had, depending on which hemisphere had been impaired. From the evidence, you could see that the left hemisphere dealt with rationality, while the right dealt with reason; syntax was the province of the left, while poetry and metaphor needed the right; the right conjured up the big picture and took account of context, while the left got on with sorting out logic. This was neatly summed up in the reactions to a false syllogism: *all monkeys climb trees, porcupines are monkeys, so porcupines climb trees*. People with a right hemisphere stroke, who were relying on their left brain, thought the conclusion must be right, because the form of the argument was OK, while left hemisphere patients concluded it was wrong, because they did a reality check and realised that porcupines are not monkeys.

Once you recognise that these differences adhere to a pattern, you begin to see that many of the difficulties we encounter in contemporary Western civilisation look suspiciously like a situation where our left hemispheres have become too dominant, as if they have forgotten that they need the balancing properties of the right. Art, music and religion are often regarded as optional extras to lives dominated by rules, logic and a universalism that does not value the particularity of human experience. In the remaining sessions, Iain explored several dilemmas, often with a philosophical slant, within this framework.

For example, where do we look for truth, and what light is shed on the search by this dominance of left hemisphere thinking? For many people, science has a monopoly on delivering truth, with its emphasis on precision and on verifiable measurement – all good left hemisphere qualities. This is OK as far as it goes, but there are limits to the kinds of questions science can answer; it cannot answer questions of purpose, which are more the province of the right brain. Even objective recording of data is problematic. It relies on adopting the decontextualised perspective of a nobody, which is a very specialised way of thinking and requires to be reinterpreted before it can be taken further. Reason itself is bookended by intuition and is often used to justify assumptions that we do not realise limit our understanding. A more balanced approach to truth sees it as an encounter, something we pursue, rather than possess, and this calls for the broad perspective of the humanities.

This need to escape from the limitations of left brain thinking was then taken up in a session exploring God, time and space. Iain described the left brain as a hall of mirrors, from which there is no immediate exit. But systems-thinking tells us that explanation needs to be contextualised, whether we are dealing with community issues or physics. The two hemispheres deal in different kinds of knowledge, variously captured by the distinctions between *connaître* and *savoir*, or between *mythos* and *logos* and it is important to be able to move smoothly from the one to the other.

Overvaluing one kind of knowledge is not a recent phenomenon, as he demonstrated through an analysis of classical paradoxes, such as Achilles and the tortoise, the ship of Theseus and the Cretan liar. A paradox is an indication that you need to adjust your cognitive set and these paradoxes can be resolved by recognising that the whole is not just the sum of its parts, an illusion to which left brain thinking is susceptible. Indeed, clinical studies indicate that perceiving movement as flow, rather than a sequence of points is a hemispheric difference.

In the next session, Iain challenged the adequacy of regarding the brain as a machine, rather than as part of a whole person, emphasising again the limitations that the machine metaphor imposes on our understanding of life. For a machine, a proposition and its opposite cannot be entertained together, but life and nature are characterised by abundant diversity, where incompatibility of ideas and experiences can be creative of new things. Life is a dance, not a set of rules.

Finally, in much the same vein, Iain championed the power of the negative. Out of depression and adversity can come something positive; boundaries which are not too rigid can sustain freedom; beautiful sculptures such as Michelangelo's prisoners are formed by taking material away, not by putting it together; evolution can be seen as the outcome of failed experiments. The asymmetry of the brain is important because it allows for the slight imbalance that enables development to begin.

As you can see, the topic of the conference set the scene for rich discussion, both in the scheduled sessions and over meals and excursions. The day started with opportunities



for meditative exercises and there were additional papers presented on Jungian archetypes and crop circles. As participants, we had a wide range of backgrounds and interests – various forms of psychology, finance, renewable energy, biochemistry, medicine, organic farming – and bonded well over the nine days we were together. Conversation flowed smoothly over lunch at the beach café, in the bus that took us into Port Antonio to raid the cash machine, and in restaurants in the evenings. We danced to live music in Woody's Burger Bar, watched mesmerised by the humming birds at Goblin Hill, relaxed on rafts as we punted lazily down the Rio Grande River and got totally wet negotiating the waterfall at Reach Falls, despite being so elderly! After dinner, we congregated in one of the villas, sang to Di's guitar, drank Pina Coladas and Rum Punch and tried to learn rounds and madrigals. All parts of our brains were fully exercised!

On returning home, the discussions stayed with many of us. The idea of left brain thinking being too dominant offers a new way of conceptualising social and political challenges and I found myself seeing it everywhere, in the regulations for essay marking, in the sterility of the debate about Europe, or in a performance of *The Crucible*. Our discussions at the conference had not embarked on exploring how, as a society, we might escape the imbalance that Iain's analysis had identified. Yet, on my return, I was glad to find places where many of the problems we had identified were appreciated and steps were being taken to resolve them. For example, the International Futures Forum has developed a framework for considering how transformative innovation can be introduced into systems that are locked in a dominant model of thinking and action. And a recent study of co-production in public policy design echoed many of the critiques of power and the emphasis on relational processes that kept recurring in our conference discussions. These are examples from my professional world, but I expect other conference colleagues have also found the ideas of the Jamaica interlude resonating in their own lives. It was a hugely enriching experience and thanks are due to David Lorimer, Di Clift, Iain McGilchrist and the Scientific and Medical Network for making it possible.

McGilchrist, Iain, *The Master and his Emissary: the divided brain and the making of the Western world*, 2009, Yale University Press, New Haven and London

Durose, Catherine and Richardson, Liz, *Designing Public Policy for Co-production: theory, practice and change*, 2016, Policy Press, Bristol and Chicago

International Futures Forum,
www.internationalfuturesforum.com/ **Dr Alison Elliot OBE**

Alison Elliot has an academic background in mathematics, linguistics and psychology. She has represented the Church of Scotland in various ecumenical contexts, concerned particularly with issues of the interface between religion and social policy, and has chaired the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. She is currently Acting Director of the Centre for Theology and Public Issues at the University of Edinburgh's School of Divinity



Report on AHSSSE/ SMN conference

27th June 2015

John Franklin

The Scientific and Medical Network joined with the Alister Hardy Society for the Study of Spiritual Experience in an Open Dialogue on the theme, *Science, Religion and Spirituality: Moving towards a Post-Materialist Paradigm?* at the Catholic Chaplaincy in St Aldates, Oxford on Saturday 27th June 2015. The speakers were **Prof. Bernard Carr**, Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy at Queen Mary University, Chairman of the Scientific and Medical Network, and author of *Universe or Multiverse?* (Cambridge University Press); and **Prof. Jeff Astley**, Hon. Professor, Department of Theology and Religion and Professional Fellow of St. Chad's College Durham University and Alister Hardy Professor of Religious and Spiritual Experience at Glyndwr University, Wrexham. The day was opened by **Rhonda Riachi** and **Rowena Rudkin**, the Chairs of the AHSSSE Oxford & Cotswold Group and London Group, who welcomed the speakers, the chairs for the day, **Dr. Peter Fenwick** and **Andrew Burns**, and guests.

The conference was based on a report, a *Manifesto for a Post-Materialist Science*, which resulted from the findings of a group of internationally known scientists from a variety of scientific fields who had come together to challenge the materialist worldview at an Inter-national Summit on Post-Materialist Science in February 2014. This summary report asserted that mind represents an aspect of reality as primordial as the physical world, is fundamental in the universe, and cannot be derived from matter and reduced to anything more basic; that minds are apparently unbounded, and may unite in ways suggesting a unitary one Mind that includes all individual, single minds; that the evidence suggests the survival of consciousness following bodily death - and "that scientists should not be afraid to investigate spirituality and spiritual experiences since they represent a central aspect of human existence", which was the view of Sir Alister Hardy FRS, which led to his founding of the Religious Experience Research Centres that bear his name. (The conclusions of the International Summit were published

in the *Scientific & Medical Network Journal*, *Network Review*, Summer 2014)

In addressing the subject, Prof. Jeff Astley, speaking first, in his talk *Beyond Science and Nature? Beyond Belief?*, explored what has been called 'The New Frontier of Religion and Science' – the territory marked out by developments in neuroscience, and by the metaphysical and theological claims about non-material transcendence. He related this debate to arguments about the nature of spiritual and religious experience, and other challenges posed by reductionist interpretations of science.

Bernard Carr, in an illustrated talk which followed, *Can Science Accommodate Mind and Spirituality?* argued that, indeed, it should. Modern physics claims to be close to a "Theory of Everything" and this would underlie all science in a reductionist perspective. But this neglects consciousness, mental and spiritual phenomena usually assumed to be beyond science. However, indications from physics itself suggest that consciousness is a fundamental rather than incidental feature of the world, and that some sort of post-materialist scientific paradigm is required to accommodate this.

The talks were followed by a dialogue between the two speakers in which they questioned each other on points of relevance ending up agreeing that a post-materialist scientific paradigm and a change of perspective is required.

The afternoon was open to questions and contributions from the floor, put to a Panel comprising the two speakers and Dr. Peter Fenwick and Andrew Burns. Led and chaired by Dr. Fenwick, a most stimulating and interesting discussion ensued.

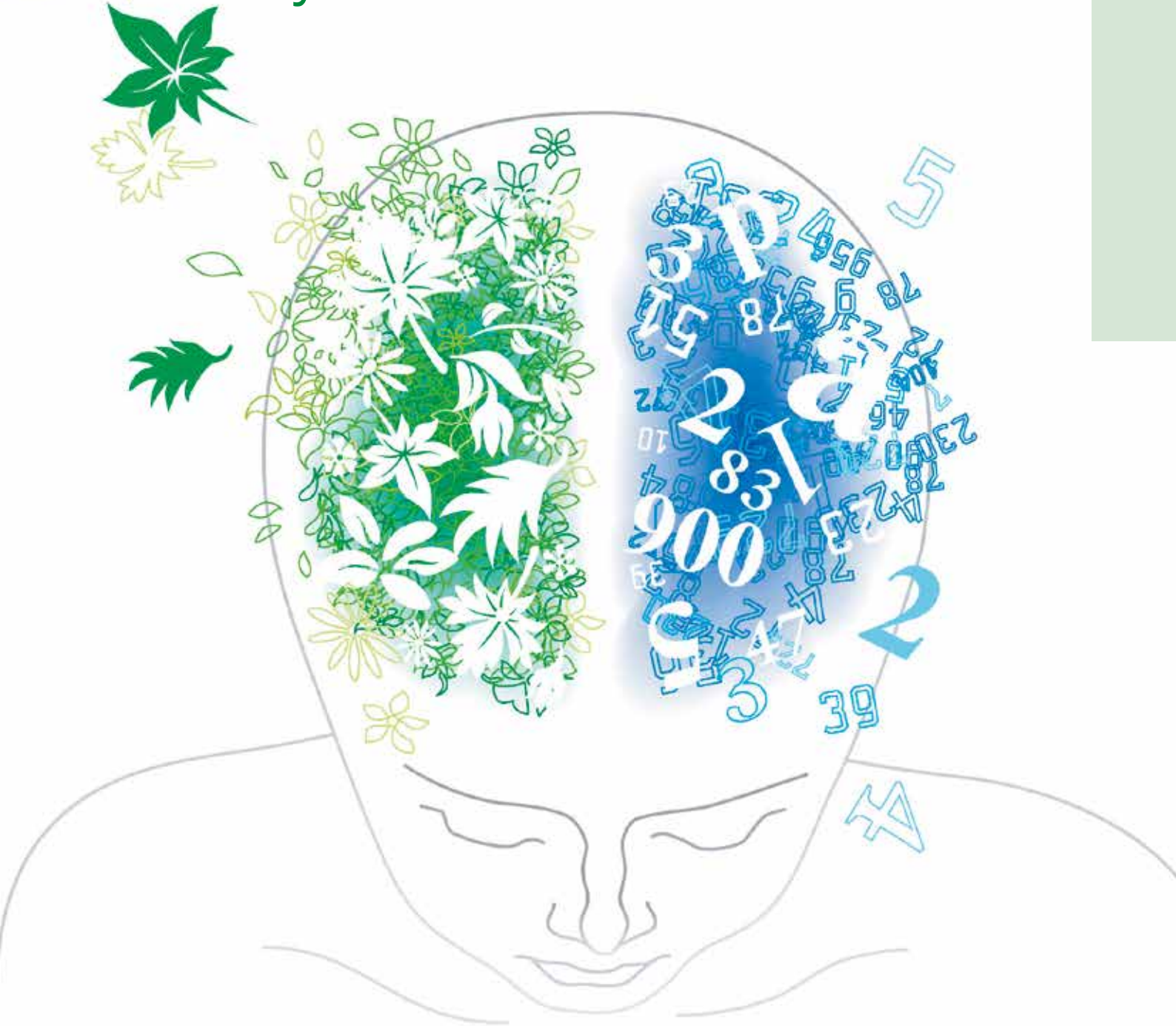
John Franklin AHT.



Note: Since this conference, the AHSSSE has been merged into the Alister Hardy Trust, its activities and membership now continuing under the name AHT.



Professor Jeff Astley – Beyond Science and Nature? Beyond Belief?



Prof. Astley is an academic theologian with a long-established interest in the debate about the frontier between science and religion. His lecture was a critically supportive response to the Manifesto for a Post-Materialist Science, the outcome of an international summit in February 2014. The conclusions of that summit had been published in the Network Review (Summer 2014) and were distributed to the Oxford conference attendees.

Prof. Astley's opening remarks addressed the meaning of his title and the generally difficult relationship between theologians and scientists. Like other prepositions, 'beyond' indicates direction rather than position. Other key words like 'transcendence' and even 'supernatural' are also often matters of degree. Theologians and scientists have different methods and theories, and theologians are now cautious about commenting on the work of scientists. But when

scientists stray into the area of metaphysical beliefs, this sounds to theologians like a call to arms. The Manifesto for a Post-Materialist Science argues against the concept of nature as something merely material or physical and argues, like Christian theologians from their own perspective, for a place for mind – even if (in this world) it is not wholly distinct from matter.

Ian Ramsey, Professor of Philosophy of Religion in Oxford in the 1950s and 60s, wrote of the existence of a range of ‘Mores’ – in a pattern, a person, a moral imperative or God – that we may discern as transcending the medium through which they are revealed (a medium which provides the metaphors or models, from what we see ‘with our eyes of flesh’, for what cannot be literally seen or spoken of). Like para 16 of the Post-Materialist Manifesto, Ramsey insisted on acknowledging ‘the empirical’ and taking a view that is ‘inclusive of matter’, while finding room for mind and spirit as well as ‘part of the core fabric’ and ‘a basic constituent’ of the universe. This differs from the critiques of evolutionary theory from religious conservatives or sneering social scientists based on an unworthy contempt for the material and our ‘brute origins’. Such a viewpoint is equally out of place in scientific understanding as it is in the Abrahamic religions.

Our basic debate is between the ‘moreness of mind’ recognised by post-materialism and the ‘nothing buttery’ of a scientific materialism. Prof. Astley is firmly of the former persuasion: for him, mind matters; it is the most familiar and meaningful feature of our lives. Soul, Self and Mind all relate to subjective experience. The ‘hard problem of consciousness’ is ‘how does it feel like to be me?’ And how does that sense of being me relate to the grey jelly inside my skull?

Philosophers and theologians down the ages have tussled with the mind-body problem. In recent times, John Searle has argued for a ‘first person ontology’ that is not reducible to any third person ontology. But his biological naturalism equates the status of consciousness with other system-level emergent properties such as solidity or transparency: powers that are entirely caused by the physical elements of the system. The Christian philosophers and scientists Nancey Murphy, Warren Brown, Malcolm Jeeves and Arthur Peacocke embrace a similar ‘non-reductive physicalism’: a form of monism for which physical reality is the only substance. In their perspective, too, consciousness emerges through the organisation of parts of the body (brain) at higher levels of evolution, but it is essentially an organization of the physical.

Prof. Astley commented that some of these views lie close to the ‘double-aspect’ theory of Spinoza and what others call ‘neutral monism’ – a ‘duality without dualism’. It may even imply a pan-psychism (the view that all matter involves some sort of consciousness), although Thomas Nagel complains of this position’s ‘faintly sickening odour of something put together in a metaphysical laboratory’. Keith Ward has argued that in reductive physicalism, the physicalism ‘has in effect been given up’, and some sort of dualism ‘seems inescapable’. In any case, theists must allow for the possibility of at least one consciousness existing without a body, namely God. For Prof. Astley, it seems that substance dualism is still hanging on, ‘if only by theistic fingernails’.

Today, however, many theologians hope for the re-creation of the whole person in a different space-time universe, rather than the survival of a disembodied soul. This is despite the coherent conceptualisation given to the latter view by another Oxford philosopher, Henry Price, who argued that we may experience and act in an afterlife in ways analogous to our experiencing and acting in our dreams. In his *Evolution of the Soul*, Richard Swinburne defends a ‘soft dualism’, despite the high level of correlation between brain events and mental events in this life: ‘mere correlation does not explain’, he insists. Price suggested that the soul might work like a light bulb, which in life requires to be screwed into some external power source to function, but may be moved to another ‘socket’ (reincarnation,

resurrection) or even be powered by God without any physical brain at all. Such ideas are consistent with the interactionist dualism supported by Sir Karl Popper, Sir John Eccles, Sir Roger Penrose and others (some of whom argue for a mechanism for mind-brain interaction based on quantum mechanics). Dualism is still a live option, then, though a minority one.

Moving on to consider religious experience, Prof. Astley said that there was now an impressive body of evidence to support Alister Hardy’s sense that this is a significant aspect of ‘the natural history’ of human life. Although Hardy did not think that we should ever have ‘a science of the inner essence of spirituality’, he would have rejected the current claims of a ‘neurotheology’ that identifies the causes of such experience entirely within the brain. But could the same argument not be made for our sense experience, with the conclusion that the world around us is unreal?

But the problem of the objectivity of religious experience is more difficult than it is for sense experience, as we cannot apply the same tests against illusion. Nevertheless, Swinburne, William Alston and others have convincingly argued the case for the rationality of beliefs based on religious experience. Prof. Astley listed four particular points of difference between sense experience and religious experience that should still give us pause.

1. Spiritual experience is not universal; perhaps because it may require a special capacity in the receiver.
2. People may also have to be in a special ‘spiritual condition’ to have religious experiences, though this goes against much evidence from survey work – unless human need or distress may be regarded as a spiritual condition.
3. Agents are free to perform or withhold revelatory experiences, hence such experiences may not be repeatable or testable in laboratory conditions. For this reason, an exact science of the activity of the mind will probably never be possible.
4. Agent explanations are always incomplete: we ask *why* as well as *how* they happen. We expect to find personal intentions, purposes and motivations behind such experiences.

Prof. Astley pondered the application of the above to reductionism: as a *research strategy* that understands higher levels through knowledge of lower ones. He welcomed John Searle’s claim that there is no such thing as ‘the scientific world’; there is just a world that we must do our best to explain. Therefore “science” does not name an ontological domain; it names rather a set of methods’. And science implies no metaphysics. Raymond Tallis thinks that philosophical positions such as behaviourism confuse a methodological decision – to make science easier or more fruitful or more scientific – and a discovered truth about the world’. Whatever can be caught by the scientific net cannot be God; yet positing a ‘God of the Gaps’ to explain explanatory puzzles in nature can lead to bad science and bad theology – as, for example, with Intelligent Design Theory.

Can science ‘do subjectivity’? This is not seen to be the job of science as currently constructed, and Prof. Astley still wonders whether it should be the task even of a reconstructed science. According to the theologian John Haught, there may be no objection to ‘the fact that science itself cannot talk about subjectivity’ as long as we can make room for it with a ‘stereoscopic’ philosophical vision (such as was embraced by Whitehead, Teilhard de Chardin, Polanyi or Lonergan) that ‘embraces both the inside and the outside of things’. This wider empirical *approach* is one that would be more honest, objective and true to the facts. We want researchers to be open: observing effects, and even accounts of unusual causes, with an open mind. But we don’t want to endorse gullibility, but rather *critically* openness. For a window stuck open is as bad as one that is stuck closed.

One Mind

Richard Nissen

Albert Schweitzer

Dr Alan Sanderson

In 2015/16 winter issue of The Science and Medical Network Review Dr Larry Dossey wrote an article called: "Schrödinger's One Mind and its relevance to Religion and Healing". I think that this is very relevant to our thinking about how healing works. I have found that I am a healer and I can make a difference especially to how people experience and deal with pain. I find that quashing migraines is easy.

Quantum Non-locality is now recognised as a fundamental property of the Universe which we might express as weird "Action at a Distance". There is mounting evidence that all living creatures experience the oneness of the Universe: "Universal Consciousness". The quantum world is a world of now, there is no time lag on action, all is now. We feel this when we do remote healing where we feel we are with the patient there and then wherever they are, everything is now.

The mental and physical fields of living things together are interleaved. It is interesting how brain waves cohere in meditating people. For those who meditate and operate in the spiritual world there is much evidence that they too are accessing the Universal Consciousness which is, I believe, described as the Oneness by the aborigines and what many would consider to be an aspect of God. Indeed St John uses just the words you would use to describe all this if you had never seen a computer:

*In the beginning was the Word,
and the word was with God and the
Word was God. The same was in the
beginning with God. All things were made
by him; and without him was not anything
made that was made*

John 1 1-3

As Dossey describes: Schrödinger proposed a concept of one mind, in which consciousness is transpersonal, universal, collective, and infinite in space and time: therefore immortal and eternal. Here is an expression of one single consciousness. On birth the child is imbued with this eternal consciousness and in death the body dies but the spirit lives on, part again of the universal consciousness. We always share in this one consciousness so that each of us is actually interconnected to this oneness and by extension to everyone and everything else. This means that we plug into it at all the time as we are part of it.

Suddenly the question is not how it works, because as we are all part of the one (universal information field) getting answers to questions anywhere, any time, is not only possible but self-evident. The difficulty is to ask the right questions and allow the answers to be delivered to you. This is the art of divining and the art of focusing intent on what you look for or desire.

I was confused as a healer and as a dowser as to how this could be done especially at a distance. It is quite normal to send healing to people far away just by focusing your mind (intent) on the patient and then sending healing to them.

The more I thought about this, I felt that this was identical to prayer, so perhaps, healing is prayer, as practised by churches from time immemorial. I am sure we would not do it if it did not work. I believe that it does work and there has been research that people, loved and prayed for, do better especially if they are ill and need help.

Recently at a seminar at the annual British Dowsing conference in September, I asked experienced dowsers to track the annual autumn migration of cuckoos, from Europe to the Congo basin in Africa, and I was astonished that nearly all found the route and the destination. I think that they all plugged into a "Universal Consciousness or Universal Information Field" otherwise how could this work? You can see more on this on www.animalnav.org.

Vlatco Vedral in "Decoding Reality – the universe as quantum information", describes the universe in terms of a quantum computer that stores all the information that has ever existed in the universe: the universal Information Field. It is typical of quantum mechanics to deliver answers to eternal questions in a completely astonishing and counter intuitive way.

So in summary, we are all part of a Universal Consciousness. This means we are all one and connected. As we are all connected we can deliver all the hope and help that we should, just by concentrating on listening to others and giving our love and concern to all we can.

From Richard Nissen: Richard@nissens.co.uk

Albert Schweitzer

From Alan Sanderson: Dr Schweitzer and his Staff

Trudi and I were glad to see the Schweitzer article. However, there's an inaccuracy which we thought we'd bring to your notice as it fails to do justice to the way in which Schweitzer treated his staff.

The case reported in which Schweitzer came by night to see Trudi, whose patient had just died, was not as reported. The patient was not an adult in the main hospital, but a girl of 5 or 6 who Trudi took to a room close to Schweitzer's quarters, because in Trudi's own room the dying child made so much noise that other nurses could not sleep.

The incident illustrates the fact that Schweitzer gave his staff a lot of personal responsibility to manage patients as they thought fit. He was an autocrat who learned to trust his staff. In a hospital with only a handful of nurses and no night staff there was no other way.



Dr Larry Dossey becomes an Honorary Member

Dr Larry Dossey was awarded Honorary Membership while speaking at the Mystics and Scientists this year. I read his first book *Space,*

Time and Medicine with great excitement in 1983 – here was a physician who had understood the nature of nonlocality was steeped in David Bohm, whose work *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* I had also recently read. Since then he has produced a series of best-selling books and is a leading voice in mind-body medicine although he himself has moved beyond this label to nonlocal medicine.

Larry is an internal medicine physician, former Chief of Staff of Medical City Dallas Hospital, and former co-chairman of the Panel on Mind/Body Interventions, National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, National Institutes of Health. He is executive editor of the peer-reviewed journal *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*. He is the author of twelve books on the role of consciousness and spirituality in health, which have been translated into languages around the world. His most recent book is *ONE MIND: How Our Individual Mind Is Part of a Greater Consciousness and Why It Matters*. He lectures around the world. Dr. Dossey lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA, with Barbara, his wife, who is a nurse-educator and the author of many award-winning books. www.dosseydossey.com



Prof Marilyn Monk becomes a Vice-President

Marilyn Monk is an academic research scientist in the fields of molecular biology, early development and cancer. She is Emeritus Professor of Molecular

Embryology at UCL London and, previously, Honorary Professor at University of Melbourne, and Adjunct Professor at Monash University in Australia. Her research covers DNA replication and repair in bacteria, cell signalling and aggregation of slime mould amoebae, and gene expression and its regulation by epigenetic modification in mammalian development. Among her discoveries are mechanisms of epigenetic programming of gene expression, deprogramming and re-programming in development, epigenetic environmental adaptation (Lamarckian inheritance), and embryonic gene expression in cancers.

Her group developed a wide range of single cell molecular techniques to study gene expression, gene modification, and gene mutation at the sensitivity of the single cell. Clinical applications include early diagnosis of genetic disease, stem cells and regenerative medicine, and a search for a possible cancer vaccine targeting embryonic gene expression in cancers. In addition to her scientific career, she has a longstanding interest in the arts, psychology and mysticism. She is qualified as a Psychosynthesis Counsellor and an Alexander Technique Teacher. Marilyn has been a member of SMN since the 80's, a member of the SMN Board for 7 years, and a regular contributor to the SMN review.

MEMBERS' NEWS

William Bloom - Breakthrough in Spiritual Education



With colleagues in the Spiritual Companions Trust and the Crossfields Institute, William has recently received approval from Ofqual for their new qualification called **Diploma in Practical Spirituality and Wellness**. Its focus is experiential and practice-based. It is aimed at everyone

interested in spirituality and wellbeing, from archbishops to hairdressers, and of course everyone involved in education, care and development. They want to normalise spirituality so that it is as natural a part of everyday culture as diet or exercise.

The course is structured into four units;

- Context and Science
- Person-Centred Spiritual Practice
- Reflective Practice
- Spiritual Care

At its heart is daily practice: connecting with the energy/wonder of life, mindful self-management and service. On top of this foundation of daily practice, we then build an understanding of the science of the health and wellbeing benefits, how to communicate about these benefits and how best to give spiritual care in daily life. www.spiritualcompanions.org



Conversations with Higher Consciousness

David and Jean Ingman

We are David and Jean Ingman, a retired professional couple living in Sydney, Australia, where we co-ordinate the Sydney section of the Network. We lost our son in 1994. A series of happenings

shortly afterwards convinced us that somewhere, somehow, he still existed. Twenty years of research and personal experience have followed. The material contained in the website <http://realityandyou.com/> is the result.

The material contained in this site is in book form and was received during thirty-five hours of conversation on an interviewer, interviewee basis between Jean and David, with Jean asking questions and David "speaking" the answers.

The main theme is that the "I" is a perception, from the "observed" position, of a projection of an idea by a conglomerate of consciousness acting in concert, the observer, which results in a sense of self - from the implicate to the explicate.

ATTENTION MEMBERS!

Personal Numbers and Office Procedures

Please help your administration office to run smoothly and so help you efficiently:

- when your details change (address, telephone number, email address etc.) please make sure we know
- use your membership number whenever you contact us, and write it onto all correspondence, conference booking slips, subscription forms and orders for books, services etc.
- book early for conferences - it helps you get a place
- ensure cheques are made out correctly to Scientific & Medical Network; for conferences and orders: always add (legibly!) details of what it's for and membership number on back, even when accompanied by a booking form
- remember we're a network, and it often takes time for all relevant people to be contacted so when making requests give us time to respond helpfully (and always remember to tell us who you are - we sometimes get forms back with no name at all!)
- help us save money; whenever possible pay in £ sterling and remember to gift aid when you make a payment (subscription, conference fees, etc..) - it maximises funds available for more important things.

Office hours are 10.00am to 5.00pm Monday - Friday. Please leave a message if no one is available to take your call. We will get back to you as soon as we can.



Martin Lockley – The Island Artist

Martin and his half sister Ann have produced a charming book about the artist Doris Lockley, who was Ann's mother. Doris and their father lived on a remote island off the coast of Pembrokeshire during the 1930s. The book describes their simple life among the birds, a successful documentary made about a neighbouring island and the various publications of their father Ronald with illustrations and initial sketches. As they say, it evokes a bygone age and a rugged way of life. Further information from Martin on martin.lockley@ucdenver.edu



Andrew Bell – Words, Words, Words

Like many readers, Andrew has spent much of his life on a spiritual journey. I enjoyed his collection of poetry, of which a short sample follows:

Morning

*A late awakening
it was, this morning:
caught up
in the mind-net
I call
my private world;
lost
but willing, once again
to surrender;
to hitch a light-shaft
to the edge
of all this knowing;
to fall
into the holy ground
where nothing begins
and nothing ends;
where the constellations
play through the life
and all is praise.*

Peaceful Reflections 1994-2015 – Eric Gladwin

Eric is now in his 99th year and can no longer come to our meetings in person. These healing poems and prayers act as an expression of Creation's invisible drives for healing and peace. You can see more of his poems on the web at: www.ericgladwin.com

Just...Dandelions and a Blue Sky

*The sky was deep clear blue, free of scarrings by men
And the thrush poured out song in sheer gladness of Being
Pure in the innocence we once had, you see.
And the dandelions I held gently were a sharing of this
With precisioned gold petals holding smaller, within:
And one had its seeds ready, to soar high on the wind,
As perfected expressions of the Maker of All!
And I felt humbled as the Sun's love poured down
As I, just a 'man-scrap' shared THIS, of God's Whole!!!*

Then it flew....



LOCAL GROUP REPORTS

LONDON GROUP



CLAUDIA NIELSEN – 0207 431 1177, claudia@cnielsen.eu

To read reports from other meetings, go to the **REPORTS** page of the London Group page of the Network's website. If you don't live in London but wish to be advised of London events, please drop me an email and I shall add your e-address to the circulation list.

2016 January

We started the year with a presentation by SMN Board member **Paul Kieniewicz**, who is a geologist, astronomer, novelist and the author of *Gaia's Children* and, with Andrew Glazewski, *Harmony of the Universe*. The subject of this evening's talk was *Andrew Glazewski*, priest and physicist, who was seminal in the founding of the *Scientific and Medical Network*. An energetic and charismatic person, Glazewski was interested in the **Science of the Human Field** – which was the title of Paul's talk. He had personal experience of interacting with this field as a healer and wrote a series of papers on the science of this phenomenon.

We heard that Glazewski was born in the Ukraine into a landed gentry family, who had to flee their home during the First World War. Nevertheless, he received the finest education including a degree in physics. He was fond of the good life, which included ladies and parties, but had a religious experience during a retreat at a Carmelite convent, and decided to become a priest. It took him some time to convince his parents of this change of plans, but they eventually gave in. He came to England and during the war was mobilised as a chaplain to the troops and did sustain war injuries. Upon his return to Britain, he took up a post of chaplain to the Polish community in Newton Abbot. During this time, he wrote a number of scientific papers on his theory of the Human Field and submitted them to Dr. Patrick Shackleton, Dean of Postgraduate Medical Studies at the University of Southampton. At some point he heard about George Blaker, and realised that both men shared with him an interest in the greater reality of which the material world is only a part. Realising the benefit of a meeting, he put the two men together and that was the very first step towards the founding of the SMN in 1973. Unfortunately, Andrew died a short while after, following an unexpected and massive heart attack.

Paul first met Glazewski as a young man, on a retreat and although he was a priest, Paul was surprised to hear no mention of God for the first few lectures. This was because Glazewski's focus was first and foremost on human psychology. He talked about the unconscious, which he called *George*, and the 'overconscious', which he called *Peter*. He explained those concepts and expanded on the need as he put it, of dialogue between *George* and *Peter*. Amongst other benefits he would say, this allows for an integration of our intuitive abilities. Turning to the physical body, Glazewski identified three modalities of the biological field which all living beings possess: the electromagnetic field, the sound (acoustic) field and the electrostatic field. Underpinning and interconnecting everything, he postulated a non-local, primary field, with which to explain ESP, distant healing etc. To understand how we can interact with these fields, his theory maintains that we distinguish objects with our perception of the *proportionality* of those objects. Music can explain the basic concept; the notes form a set of proportions and as we listen to the flow, we can distinguish the *proportionalities* of the various tones which create the musical harmony. In healing, the use of imagination enables the healer to focus on the *proportions* of a particular person, or something belonging to this person. Based on these *proportionalities*, even at a distance, the healer uses his imagination and feelings to perceive the smooth flow of energy from an inner organ to the field and back again. When this flow is interrupted, there is disease. Healing therefore is about clearing blockages. Distance healing is possible because of the interconnection of the primary field and because our mind is non-local. The language of the Implicate Order of David Bohm he says, is the best way of understanding the theory of this process.



February

This month we welcomed **Max Velmans** who is Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Goldsmiths, University of London and the author of *Understanding Consciousness* (2009) and *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness* (2007) as well as some 100 publications on the

topic of consciousness. This evening Max explored the question - *How do we Know What is Real?* and started by pointing out the two basic ways we use to apprehend reality, direct experience and rationality. Bertrand Russell described it as *knowing by acquaintance* and *knowing by description*. But these modes of knowing can be challenged: which of them is more trustworthy? The tradition of this dual mode of knowing goes back to the ancient Greeks where the camp was divided between the rationalists and empiricists. In reality as we know, we need both modalities.

One further perspective on how we know what we know looks at where we place our attention. If our attention is placed outside of ourselves, we see that knowledge as 'objective'. And if inside, the knowledge is 'subjective'. Either way, says Max, we are one step removed from reality. We make a representation of the external world, and to explain his point, Max went on to show the model he developed, in which a subject observes a cat in the outside world, and relies on the representation of the cat in his mind (shown in the model, as his brain) to apprehend the observation. So we could say that we only know the world through the representations we make, which for most people, most of the time, is fine. The problems however, arise with experiences which are fleeting, or illusory, such as hallucinations, psychotic experiences etc. We then have to face the question, are they real? And this leads to a more generalised question, *what is real?* Ultimately we must accept that our cognitions can be incomplete, inaccurate etc. Accepting this to be the case, must we however always doubt the veracity of anomalous experiences? When neuroscientists look at correlates in the brain to these subjective experiences, they do so with a view to solving the problems of subjectivity in a materialist way.

The weakness of this approach however is that brain states cannot be reduced to subjective experience. Neuroscience cannot access someone else's experience or its antecedents. Correlation does not get us causation. The world we experience is a construction of the physical world we see in our internal psychology at that time. These experiences are real and cannot be reduced to brain states. At the centre of this discussion are mystical experiences. How real are they? For the people who have them they are more real than everyday reality. These states, however, are unexpected and for that reason cannot be subject to rigorous research procedures. They are however ubiquitous and Max went on to quote William James, who described mystical experiences as having the qualities of ineffability, a noetic sense, meaning, imparting knowledge, transience and passivity. So the message is that rational, awake consciousness is one type of consciousness but there are others, and we may make a mistake if we go through life thinking this is the only one credible, and much will be missed if we ignore all the other types and states of consciousness. In our questions sessions we heard two people's interesting, meaningful and profound experiences in altered states, which for them were not only real but transformative. A very interesting discussion followed.



March

We were delighted to host a talk by **Oonagh Harpur** this month, not only because Oonagh is a trustee of the SMN, but especially because her talk brought an unusual and not frequently considered perspective on an important aspect of life, business. She entitled her talk ***Love and Integrity in Business***, a word combination which she says, may be understood as an oxymoron. Oonagh is an accomplished business woman who first became a CEO in 1989 and has served on company boards for over 25 years in executive, advisory and non-executive roles, as CEO, as non-executive Director and as Trustee in the private, public and not for profit sectors. She has worked in the UK and USA in local and global organisations in the energy, health, and financial and professional services sectors.

This evening we were a small group and so started by introducing ourselves and saying something about our interest in the topic of the presentation. Oonagh then asked us what we did during the day with a view to show us something about our understanding of what constitutes work. She then explained the concepts by using a model devised by Hazel Henderson which shows the different types of work in the form of a cake in which the monetised type, incorporating the private and the public sectors, occupies the top layers, and the non-monetised type, including the love economy, the work we do because we care, child care, housework etc. the bottom ones. In between the two, we find the underground economy, cash driven and non accountable. The idea of love as an intrinsic impulse in work, including the monetised sector, occurred to Oonagh in the early 90s and she noted that this principle, manifested in business ethics, community investment, sustainability etc., which made

business more productive and more enjoyable. The way it manifests however, can be contradictory. For example, whilst working in a law firm many years ago, she noticed that figures were not shaping up as expected, ringing alarm bells. She went to the Board and advised them that the business was becoming unsustainable. The executives in the organisation, acknowledging that the company, rather than the employees were the ones who had failed, let go 25 people, not however, before helping each one of them to find an alternative job. This shows that love is also about not keeping people when this will sink the whole. The tone of a business she pointed out, comes from the top.

A few years later Oonagh set up *Love and Integrity in Business Network*, an organisation as the name implies, to explore the impact of these concepts. She invited executives to discuss the topic and learned the following from the chairmen that participated:

- They set direction. They inspire the workforce through purpose and values and align the corporate strategy with it.
- They have a line of sight. They incentivise values-based leadership and behaviour and evaluate those values through the behaviour of the workforce.
- They provide ethical leadership. They use ethical values to guide decisions and promote values-based leadership.

Oonagh went on to explain to us the attitude to staff and business of companies who work along those lines, and used the examples of *Old Mutual Wealth*, *Unilever* and *Walgreens Boots Alliance*. Stanford University, who undertook a long term research (over 40 years), found that companies who operated on the basis of such values outperformed those who did not.

We had a good discussion on the topic, which included hearing about personal experiences which members of the group had of working within companies which did and did not operate with the value of love and integrity in business.

Oonagh has a TedX talk with the title, *Love and Integrity in Business*.

April

In April we hosted a talk by **Dr. Vasileios Basios**, who came especially from Brussels for the occasion. Vasileios is a senior researcher at the Physics of Complex Systems Department of the University of Brussels, conducting interdisciplinary research on self-organisation and emergence in complex matter as well as aspects of the foundations of complex systems. In his early years he worked in the team led by Nobel Prize winner Ilya Prigogine.

This evening Vasileios explored complexity, in a talk titled **What Emerges from Complexities Sciences? (the first harvest)**.

Mechanistic reduction is a useful tool says Vasileios, but it is limiting as a dogma. In this post materialistic era, we have exhausted this dogma, and complexity offers us a radically new approach to science. It reflects on its own foundation and accepts that reality is multifaceted. The world that emerges from this approach is an interconnected and organic whole. It sees the universe as a mindful cosmos rather than as a machine. Vasileios describes it as the third scientific revolution, coming after relativity and quantum physics.

The first move towards complexity can be identified as being the introduction of the concept of the field, which allowed for connection over distance, movement in non-linear way. As part of the wave of new discoveries of the 19th C is Faraday's electromagnetic induction and Maxwell's electromagnetic theory of light. Since then various scientists contributed to the development of the science of complexity, and we heard about and saw some representations of their work on screen. Amongst them there was Poincaré and Hadamard (on dependence on initial conditions of non-linear systems), Zhabotinsky and Belousov (on complexity in chemistry), Mandelbrot (fractals), and Goedel who developed the concept of self-referential non-linear thinking. We watched a fascinating demonstration of this principle based on one of Escher's work and then the beautiful example of self-organisation of flocks of birds in which each individual contributes to the chaotic and reassembly motion of the whole over and over.

Going beyond science, Vasileios used the metaphor of the blind men and the elephant to illustrate the problem we sometimes find when an insight about a part is taken as the truth about the whole. Complexity with its inclusiveness and holistic stance overcomes this difficulty

because it is based on dialogue and consensus. It overcomes for instance what has been called the *Tragedy of Commons*, in which people participate in a communal resource, with the aim of taking out as much as they can without thought for others. This mindset for example, caused the financial crash of 2008. Complexity operates according to different principles, which include reflection, dialogue, holistic thinking. On a personal note, Vasileios gave us an example of complexity in operation by describing a group he participates in, which comes together to share ideas and their implementation. They meet in an old mill near Brussels bringing their individuality in the service of the whole. They call it Mycelium as symbolic of the process envisaged.

In short, Complexity is a new kind of science, a new approach to problem solving. It allows non paradigmatic thinking, with validation and dialogue across disciplines. Metaphor can guide research, such as the idea of an ensouled cosmos. It requires awareness of assumptions, keeping in perspective the origins, nature and aims of the research.

GRAMPIAN GROUP – NICOLA MILLER AND PAUL KIENIEWICZ

15th January

Unearthing the Past: Orkney's Wartime Aerodromes; Ley Lines; and a Short Participative Demonstration

2016 kicked off with a passionate presentation by members of the B. A. Dowsing Team. **Allan Downie** (team leader) began by introducing Jim, Charlie, Mike, and Andy, highlighting their different contributions which, in addition to dowsing, included interests in Ley Lines, photography, and historical searches and surveys, necessary before each dowsing session. Allan's interest in dowsing stems from watching his father dowsing for water on the farm where he grew up, and seeing the dowsing rods hit his father in the face! We learnt that dowsing, which dates back to early Egyptian times, is used in attempts to locate water, buried metals, ores, gemstones, and other objects as well as energy or ley lines: Dowsing 'tools' include twigs, metal rods of different lengths and widths, and pendulums.

The main focus of the presentation was the Team's visit to the Twatt Aerodrome in Orkney during 2013 and 2014 (<http://www.ba-events.com/ba-dowsing.htm>). However, before going ahead with the talk the speaker described meeting White Eagle at a dowsing conference in Canada and hearing him talk of inviting ancestors to dowsing sessions, demonstrating first their absence and then their presence with dowsing rods—a practice the team have since adopted.

In Orkney, the B.A. Team worked alongside the Aviation Research Group who were also working on the airfield. We heard about using a pendulum and map to locate a lost Barracuda aircraft in the Scapa Flow (found just one degree out); two spirits at the entrance to Twatt Control Tower; a German bombing raid and a love affair between a wartime cinema projectionist and a Wren who lost her life (Christmas 1943); the importance of using dowsing to locate where to start digging; and, the discovery of part of a spitfire wing and many other artefacts. During the questions that followed we were told of the importance of asking clear concise questions when dowsing, and that success is less likely if the dowser is feeling tired or unwell. We also heard that dowsing is possible without rods or pendulums—that our ancestors had the ability to feel energy in a way that is largely lost to most of us today—a form of energy that is not yet understood. The ensuing discussion touched on a variety of subjects including Feng Shui, the rich distribution of energy lines in Aberdeenshire, stone circles, sacred wells, energy balancing and church consecration ceremonies, and earth acupuncture. The meeting ran well over time and was followed with more discussion and opportunities to try out the dowsing rods. The scientific rationale behind dowsing is limited and there is no undisputed scientific evidence that it is effective. However, the participative session was fascinating and the collective observations of those present await a full explanation.

13th February

Traditional Chinese Medicine

At the beginning of the Chinese New Year, the year of the monkey, we welcomed **Dr Bisong Guo** as our speaker. Dr Guo, trained in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Western Medicine, founded the Shen Foundation in Forres in 2009 (<http://www.shenfoundation.net/>). She has extensive interests, at local and global levels, ranging



from sustainability, leadership, and qigong, to personal and global transformation. She is also author of *Internal Alchemy a New Perspective*, and co-author of *Listen to Your Body—The Wisdom of the Dao*.

The evening began with Dr Guo leading a meditation. She began her talk with a discussion about energy or Qi, and the similarities between

TCM and other Eastern practices (e.g. prana or "life force" in Hindu philosophy). This paved the way for the main topic of the evening, the importance of Qi and meridians in TCM. To illustrate her talk Dr Guo used animated diagrams to show the flow of energy along different meridians which she likened to a road map with its main highways and lesser routes. She discussed how energy flow might be blocked as a result of scar tissue following surgery—particularly following mid-line incisions which involve "main highways", and how energy flow may be blocked by bottling up emotions resulting in, for example, migraine headaches. We heard how TCM practitioners are alerted to site of blockages and their possible origins by the appearance of parts of the body such as the feet, fingers and ears and Dr Guo illustrated this with a case history; a past history of miscarriage and its management at the time. The importance of accurate documentation by TCM practitioners was highlighted: careful record keeping is a long tradition in TCM that has facilitated the recognition of associations between patterns of symptoms and particular energy flows.

From Qi and meridians, Dr Guo turned our attention to Yin and Yang, their relationship to the time of the day and the importance of Yin-Yang balance. The aim of TCM is to support the body in its natural processes and, when necessary, healing. According to TCM, for example, it is better to exercise in the morning because later in the day the body is winding down.

Dr Guo's talk prompted many questions. She was, it was said, making "big claims" for TCM, but did it ever fail? Yes, was the answer, but when it did, there was often a reason why; someone may have been responding well but, because they felt better, they stopped the exercises aimed at improving the flow of energy. Another question led Dr Guo to highlight an important principle in TCM which is to be open to treatment and not to have a closed mind—a mind-set most often found in individuals who have come to an appointment because they have been sent by someone else! Many of those present were keen to find out more and of the 20 books she brought with her, all except one were sold.

In March, **Frances Milne**, a diplomate in Analytical Psychology (Zurich) and a Jungian analyst in private practice in Aberdeen, gave a talk on *C.G. Jung in Aberdeen – July 1914*. In July 1914 Jung attended the annual meeting of the British Medical Association in Aberdeen and gave a lecture entitled, "On the Importance of the Unconscious in Psychopathology". A few days after his lecture war was declared in Europe, an event barely mentioned in the Aberdeen press. This was a pivotal time in Jung's life as only a year earlier he had broken with Freud and as a result of the break up entered a long period of profound disorientation. He had a series of vivid dreams and visions that indicated an upcoming catastrophe engulfing Europe. Were those dreams portents of the coming war or did they indicate Jung's personal psychic crisis? Frances Milne suggested that the latter is a more likely explanation. She illustrated the talk with images from *The Red Book*, written and beautifully illustrated by Jung during those critical years, in which he documented his visionary experiences that later became the basis for his collected works. The meeting, which was very well attended, reflected the depth of the continuing interest in Jung and his ideas today.

WALES GROUP – ERIC FRANKLIN

The **Revd Don MacGregor** spoke to us on 23 February 2016 about epigenetics, intentionality, and the power of the mind, relating these to the Christian message.

A newly-emerging paradigm links quantum interconnection and spiritual philosophy. There are radical implications for the healing of body and mind. Diagnosis today is aided by magnetic resonance imaging, for example. Diseased and healthy tissue have different electromagnetic emissions. Jesus was evidently able to raise the energy levels of those around him, so healing them. Don raised the question of the way the simple and identical cells of an embryo know how to differentiate, and answered with the hypothesis, now gaining ground, that there are morphogenetic fields which have this function, and healing can come via the same route.

Intention seems to be central to this healing process. Much research has, accordingly, been done on intention, and the effects, though small, are real and consistent. Statistical analysis shows an effectiveness of 37%, far above chance. Expectations affect the results. The more the objective mattered to the intender the more likely that the desired effect would show. Of course, this implies also the effect of bad thoughts, voodoo, curses, but, using the same power of intention as a defence, it is possible to visualise a protective shield, and this is one and the same in its nature as calling upon God for help. The apostle Paul's "putting on the whole armour of God" describes this.

The simplistic view is that the DNA determines everything, that we are totally helpless victims of our own genes. We now know that the reality is far more complex. The study not of genes themselves but of the way in which they do their formative work, shows that the epigenetic process is not deterministic. DNA is like a library of genes, but unless a gene is unlocked it will have no effect. The unlocking of a gene depends on protein 'switches' around the gene, which is ultimately switched on by the environment of the cell, acting in two ways. First are direct chemical influences, such as hormones. Secondly, some operations are influenced by electro-magnetic radiation itself, and these more subtle influences are thought to be the means of change by intentionality. Bruce Lipton has been a prominent researcher in this field. The revolutionary implications have not yet been incorporated into accepted scientific theory. So 'mere' thoughts can turn genes on and off. Lack of self-esteem, for example, can cause poor health.

The indispensability of the immune system is shown by its ceasing to operate at death. Within hours, decomposition occurs. But the immune system can be compromised during life, by lack of nutrients or by stress. Attitudes and emotions affect our own health. Candace Pert's research, resulting in her book 'Molecules of Emotion', showed this. She found it difficult to get her ideas accepted, but a new body of theory and practice, Psycho-neuro-immunology, eventually resulted. Emotions produce, and are influenced by, chemical substances, whilst meditation is the best means to release stress, so intentions affect the working of such processes. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippian church advising that our thinking should centre upon good things, which he specifies. The placebo effect is real. Belief is far more effective than some of the drugs on the market. People with slow-healing wounds often have negative thought patterns. The power of prayer clearly relates to all these facts. Prayer is restorative, bringing back what ought to have been the body's status quo, and research shows that it does work. 'Healing intention' is a suitable synonym for 'prayer'. The effect is measurable, and it is found that without love or compassion there is little effect. Indeed, feeling is importantly involved. Buddhists acknowledge that their chanting aims to generate a feeling.

We need a full understanding of the New Testament records. We lose much in translation. For instance, the original Aramaic used to express the well-known advice to "ask and you shall receive" means also "be enveloped in what you desire", a far more comprehensive and meaningful state of feeling. Asking is to be done in an envisioning way. This is intentionality again. Effective prayer is to imagine the problem already resolved, but always with compassion, and it is not restricted to Christianity but is in all religions. The practical problem is that we don't know how to harness it as yet. Jesus was a fully developed human being, so his message has mostly been misunderstood. There should be an awakening to God, an awareness of the one Consciousness which contains us all. The word 'salvation', the objective of every Christian, is concerned with health.

Don told us that he loves to see the coming together of science and spirituality, a thought with which we all empathised. But science changes slowly. It was as long ago as 1899 that Planck discovered how the atom works, yet it has taken a century for the ideas involved to reach the majority of the population. Finally, and we were glad to allow him this, Don said that copies of his book 'Blue Sky God' (which your convenor has read and recommends) were on the side table, and were available for purchase.

CAMBRIDGE GROUP – RICHARD MICHELL

At our last meeting on March 10, Richard Michell described his experiences with the Radiac appliance, whose design came from the universal source of wisdom tapped into by Edgar Cayce in the 1920s. This remarkable device, based on a technology unknown in our culture, apparently balances the body's subtle energies, taking its input from the body and returning its energies in harmonised form. It is charged by exposure to sunlight and activated by being immersed

in ice-water for half an hour before use. Richard found that it cured his perennially cold feet, enhanced his regular meditation as well as the quality of his sleep and dreaming. According to many user reports, it is likely that other beneficial effects on health will ensue after a longer period of use.

The evening's experiential theme was taken up by new member Sarah Kearon, who briefly described her "spontaneous enlightenment" and its ongoing after-effects. We plan to give her the opportunity to expand on her theme at a future meeting.

MEMBERS' ARTICLES AND ARTICLE OF INTEREST

Available from the Editor or through links, dl@scimednet.org

SCIENCE

WISE Journal December 2015 (World Institute of Scientific Exploration)

(127 pp., downloadable from <http://instituteforscientificexploration.org>)

Mach's Principle, Gravitation & Matter Distribution

Nicholas Greaves (20 pp.)

These are three separate but related papers containing conjectures of Cosmology.

1. Mach's Principle and its correlation with gravitation & inertia.
2. Why the universe appears homogeneous & isotropic, and the manner in which the speed of light might be variable, and its resulting relation with the passage of time, and some similarities of these proposals to the Absorber theory.
3. A further conjecture by the inversion of paper 1 to demonstrate negative gravitation and other resulting implications.

PHILOSOPHY-RELIGION

Laing Lecture - What Brains can and cannot Tell us about God
Dr Iain McGilchrist (25 pp.)

Laing Lecture – The Power of No
Dr Iain McGilchrist (25 pp.)

This Neglected Faith – World as Sacrament: a Model for the Sanctity of Nature
Rev John Maxwell Kerr (28 pp.)

Premodern Inter-faith Dialogues with Special Reference to Nicholas of Cusa
Michael Langford (32 pp.)

Fascinating analysis of 11 such dialogues showing a great variety of interactions.

The Four Spheres – Healing the Split Between Mysticism and Science
Paul Hague (a book of 228 pp.)

CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

Emerging Adulthood, Early Adulthood and Quarter-life Crisis: Updating Erikson for the 21st Century
Dr Oliver Robinson (20 pp.)

Attunement Experiences Reported by UK Mediums
Chris Connolly (6 pp.)

GENERAL

Blake Society Annual Lecture
Dr Iain McGilchrist (15 pp.)

Some Hidden Truths About Banks
John Tomlinson (24 pp.)

Depositors face an onslaught from both banks and governments. As depositors, we put our money into a current or cheque account at our bank for safekeeping. Yet, we find our deposits are placed at risk and subject to loss rather than stored safely for us. Instead of protecting depositors, government 'bail-in' legislation has increased that risk. The banking system is no longer fit for purpose.

Speech at Jubilee Centre Oxford Conference
Prof Richard Pring (8 pp.)

Some engaging and amusing reflections on character and virtue education.

Greed Costs Money
Dr Edi Billimoria (3 pp.)

This article is the outcome of my reflection upon Maria José Pereira's thoughtful and persuasive paper 'Integrating Money, Love and Virtue: A New Humanism'. I cite three examples to develop her principal theme of the need to regard industrial and commercial life as an organic part of our entire personal and social life – not as a detached area of activity divorced from human values.

Gated Development

Report by the Global Justice Foundation (56 pp.) Download from www.globaljusticenow.org.uk

Asks if the Gates Foundation is always a force for good and takes a critical view of its influence in health and agriculture: 'Analysis of the foundation's programmes shows that it has an agenda – it is a specific ideological strategy that promotes neo-liberal economic policies, corporate globalisation, the technology this brings, and a long outdated view of the centrality of 'aid' in helping the 'poor'.

Smart Metering Risks – a Review of the Evidence
Ingrid Dickenson (13 ppt slides)

Refugee Aid: A Vision of International Solidarity - statement following reports from our co-workers in Lesbos
Dieter Duhm (3 pp.)

A passionate plea for a more humane policy: 'Alongside the globalisation of violence, following a yearning that we all carry inside ourselves, a globalisation of compassion and solidarity could now come into being. The establishment of this new movement requires a more long-term perspective, powerful communities and a compelling shared goal.'

Online articles by Anthony Judge**Radical Localization in a Global Systemic Context**

Distinguishing normality using playing card suits as a pattern language

<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs10s/radicapy.php>

Starvation Imagery as Humanitarian Trump Card?

Counterproductive emotional blackmail engendering worldwide indifference

<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs10s/trump.php>

Variety of System Failures Engendered by Negligent Distinctions

Mnemonic clues to 72 modes of viable system failure from a demonic pattern language

<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs10s/failure.php>

Global Incomprehension of Increasing Violence

Matching incapacity to question the reason why

<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs10s/understa.php>

Reversing the Anthem of Europe to Signal Distress

Transcending crises of governance via reverse music and reverse speech?

<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs10s/reverse.php>

Evaluating the Grossness of Gross Domestic Product

Refugees Per Kiloton (RPK) as a missing indicator?

<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs10s/refukilo.php>

NEWS AND NOTICES**Institute for Venture Science – call for grant proposals**

The Institute for Venture Science (IVS) has opened its first round of pre-proposal competition for scientific grants. The IVS funds promising ideas that challenge conventional scientific thinking. The organisation seeks to identify ideas with the highest potential to replace paradigms that have outlived their usefulness. All areas of natural science are considered. Dr. Gerald Pollack, the Executive Director of the Institute commented, "We do not fund technology development, but only fundamental science – the more fundamental, the better. We are seeking proposals with the highest capacity to shake the earth."

A key aspect of the IVS plan is to fund multiple laboratories worldwide that follow the same theme. That approach helps build a critical mass, assuring that promising new paradigms cannot be easily ignored. Challengers will have a fighting chance to gain traction. This approach is expected to facilitate major breakthroughs, possibly even scientific revolutions. Pre-proposal instructions are available at <http://www.theinstituteforventurescience.net/#!preproposal/cifs>.

Further information on the Institute can be obtained by visiting www.IVSCI.org or by email to admin@ivsci.org.

GITAM Journal of Gandhian Studies

This is an interdisciplinary, international journal of Gandhian sourcing practices, peace and nonviolence, that comes out twice a year and amounts to about 500 pages a year. It is good value at \$30 including airmail postage. (www.gitam.edu)

The second issue for 2015 is mainly devoted to Ahimsa, beginning with a 100-page compilation of Gandhi's own views on the topic. Perhaps the fundamental thought is that the law of love is the law of life and that ahimsa upholds both love and life using peaceful means. Those who adopt this position need to be fearless and self-disciplined – it is not for the faint-hearted and exemplifies karma yoga, as Ramakrishna Rao shows in his contribution. I was struck by the way in which his life reconciles a number of opposites, of which non-violence is one example and practical idealism another. A very worthwhile publication for any reader seriously interested in Gandhi.

All about Heaven

Allaboutheaven.org is a not for profit multi-faith site whose aims are:

- To prove that a spiritual world exists by using spiritual experiences, of which there are now tens of thousands on the site, classified by type e.g. near death or out of body, and showing the activities used to achieve that experience as well as the meaning of the experience. To this end we cross reference The Universal Symbol System also on the site with its definitions
- To explain how spiritual experience works - what is happening in the mind during an experience
- To describe the 'spiritual path' and why we are here.
- To help people lose all fear of death, by describing what exists in the realm that awaits them and providing examples of what the dying experience
- To provide numerous examples of well known people who have changed the world, - poets, painters, scientists, philosophers, adventurers, leaders, geniuses, writers, mystics and magicians, who believed in the spiritual world, along with their spiritual experiences.

Helene Reeder Memorial Fund for Research into Life after Death

Announcement for grant 2016 – deadline 15th October

The Helene Reeder Fund is pleased to announce the availability of grants for small and medium sized scientific research projects concerning the question of Life after Death. Grants will be awarded in the range of €500 – €5000 maximum. The topic Research into Life after Death should constitute the main objective of the project.

For further information, please apply to edg.muller@comhem.se

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science-philosophy of science

Evolutionary Rune-minations

Martin Lockley

THE RUNES OF EVOLUTION: HOW THE UNIVERSE BECAME SELF AWARE

Simon Conway Morris, FRS

Templeton Press, 2015, 198 pp., \$39.95, h/b - ISBN 978-1-59947 494-9.

Do we need another book on evolution? Although phrased somewhat differently, this is the question Simon Conway Morris asks, and answers positively by promising something “different.” Simon, a Cambridge paleobiologist has lectured at SMN meetings and is also known to a wider audience of evolution aficionados. Likewise his publisher, Templeton Press, is known for its advocacy of “different” perspectives, perhaps one might say beyond scientism. Simon has made a name for himself by searching for deeper evolutionary truths, deeper than traditional Darwinism. Without disputing the “primacy of the Darwinian explanation” he is amusingly scathing about “the ultra-Darwinists who... rejoice in the complete meaningless of the universe...taking gleeful pleasure in perversely magnifying our utter cosmic insignificance.” As in a previous book (*Life's Solutions*, **Network 85**) Simon's search for evolutionary “meaning” is both refreshing and interesting, and sets him apart from most of his mainstream colleagues. But then again few colleagues have been Gifford lecturers or bold enough to publically address controversial metaphysical and spiritual/religious questions under the rubric of evolution. Simon's thesis can be summarised in a single word “convergence.”

Those not steeped in evolutionary theory may nevertheless know that traditional Darwinism argues that natural selection acts on random mutation in such a way that extrinsic forces are thought to weed out those not “fit” enough to survive. In this model, the world

is a dangerous place in which largely passive organisms are knocked down like nine pins if they don't have “what it takes” [whatever that is] to adapt to the external threats that may strike at random like bowling balls or meteorites (also known as bolides)! In this scenario, if different animals develop different adaptations: say wings in birds, bats and pterosaurs, it is called “convergence” and considered a rather happy but nevertheless surprising and random coincidence brought about by animals undergoing selection in similar habitats. But convergence, as Simon notes is so ubiquitous that he repeatedly refers to it as “rampant,” and so argues that intrinsic biological development appears to be so often attracted down predictable pathways, that not only can it not be considered random, but rather it appears to be directional to the extent that some outcomes appear almost “inevitable.”

Organisms as their name implies have intrinsic organisation [and organisms are even classified, traditionally into “orders”]. My favorite example, cited by Simon, is the brain child of Oxford paleontologist Tom Kemp, is referred to as “correlated progression.” Dealing with our earliest mammalian ancestors, Kemp noticed that on multiple branches of the evolutionary tree various early mammals always followed certain directions as they developed new anatomical traits [such as our useful and still-much-used and evolving jaws and ears]: so traits A,B,C,D and E always appeared in the same order, even if at different rates and with different expressions. Sometimes the sequence might be A,B, D, E or A,B,C, E, skipping a beat, so to speak, but never a random or disorderly sequence. Such directionality speaks to intrinsic biological “order.” Although Simon is pioneering in his recognition and understanding of the implications of convergence for intrinsic directionality, the sea change in biology in recent decades, especially in molecular and genetic studies, and so called evo-devo (evolution of development) have thrown the field wide open, and made his case a little easier, by demonstrated that Darwinism is only a somewhat aging part of a far more complex evolutionary paradigm. Biology is very complex and dynamic, if you don't believe it read Simon's book.

Here a buyer beware warning: *caveat emptor!* Especially for the non-specialist, expect a blizzard of polysyllabic names of obscure species, families and sub tribes of plants, animals, the microbes and parasites they associate with [not always willingly] and the complex organic chemistry that keeps them ticking, or should I say dynamically diverging and converging. Perhaps taking a leaf from Darwin's classic work, Simon is nothing if not thorough in his choice of endless examples taken from nature's laboratory, so much so that the import of his main thesis often has to await a hearing until a few dozen, dense, supporting examples and arguments are laid out. But, with a little hacking through the jungle of biological verbiage and specialised detail, the structure of the book emerges as a pleasingly organic epic, that democratically works through the evolutionary histories and implications of countless groups of organism, their senses and quirky behaviors.

The work is democratic in the sense that as each step towards greater complexity is examined, along what many still regard as the trajectory of time's complexifying evolutionary arrow, Simon digs back and shows that simpler organisms, such as sponges or even bacteria, manifest surprising, and often previously unacknowledged complexity. This complexity is convergent with what we humans, as “higher mammals” have tended, rather chauvinistically, and perhaps too proudly, to claim as our own rather exceptional characteristics. Convergence reminds us that discovery of biological sophistication in one species often leads to unexpected recognition of similar traits in another “humbler” and quite unrelated form.

So what about the runes that speak to a self-aware universe? Well, here the story is perhaps quite familiar, especially to the SMN crowd. The trend towards bigger brains (called encephalisation) in many species, especially hominids, has helped with self-awareness, making humans at least one avenue by which the universe has become self-aware. Simon's thesis is that this trend is/was “inevitable.” Without overtly suggesting the universe has “purpose” he nevertheless speaks of meaning and takes swipes at those [academics and

spokespersons?] whose “beautifully-crafted talks...[postulate]... that all is without meaning. If you believe that you'll believe anything.” [I used to tell students that simple logic allowed them to disregard as meaningless anyone who, as a part of the universe, claims it is meaningless!] So ostensibly Simon regards evolution as interesting, not because it is true and fascinating (which it is) but because it leads to self-awareness. [I take it we can also see this as evolution's inevitable “purpose,” even if we refer only to “direction” and stop short of any dreaded categorical statement about teleology determining final meaningful goals].

Who is to define the meaning of meaningfulness?! Self-awareness and consciousness surely have considerable meaning, allowing humans to contemplate the very concepts of evolution, meaning and purpose in the first place. Again treading on familiar ground, Simon reminds us that self-awareness “inevitably” raises the specter of mortality, evidently a metaphysical issue since the time of the Neanderthals. Simon tries to navigate this question with rather an arcane discussion revolving around a Weber-Fechner law [new to many I suspect] and Roger Shepard's arguments about living in a 3D, Euclidian and mathematically comprehensible world. Well, Yes! I guess! Some have waxed lyrical about God as a weaver of pre-existing mathematical laws and mind fabrics. But the mystery remains, and in his final analysis Simon quotes Edwin Muir (who better?) and Llewelyn Powys who both stand in awe at the realisation that: “human beings are understandable only as immortal spirits,” [presumably in some way spiritually connected to the organic fabric of evolution, *n'est-ce pas?*]. All said, one must agree that evolutionary observations require that paleobiologists, like Simon, ask these consciousness-laden questions about their own capacities and purpose as observers. All this should propel the human mind beyond the bounds of traditional Darwinism. SMN readers will surely resonate with these rune-minations.

Professor Martin Lockley is emeritus professor of geology and consciousness studies at the University of Colorado, Denver.

Technology and Beyond Body Phenomena

Nicola Miller

ACOUSTIC TECHNICS

Don Ihde

Lexington Books, 2015, 148 pp., £49.95 (hardcover), £47.45 (Kindle) - ISBN 978-1-4985-1923-6 (Hardback); 978-1-4985-1924-3 (ebook)

“For every change in a ‘world’ there is a corresponding change in the experienter—the embodied human perceiver”

From simple tools used by our ancient ancestors to the vast array of ‘tools’ or instruments familiar to us in the 21st century, technology transforms the way we live. Compared with earlier historical periods, today's rapid pace of technological development means it's impossible to keep abreast of new discoveries and advances and, more importantly, the implications new technologies may have for the way we live, for our animal neighbours, and for the Earth that sustains us. In fact, the speed of change and the excitement that accompanies new inventions means they are often launched before implications arising from their use have been fully considered. Within this context *Acoustic Technics* is a very timely publication. The author, Don Ihde, is a distinguished American philosopher of science and technology and Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Although retired in 2012, Ihde continues to write and is in great demand as an international speaker.

Acoustic Technics is one of a new series of publications concerning the philosophy of technology and, in particular, the school of thought called postphenomenology. It is described as a contemporary follow up to *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound* (1976), Ihde's “first original systematic foray into *doing* (classical) phenomenology and ... reflection upon how we experience our world.” In this new book Ihde revisits his view that “all our perceptions are whole body perceptions” before turning his focus towards high-tech acoustic imaging technologies.

While *Acoustic Technics* will be at home on shelves of readers already familiar with his work, it is a book that deserves recognition by a wider readership because the issues he raises concern us all. Although accessible to readers without a philosophical background, some readers may be unfamiliar with the meanings of philosophical terms such as ‘classical phenomenology’ and postphenomenology so a little diversion, drawn from *Acoustic Technics*, may be helpful:

Classical phenomenology concerns how we experience our environment through our senses (e.g. hearing, vision, touch, taste and smell). In classical phenomenology, the limits of perceptual experience are determined by the perceptual range of the senses. Postphenomenology, on the other hand, examines the way in which we can extend our experience and knowledge of our “lifeworld” with the help of technology: it is aided or mediated experience. “It is to this human—instrument—world interrelationships that postphenomenology can and does attend.”

Ihde draws on more than 40 years of careful thought and reflection about sight and sound in human experience and practice, and extensive and wide-ranging reading across both arts and sciences. This experience is evident in the breath-taking number of historical figures and topics that are covered within its 148 pages, from prehistoric rock art and Galileo the musician, to modern espionage, big data, and “radical” new ways of detecting cancer cells. One might think that such coverage would lack depth but Ihde's ability to step back from detail, distil information gained from a lifetime's experience, and provide a framework within which it is possible to locate and critically examine past, present and (possibly) future technologies, negates any such thought. As one might expect in any conversation, personal anecdotes and occasional detours are employed to illustrate a point or pave the way for the next one. Ihde's hope is that this book will “be read as an opening to conversation.”

To support those who use *Acoustic Technics* as a springboard for more detailed enquiry, he suggests other authors and leading texts in footnotes and references. At this point, it is worth highlighting a positive effect of the very technologies under discussion: easy access to the internet brings parts of the text to life in a way that would have been unthinkable less than a generation ago: for example, in Chapter 6, *Synthesizing Sound's* we learn that the first synthesizer, or electronic musical instrument, “appears to be Leon Theremin's ‘theremin,’ invented in 1920.” Within a couple of clicks it is possible to watch Theremin play his own invention!



In *Acoustic Technics*, the Preface plays an important role in alerting the new reader to the first-person, narrative style of writing and to the book's overall structure. It is divided into two parts. The first four chapters in Part I are in "survey mode" and their broad perspective lays the foundations for the case studies in Part II which focus on specific themes and technologies such as medical acoustics and hearing devices, and "audiovisual" multimedia; from mobile phones to the advanced hybrid opto-acoustic devices used in art, music, medicine and science. Even within Part II, each chapter maintains its broad-to-narrow focus.

Chapter 1 opens in 1900 with the first of a number of Ihde's favourite "aha" moments in technoscience history; William Herschel's accidental discovery of "heat-light" or infrared radiation; that is, emissions beyond the visible spectrum. Finding "light beyond light" was a major phenomenological discovery because until then the limits of human perceivable experience had been determined by the perceptual limits of the senses. From here, Ihde traces the discovery of other emissions that make up the continuum that we now call the electromagnetic spectrum, from "the longest radio (wave) to the shortest gamma waves." He asks, and later addresses the question, "how can phenomenology, better postphenomenology, deal with newly discovered phenomena of light (soon also sound) beyond even our whole body capacities?" Against this background, Ihde discusses the development first of optical and then of acoustic instruments used to image or detect, measure, and project light and sound emissions beyond the limits of human bodily experience. In the 20th century these linear development trajectories began to converge, triggering the explosion of the hybrid audio-visual/opto-acoustic technologies in use today.

Acoustic Technics is a slim volume and, perhaps, a little expensive, but it has changed the way I think about technology and it highlights the part we can all play in looking beyond the early hype of new inventions. According to Ihde, the technologies we invent "'reinvent' us as well" but, he asks, at what cost to "the embodied human perceiver"?

Nicola Miller is an Honorary Research Fellow based at the University of Aberdeen's Biomedical Imaging Centre. She has a longstanding interest in the science underlying sound perception and its production, and the nature of the link between the ear and the voice. Her work has been published in the *Journal of Voice* and, in March 2016, *Psychomusicology: Music, Mind, and Brain*.

medicine-health

The Power of Liquid Sugar

David Lorimer

SODA POLITICS

Marion Nestle

Oxford, 2015, 508 pp., \$29.95, h/b – ISBN 978-0-19-026343-0

Marion Nestlé is Professor of Sociology at New York University and author of many books on the food industry, including *Food Politics*. Here she turns her attention to the soda industry, not only informing the general reader on the necessary background, but providing information for the kind of advocacy that takes on the industry with a view to drastically reducing its profits. The issue is all the more urgent with current rates of obesity and diabetes and applies to the nature of the food industry as a whole, not just soft drinks. As she points out in her introduction, the tactics used by the soda industry resemble those of the tobacco industry a generation ago and currently used by Big Food, Big Alcohol and Big Pharma.

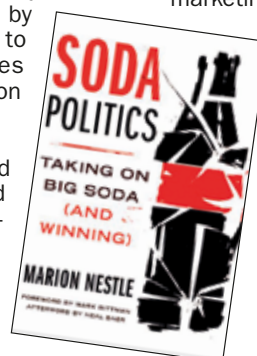
Her research shows how 'food companies use marketing, lobbying, partnerships, and philanthropy to promote sales, regardless of how their products might affect health.' More importantly, the book explains how these four aspects of doing business are strategically related. Cigarette and soda companies 'both aim to sell as much of their products as possible, regardless of health consequences.' They promote consumption through massive advertising, much aimed at children and low income groups. Philanthropy is used to create goodwill and build brand loyalty, while lobbyists operate in Congress and they forge alliances with health organisations and researchers. The book explains these factors in detail, starting with the nature of the product and its effects on health, then moving on the industry and how it works in terms of targeting children, minorities and the poor. Softball tactics including recruiting allies, marketing corporate social responsibility, investing in sponsorships and partnerships, and defending the environment. Hardball approaches strenuously defend their turf and attack critics. Properly informed advocacy is regarded by industry as the greatest threat to their sales, and this book gives provides the necessary information on which to campaign.

Nestlé sets out the facts and figures relating to sodas and especially the big players, Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and Dr Pepper. A standard 12-ounce drink contains 10 teaspoons of sugar, so that the principal role of the other

ingredients is to mask this sweetness. Incidentally, much of the high fructose corn syrup is GM, which explains why these companies support anti-labelling campaigns. Current consumption in the US is about one can per person per day, while 20% of people report drinking more than four a day. This habit affects not only obesity, but also teeth. Chapter 7 gives an overview of the industry, where the leader is Coca-Cola with annual profits of around \$1.1 billion on turnover of \$48 billion. Needless to say, this profitability gives the company enormous leverage as economic muscle is translated into political power, partly through the drinks industry trade group, the American Beverage Association.

As with the food industry in general, big soda argues that obesity is a matter of individual and parental responsibility, with personal choice represented as a fundamental freedom and sodas as having a place in balanced diets. From a PR point of view, the industry aims to avoid public criticism, head off government regulation and protect sales. In this respect, Nestlé outlines the strategies of emphasising devotion to health and wellness by reframing the issues and diverting attention to physical activity as well as introducing healthier product lines; selling to everyone everywhere, including children and minorities; building allies through philanthropy, partnerships and sponsorship; and protecting corporate interests by attacking legitimate science and the state as an interfering nanny, as well as forming advocacy groups disguised as scientific institutions. Throughout her treatment, Nestlé deconstructs industry arguments either through explaining in brackets what is really at stake or by setting out two columns of what the industry claims and how this can be countered by health advocates. Emphasising physical activity is especially important as one can see by major Coca Cola sports sponsorships including the football World Cup and the Olympics since 1928.

There is a separate chapter on marketing and whole sections on targeting children, minorities and the poor. These sections also contain guidelines for advocacy including getting sodas out of schools and putting a stop to inappropriate marketing. Nestlé gives a number of specific examples of marketing initiatives by Coca-Cola and PepsiCo aimed at the Hispanic and Mexican markets. She rightly contends that company philanthropy and marketing are inextricably linked to business objectives. PepsiCo is quoted as saying that their long-term profitable growth is linked intrinsically to



their ability to deliver on social and environmental objectives - marketing by another name but disguised as promoting health, investing in communities, supporting worthy causes and protecting the environment. For instance, Coca Cola and PepsiCo sponsor the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and Coke supports the Beverage Institute for Health and Wellness where the talk is of energy balance, mindful eating, physical activity, hydration (sodas are an excellent source!), myths about dietary recommendations and translating scientific information into public health advice - in other words criticising scientific links between sugar and health and funding research that will support their message (see table on p. 263). These CSR 'healthwashing' initiatives are, however, dwarfed by advertising expenditure.

Chapter 20 is devoted to 'working from within', using the story of Dr Derek Yach who transferred from the WHO to PepsiCo - the treatment seems very fair to me, and contains a response from Dr Yach. The industry does do some good work in terms of the environment, but their role in water supply is ambivalent, especially when factories in developing countries result in a drastic fall in the local water table. As with the food industry in general, Nestlé shows how there is a revolving door between government and industry lobbies, fuelled by campaign contributions that can now be funnelled through PACs following a Supreme Court decision where a majority of judges were effectively supporters of Big Food and Soda interests. Industry organisations like the Centre for Consumer Freedom uphold personal choice and attack what they call the food police and meddling bureaucrats claiming to know what's best for you. Needless to say, Nestlé herself is a prime target as a member of the food police and 'one of the country's most hysterical anti-food industry fanatics with radical goals' - she can be proud of this prominent attack where she is one of the messengers to be shot.

So we effectively have a situation of Big Food, Big Tobacco and Big Soda vs. Public Health, a point forcefully made by the director-general of the WHO, Dr Margaret Chan, who herself has endorsed this book and accuses governments of prioritising big business over health. However, the kind of advocacy promoted in this hugely informative and well-written book is gradually making a dent on the junk food and drinks industry and Nestlé's conclusion also sets out best practice for advocates, encouraging readers to join the food movement 'to make adequate, safe, accessible, affordable, healthy and delicious food available for everyone, everywhere.'

The Source of Healing: The work of the healing medium Alexander Vonlanthen

Reinhold Ritter

Alexander Vonlanthen

**Der Weg zur Quelle der eigenen Kraft:
Freiheit im Licht, Sein, Jetzt**

www.metacenter.ch, 2011, 190 pp.,
hardcover, ISBN 978-3-905922-03-5

Alexander Vonlanthen: Ein Leben zwischen Himmel und Erde

A documentary by Rolf Dietrich

www.metacenter.ch, 2014, 61 min.,
ISBN 978-3-033-04258-2
(German and Swiss German with
English and French subtitles)

Alexander Vonlanthen

**Offenbarungen: Weisheiten der
Vollkommenheit**

Teile 1, 2, 3 - three sets of cards,
each containing 100 cards
www.metacenter.ch, 2015

Alexander Vonlanthen is the Swiss Joao de Deus.

Joao de Deus, the Brazilian full-trance medium, is known all over the world, having treated millions of people. In Brazil, he and other healing mediums as well as prolific writing mediums, such as the late Chico Xavier and Divaldo Franco, both authors of hundreds of books, have helped shape one of the liveliest spiritual scenes, involving psychical surgery and spiritual healing.

Now somehow the phenomenon of full-trance healing mediumship has managed to jump to Switzerland.

By meeting Joao de Deus just ten years ago, towards the end of 2005, Alexander Vonlanthen, then a young Swiss man, has gained access to another level of consciousness, to healing and to the creative force. Since that time, an increasing number of people come to him for help, healing, and advice. Like Joao, Alexander will not claim to do any healing himself, but insists that it is God or the force within each and every one of us that does the healing. He will also explain that for healing to take place the person has to be ready. Accordingly, Alexander Vonlanthen's first book bears the title "Der Weg zur Quelle der eigenen Kraft" (literally: "The way to the source of one's own force").

Nowadays, Alexander Vonlanthen offers regular evening healing sessions, each lasting for about three hours. He does this in a number of Swiss towns and cities, such as Berne, Zurich, Lucerne, and others. These meetings are usually booked out long time in

advance. Typically, Alexander will start the session with a talk, then go on to demonstrate the kind of healing that is effected through him by calling up two or three volunteers from the audience. After that he answers questions. This is followed by a meditation, during which a healing space is created for everyone present. No one leaves without having received some healing.

What is happening is an individual and societal phenomenon, equally intriguing from the viewpoint of living spirituality and cultural anthropology.

Alexander discovered his gift when - together with his wife - accompanying his mother to see Joao in Ulm. Standing in front of Joao, Alexander instantly went into trance. Joao and the Entities recognized Alexander's potential as a full-trance medium, placing him amidst the group of mediums supporting Joao, blessing and encouraging him.

In his book, Alexander describes how all of this was completely new for him. He underwent a genuine cultural shock. Until then, he had been a fairly easy-going young man, enjoying life and his young family, and holding a good job. Now this changed overnight. Suddenly he had to accommodate powerful energies running through him, forcing him to do involuntary movements, making him talk in an ancient strange language, utter strange sounds, and making him start healing people. Gratefully he acknowledges how only with the unceasing support of his wife, family and local community he could come to terms with this new situation and find his rightful place. He has given up his managerial position and now counsels, lectures and heals full-time.

He declares that he is always 'spiritually online' - connected at a higher level. When he does healing work, he goes into full trance. I feel privileged to have witnessed this many times. It is possible to have deeply meaningful dialogues with Alexander and the Entities, also on questions of physics, cosmology, or psychology, and get spontaneous answers that really seem to come out of another world.

Around Alexander there is evolving a circle of friends. Some of them are beginning to have similar experiences, albeit usually not so strong. These are doctors, scientists, psychologists, teachers, nurses and just local villagers. Some have discovered their own abilities to make trance music, do trance writing, and also trance healing, all of which Alexander actively encourages. Reporting to each other about their insights and experiences seems to bring about a deepening and quickening of the process. The perception is that there is a field of consciousness, which is contagious in

a highly positive sense, helping people to unfold and manifest hidden talents and creative power.

Recently, Alexander went through a ten-day process of receiving 300 sayings of deep spiritual content. These are the new cards. Many are of a Zen koan-like quality. The Entities expressing through Alexander address the fundamental questions of life:

Is there God? Who or what is God? Who is responsible for life? Is it God or man? What is the meaning of death? Is every action the consequence of something previous? Is it possible that every movement manifests in a form? What is free will? Is there such a thing as free will? How do I know whether I have decided freely or not? What is ethical behaviour? Could there be a code for right behaviour? Are there many realities? Many dimensions?

Alexander's whole work is strongly focused on awakening – an on-going and probably never-ending process.

The Alexander Vonlanthen phenomenon is an excellent example of a well-working relationship between a healer and the medical establishment, hospital doctors and scientists. It is deeply reassuring to see how local society manages to integrate the new and benefit from it.

Having Alexander Vonlanthen address the Network, will give members the chance to be first-hand 'participant observers' in a genuine experiment in higher consciousness.

Super-Cure or Just Hot Air?

Gunnel Minett

THE POWER OF YOUR BREATH

Anders Olsson

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

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



the way we breathe is enormously important?

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

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

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

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

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

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

For the breathwork community this book should be of particular interest since it presents theories as to how to breathe that

to some extent contradict common beliefs, particularly in Rebirthing and Holotropic Breathwork. Although previous attempts to bring together breathworkers of all schools of thought have not been very successful, perhaps now is the time to attempt this type of interchange again.

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

Gunnel Minett is the author of **Breath and Spirit**.

philosophy-religion-spirituality

Visions of Infinite Perfection

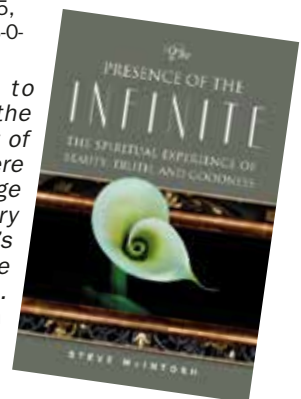
Martin Lockley

THE PRESENCE OF THE INFINITE; THE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE OF BEAUTY, TRUTH AND GOODNESS

Steve McIntosh

Quest Books, 2015, 285 pp., \$18.95, p/b - ISBN 978-0-8356-0941-8

It's coming to America first, the cradle of the best of the worst. It's here they got the range and the machinery for change. It's here they got the spiritual thirst. Leonard Cohen (Democracy)



Presence of the Infinite is the third Steve McIntosh I've reviewed for the Network. Following *Integral Consciousness* (**Network 97**) and *Evolution's Purpose* (**Network 109**), Steve now completes a spiritual trinity of expositions aspiring to formulate a "mature and sophisticated" *evolutionary spirituality* (his italics). While constantly touching on universal themes, Steve's first chapter *Spirituality in America* has a telling subtitle: *in search of leadership*. With considerable enthusiasm Steve hints, sometimes directly, that his vision of evolutionary spirituality transcends and includes other forms

of spirituality. Steve regards all worldviews as modes of spirituality saying that religious (traditional) secular (modern), and progressive (post-modern) options are available in the “spiritual marketplace.” But each he says has its shortcomings such as “off-putting elements of New Age culture.”

Nevertheless, he remains “optimistic... that a new kind of spirituality is looming on the horizon of American history,” and says “how it could gain currency in America’s fragmented culture is the primary focus of...this book.” [Although the marketplace and currency metaphors are perhaps stereotypically American, they are juxtaposed with a persistent goal and vision of infinite perfection which has the potential to inform (evolve) our finite existence and help us “participate in the gradual perfection of the finite cosmos.”] “Admittedly” says Steve “this is heady stuff” based on the premise that evolution is progressive and has a “purpose,” as explored in his last book. This premise goes hand in hand with Steve’s panentheistic world view that the infinite is both transcendent and immanent. Clearly this vision of evolutionary spirituality is trans-rational or trans-conceptual and firmly rejects the notion that “our beautiful cosmic home is just a random accident with no larger meaning.” This brings us to “meaning” which, as Steve explores, revolves around and appreciation of the perennial values of beauty, truth and goodness. If I understand Steve, and I like the metaphor, these values are not merely values to be passively appreciated but ideals to be actively practiced or “metabolised” in order to raise consciousness and advance evolution. By their fruits you shall know them.

Presence of the Infinite is certainly a fruitful exposition with, as noted previously, high ambitions to define a newly emergent “evolutionary spirituality” that transcends progressive spirituality. In doing so Steve promotes himself, along with 13 other named individuals, as one of the contemporary teachers in the field in America, while contending that “authentic evolutionary spirituality... is still very rare.” I need not comment in detail on Chapter 3 on “Spiritual experience from an evolutionary perspective” since most SMN members would likely recognise that such experiences are profoundly transformative for individuals and the communities they may influence through example and teaching. Steve admits that Chapter 4 is “philosophically dense,” [I agree]. Returning to the panentheistic theme of *infinite being* and *finite becoming* (his italics), Steve postulates “the inherent perfection of the pre-existing infinite” as the backdrop to our “finite experience of becoming more perfect by our own choices and

efforts.” Chapter 5 on “Contemporary Spiritual Currents: progressive and nondual” is a readable and masterfully concise, historical, cultural analysis of progressive spirituality as it has unfolded in western culture, since Emerson and Thoreau, but especially since the consciousness 1960s. Here brief reference to commercial success of best-selling gurus is relevant as cultural anthropology. The chapter ends with interesting comments on the polarity between nondual and theistic modes of spiritual experience, and Hans Küng’s distinction between mystical and prophetic piety made me ruminate on the inherent inward and outward or introvert and extrovert facets of the human psyche.

For much of the rest of the book Steve grapples with the implications of the polarity between the non-dual experience of universal void (non-self) and the experience of a personal, loving creator (dualism of lover and beloved), arguing that these different experiences both arise from direct spiritual experience, not doctrine, but nevertheless generate different theological interpretations of ultimate reality. Put another way, personal spiritual growth (individual soul development) seems pointless if there is no real self, or that self is already perfect once realised. Ostensibly such non-self doctrines deny the agency of free will, the point of self-awareness or any intention or purpose in the evolution of the universe. Related to this theme Steve holds that “while evolutionary spirituality admits the finite is less real than the infinite, it cannot accept ...that the finite universe is an illusion.” It is difficult to argue with his view that “ultimate reality possesses the qualities of awareness, intelligence, intentionality, creativity, and love— qualities that are unmistakably personal.”

In chapter 7 Steve takes on Ken Wilber, as he has before, for his claim that “theistic traditions rank lower than nondual ones.” He then uses the Yin Yang of Tao as a potentially integrative philosophy. Such theological ruminations require a sharp Wilberian intellect, and Steve’s legally acute mind is up to the challenge. He draws his exposition to a close with a list of five prerequisites for the emergence of a new evolutionary spirituality. These involve recognition of the aforementioned polarity between world views and the potential to debate, understand and even integrate them thanks to “science’s stupendous discoveries of ...evolution, and the confirming...of ...spiritual experience.”

I was most intrigued that in his final speculations on a future synthesis Steve transcends and includes (his favourite mode of transformation) dualism and polarity with a 3-fold or triadic unity model or tri unity: “the three, that are two, that are one”), which is not only inherent in the thesis, antithesis, synthesis dialectic, which Steve has often discussed, but also very anthroposophical and Steinerian. Steve does not mention this tradition, but to cite a simple example there is a 2-fold male-female gender polarity, but it is incomplete until integrated to synthesise, a synergistic new future generation (by recombination no less!). As anthroposophists sometimes say, nature shows the way. The 2-fold combination of I and you creates the trinity “we.” Anything that mediates a twofold ‘system’ becomes threefold.

As I know Steve, let me end by commenting thus: Steve betrays his inherent optimism, enthusiasm and motivation when he writes that “in its essence, the evolutionary impulse is the desire for the transcendent ...a kind of perfection hunger” for communion with ultimate spiritual realities. What Leonard Cohen so cogently called “spiritual thirst.” Here Steve captures the essence of the “seeker” the very human aspiration for higher self, or perfection hunger, that I have often thought worthy of a book length treatment. This is not just a personal longing which Steve says has been with him since aged 12, but it is a longing for a spiritual renaissance for all of humanity. A noble aspiration indeed and one that will only come about if seekers like Steve continue to dedicate themselves to cultivating and metabolising the values of beauty, truth, goodness and spiritual growth. From this vantage point we may, like Steve, aspire to visions of infinite perfection.

A 20th Century Swedenborg

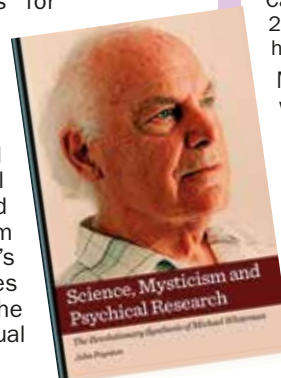
David Lorimer

SCIENCE, MYSTICISM AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

John Poynton (SMN)

Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, 198 pp., £47.99, h/b – ISBN 978-1-4438-8019-0

Michael Whiteman (1906-2007) was a physicist, mathematician, musician and mystic who was an early member of the Network. Elsewhere in this issue, readers will find an outline of his revolutionary work by the author of this book, John Poynton, himself a biologist who knew Whiteman for over 40 years. I agree with Stanley Krippner, who, on the back of this book



likens the summarising of Whiteman's work to capturing a rare tropical bird and rendering his ideas accessible in a series of short and clearly written and referenced chapters. Given his three areas of interest in science, mysticism and psychical research, this is a very important book for Network readers as Whiteman had a deep knowledge allied to extensive personal experience - some 7,000 experiences are recorded in his diaries. The five sections and 32 chapters cover the basics of his thinking, the house of personality, spiritual development, elements of mystical experience and an overview with a technical appendix on the mystical derivation of physical laws. Incidentally, these three main areas also correspond to the sections of another important book written by a member Raynor Johnson, *The Imprisoned Splendour*.

As readers will appreciate, on the predominant view in science is still what Whiteman calls one-level naturalism, which cannot in principle explain psychical and mystical experiences - it can only try to explain them away. Whiteman's method is what William James called radical empiricism based, like Swedenborg, on self-evident and repeated direct observation. This also represents a deeper phenomenology of actually penetrating appearances, and produces a systematic and rationally coherent testimony. One important parallel between physics and mysticism is the translation of potential into actual, essence to existence, the integration of subjective and objective. Anything external is by definition actual: the one instantiates the other.

A key postulate for Whiteman is the existence of other nonphysical spaces giving a multifrequency and interpenetrating picture of which he himself had direct experience. Instead of using the term out of body experience, he uses 'separative experience' and distinguishes various levels. These experiences all take place in such parallel spaces, which makes sense both of the phenomenon and of the occasional discrepancies noticed. For such phenomena to be taken seriously, we need an analytical - deductive approach rather than a hypothetical - deductive; the former applies conceptual analysis to a problem or observation (p. 33) beyond the confines of one-level naturalism. It is also important to realise that other spaces also exhibit extension and position in relation to nonphysical sensing. Whiteman describes the necessary skills of Active and Continuous Recollection that have to be developed in this sphere. He also outlines a complex 16-fold objective and subjective cycle.

A chapter on the influence of Kant draws on his scathing book about Swedenborg, *Dreams of a Spirit Seer*. Kant initially satisfied himself of the veracity of some of Swedenborg's experiences, but could not rationally make sense of them within his limited scheme. He even regarded a positive interpretation as a corruption in the use of reason, setting his own limits to its use. As John points out, Kant was simply wrong, but this has not prevented mainstream philosophers from following in his footsteps and those of David Hume. However, we are now steeped in the influence of Eastern philosophies that have a quite different approach to consciousness and reality. Whiteman studied these in detail produced his own edition of the Yoga Sutras, commenting that many translators had misunderstood such texts because they themselves were not mystics.

I found the section the on corporate structure of personality particularly interesting. Whiteman's model consists of a core identity or individual in charge (representing a time-transcendent line of consciousness), influenced by contributory minds. What we call personality is a combination of these factors. Whiteman had a particular interest in criminal psychology, entailing the issues of free will, responsibility and punishment. He felt that current psychology had an inadequate model and that many crimes occurred because the individual in charge was overwhelmed by a contributory mind, which might even represent a form of spirit attachment (a number of cases are discussed). This model also has interesting implications for the interpretation of the work of Ian Stevenson, as contributory minds also have memories of the individual life that may give rise to children remembering previous lives - Whiteman corresponded with Stevenson about this, and suggested that many of his cases were a form of 'loose' reincarnation. Perhaps those including birthmarks could represent a deeper level. Interestingly, Swedenborg's interpretation corresponds closely with that of Whiteman in postulating a form of attachment rather than reincarnation.

Whiteman sees the process of spiritual development as becoming open to the universal I AM beyond the blocks of a separate sense of self (*atta*). This means developing the capacities for recollection already noted and moving towards selflessness and nonattachment; put another way, towards the True and the Good: 'a creative light of Life itself, streaming forth in Love and Understanding, and forming all other lives out of its substance: a Light become Life not through

addition to material light, but by the removal of the impurity of fixation.' (p. 133) At another level, this means the practice of faith and obedience where 'self gives place to the underlying core identity.' This is what is meant by dying before you die, becoming a channel of Loving Wisdom (p. 150).

What makes the book, subtitled 'the revolutionary synthesis of Michael Whiteman' so important is precisely this synthesis of science, mysticism and psychical research at a time when, as John observes, the formalisms of established religions, classical science and materialist philosophy are disintegrating. Whiteman was a pioneer in this respect, and John has done readers an enormous and indeed Herculean service by introducing his work in such a clear and systematic fashion. There is a great deal to study here before moving on to Whiteman's own books. This is not only a matter of reflection, but also of applying these ideas to our own lives as we ourselves must experience our own disclosure and transformation through an encounter with the Divine Source.

The book can be ordered through John Poynton at jp@johnpoynton.com

John Poynton's book has been awarded the 2015 Network Book Prize as the most significant book published by a member in 2015

A Bold Thinker

David Lorimer

REASON AND REENCHANTMENT

Edited by John B. Cobb Jr, Richard Falk and Catherine Keller

Process Century Press, 2013, 448 pp., \$27.95, p/b - ISBN 978-1-94044-700-1

David Ray Griffin is Professor of Philosophy of Religion and Theology, Emeritus, at Claremont School of Theology and Claremont Graduate University where he is still co-director of the Center for Process Studies. He is the author or editor of 35 books in theology, philosophy, philosophy of religion, the relation between science and religion, and social, ecological and political issues. This book on his philosophical, religious and political thought is the outcome of a seminar held to mark his 'retirement'. There are fourteen essays covering the full range of his interests, followed by 60 pages of Griffin's responses and an account of his intellectual



journey. This last chapter is a good place to start as he outlines the major influences, including Paul Tillich and that of one of the editors, John Cobb. He heard a lecture by Aldous Huxley, and was captivated by Cobb's seminar on Whitehead's philosophy and its religious relevance. In Germany, he heard Pannenberg expounding his theology then, back in Claremont, he deepened his acquaintance with Whitehead. In the meantime, he had also acquainted oneself with philosophy of mind and parapsychology. He was also formulating his thoughts on global democracy and global ethics, on naturalism and religious pluralism, and, more recently, on imperialism and the inadequacy of official accounts of 9/11.

For those who are not familiar with him, A.N. Whitehead (1861-1947) was a mathematician and philosopher who taught Bertrand Russell and later collaborated with him on *Principia Mathematica*. He was an expert in the history and philosophy of science and went on to teach at Harvard from 1920s on. His major work is his Gifford Lectures published as *Process and Reality*, and which I read during the summer of 1983. Whitehead invents his own terminology and, while he has had considerable influence in many fields, his work is less well-known in mainstream British philosophy. Once one has really taken on board what Whitehead has to say, one cannot continue to do philosophy as before. In this book, he is quoted as saying, 'it belongs to the self-respect of intellect to pursue every tangle of thought to its final unravelment.' Sandra Lubarsky is right in saying that this approach typifies David Griffin as he is not prepared to take things at face value without thinking them through for himself from first principles.

Moreover, he has done much of his work in unpopular and unfashionable areas. Whitehead himself was not directly interested in parapsychology and, as John Cobb observes, it is a generally unacceptable topic in the University. Hence most Whiteheadians ignore it in the same way as theologians and philosophers in general. Theologians tend to be embarrassed by strong affirmation of evidence for life after death rather than seeing it as confirmation of their theological views. For Griffin, as John Cobb remarks, the truth of the statement is more important than its acceptability in one community or another. It leads him to regard life as a real spiritual adventure.

Griffin has elaborated a number of new terms such as panexperientialism, constructive postmodernism and non-supernatural naturalism. These make important distinctions and contribute to a refinement of thought. He prefers panexperientialism to the more

popular panpsychism, asserting that experience is fundamental as a basis for consciousness and freedom that is denied by the prevailing scientific picture. His view is naturalistic without being materialistic, and Griffin is very careful to define various forms of naturalism so as to situate his view within a non-dualistic worldview. He proposes a 'non-dualistic, neoanimistic, panexperientialist philosophy, in which experience and spontaneity are fully natural features of the world, characteristic of nature at every level.' Parapsychology becomes a real possibility in such a view, as does life after death, on which Griffin has written at length. However, he cannot accept the evidence for precognition at face value as he regards it as a contradiction in terms. He upholds the causal efficacy of minds against epiphenomenal views, and exposes the limitations of materialistic philosophical premises. His constructive post-modernism has exerted considerable influence in China, as one of the essays shows.

Griffin's courage has more recently been in evidence with his forensic analysis of the inadequacies of official accounts of 9/11. His initial interest was American imperialism whereby America claims to be a good empire. This claim disintegrates when one reads the series of 10 books that he has written on this topic and it becomes clear that the Iraq war was justified by 9/11 as a false flag operation.

The initial book, *The New Pearl Harbour*, summarises the main arguments against the official theory and was available to the authors of the 9/11 Commission Report, which did not provide a rebuttal of his arguments, preferring mainly to ignore them. Needless to say, it was difficult to find a publisher for this first book, but it sold more than 100,000 copies. I have reviewed all these books in previous issues of Network Reviews. Tod Fletcher provides an excellent summary. Griffin himself underscores the relevance of 9/11 as a theological issue in the tradition of Old Testament prophets denouncing corruption and injustice.

Since the book was published, Griffin has taken on an entirely new field with his authoritative study of global warming, *Unprecedented*, which I reviewed in the last issue. Again, it is typical that he looks at the evidence from all angles and comes to his own conclusion. He is an exemplar of integrity and moral courage whose work deserves to be better known, and there is no better introduction than this volume.

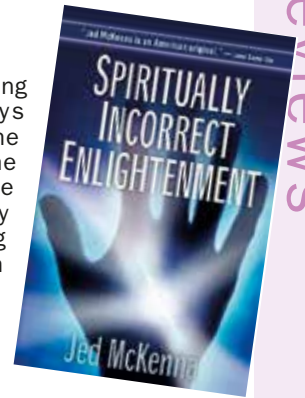
A Turd in the Punchbowl

David Lorimer

SPIRITUALLY INCORRECT ENLIGHTENMENT

Jed McKenna

Wisefool Press,
2004, 305 pp.,
\$21.95, p/b.



This rather striking image conveys something of the tone of what the author calls the unadorned reality of the awakening process, in contrast to the spiritual merry-go-round that he thinks is simply a distraction from or avoidance of the real work. He makes this remark at a party of well-meaning friends, all of whom consider themselves spiritual and ethical but whose lives are effectively an expression of distraction, escape and spiritual materialism – in other words, like most of us, they are making a compromise between the ultimate demands of a spiritual calling and the need to fit into society. In this respect, Jesus was extremely radical, calling for his disciples to leave their families and for rich people to give away their wealth – he expected real transformation, a second birth, while more comfortable churchgoers prefer to be saved rather than transformed. This keeps them in a state of soothing dependency rather than undergoing the agitation of finding the truth out for ourselves and becoming our own authority.

The central figure in the narrative is Captain Ahab from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. For McKenna, he embodies the breakthrough archetype with his single-minded, obsessive pursuit of the whale: pursuit of truth, truth at any price. The uncomfortable message of the book is that few people are prepared to pay this price, but if we don't then we are skimming along the surface without plumbing the depths of life. The reader understands this process of spiritual autolysis through a selection of emails from a woman called Julie, who used to be a journalist covering spiritual matters – she lit plenty of candles and practised yoga and meditation, but this did not lead to the transcendence of the ego. For McKenna, this involves negation, even vastation: 'seeing what needs to be killed, killing it, and cleaning up the mess' or processing the loss after releasing any sense of attachment that forms a component of the ego. The process is one of stripping and cutting away, dismantling and deprogramming the ego and its inherent sense of separation. In this way, extreme

suffering is a potential spiritual opening, as one also learns from near death experiences.

A vivid example occurs in a conversation between the author and his friend Barry who talks about another Catholic friend in a desperate state. Barry wants to know how he can help, but for Jed this kind of rescue and reversion to normality is not at all desirable. Suffering, loss and death are life's wake-up call and he is not interested in helping anyone feel better: 'I dwell in an infinite pitiless void'. In this sense, if he is not upsetting people, he does not feel he is doing his job properly (this becomes very amusing in some exchanges with a publicity agent about the message of his books). He does not take the view that there is anything wrong that needs fixing since 'I reside in a perfect universe where nothing can ever be wrong. We all do, I just happen to know it.' Truth has no confines and is beyond opposites while duality and ordinary life is a form of dreaming, from which most people have no wish to wake up. For him it is also vanity – there is no right and wrong, no better or worse – in a slightly different sense to the message of Ecclesiastes. McKenna advises Barry's friend to stop struggling, clinging and resisting but rather to release and break through by breaking down.

McKenna further explains this in terms of the hero's journey, with flesh on one side and spirit on the other. At some point, an event can put us into freefall and thus into the process of death and rebirth. We experience fear, doubt, denial, avoidance and resistance. This death of the ego is what mystics refer to as dying before we die, and it is a process described by Monika Renz in *Transition*, her book about actual dying that I reviewed in the last issue. This is not only the overcoming of a sense of separation quintessentially characterised by fear, but also the realisation, expressed in a quote from U.G. Krishnamurti (not Jiddu) that 'understanding is a state of being where the question isn't there any more; there is nothing there that says "now I understand!"' As McKenna puts it, the desired answer is always the removal of the obstruction a correct question represents. Further on, he quotes Krishnamurti again with the subtle insight that 'what prevents you from understanding what you want to understand is this very thing which you are using to understand things'. Ignorance is the essence of the separate self. At one level, this represents the dialogue between the left and right hemisphere, where the left claims that understanding can only be linear and analytical, while the right intuitively grasps the whole. At another, the realisation that oneness is not graspable and expressible but can only be experienced.

The argument of this book stands in stark contrast to self-help books in general, since its premise is that we should dismantle rather than improve the self. Many other writers encourage the move from ego to Self but the question is whether they are in fact keeping the ego structure intact at a higher level. There is arguably nothing intrinsically wrong with this – it just doesn't complete the process described by mystics that includes a dark night of the soul leading ultimately to the unitive life. Although the move beyond opposites is well described in this book, the emphasis on destruction and deconstruction leaves the reader in an almost amoral state of not caring and considering all events quite impersonally. For me, there may be great wisdom in this approach, but the embodiment of love and compassion are missing. Buddhism and Christianity both emphasise the marriage of love and wisdom and the Sage or Saint embodies both. Clarity is not enough; indeed, it is just harsh without the accompanying expression of love.

Reflecting on this review, I remembered that (p. 235) there was an interesting passage where McKenna explains his view that by our standards dogs are the most advanced beings on the planet. I'm not sure about being self-realised, but it is certainly true that they are loyal, love unconditionally, forgive instantly, are empathetic, always in the moment, not carrying the past or fretting about the future. Quite something to live up to!

Ich Dien

David Lorimer

SPEECHES AND ARTICLES 1968-2012

HRH The Prince of Wales

Edited by David Cadman and Suheil Bushrui

University of Wales Press, 2014, 963 pp., £250, two-volume cased h/b – ISBN978-1-78316-196-6

Members of the Royal family are brought up in a tradition of public service and duty perhaps most directly expressed in their patronage for many charitable causes - the Prince of Wales's motto above simply means 'I serve', which he has done for nearly 50 years, and in his case by setting up many charities of his own and becoming the largest charitable entrepreneur in the country. Some readers will know that I published a volume about the relationship between the Prince's philosophy and his work, *Radical Prince*, in 2003. An abridged paperback came out in 2004, and has been translated into French, Dutch and Spanish. Then, in 2011, the Prince

published his own work *Harmony*, with Ian Skelly and Tony Juniper. This book sets out the underlying principles of the Prince's work. Now, David Cadman and Suheil Bushrui have brought together a major collection of the Prince's speeches and articles, a project that emerged from the publication by the University of Maryland of two collections of speeches and articles for use by students on Professor Suheil Bushrui's course, *The Spiritual Heritage of the Human Race*. These were translated into Arabic and an editor described the book as a perfect example of a universal message by a great world leader. The editors have added extensive introductions to each of the sections and the book is illustrated with a few fine watercolours by the Prince himself.

As the Prince observes in his own foreword, he is asked to give a great many speeches, some of which call for considerable thought and reflection, giving him the opportunity to expound 'the set of principles and outlook guide and shape all my work' - that at the heart of which is harmony. One can appreciate in the development over more than 30 years how the Prince has proved prescient in many areas: 'warning of environmental degradation and resource depletion, highlighting the importance of helping young people achieve their true potential, encouraging businesses to care for their communities, supporting planning, architecture and design of a human scale and local identity, exploring the proper relationship between orthodox and complementary healthcare, and encouraging understanding and respect between religions and cultures.' All these, as he says, 'have proved to be real problems requiring attention and action.' It is important to note that the speeches and articles appear in the original form, often as spoken.

Although the primary purpose of these volumes is as an archive, they do tell the story of our generation through the integrated perspective of the Prince and enable readers to realise for themselves the importance of his central principle of harmony. Readers will also be aware of 'expert' criticism of many aspects of his work, but the Prince has not shrunk from engaging in important and substantial matters of principle and going against the materialistic and utilitarian spirit of the age, standing up for timeless wisdom in an epoch of information overload. The book is divided into eight parts: harmony; farming, fisheries and forestry; climate change; architecture and the built environment;



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medicine and health; society, religion and tradition; education; the Prince's Trust and business in the community. Within these headings is a vast range of topics addressed in different contexts, sometimes named lectures such as the Dimpleby Lecture, the Shakespeare Birthday Lecture, The Sir Albert Howard Lecture, and various anniversary occasions provide a platform for the Prince to give a more detailed account of his views.

One of his fundamental points is that we suffer from a crisis of perception, thinking of ourselves as separate from nature, each other and the Divine. The way we perceive things shapes our values and in turn our behaviour. If we feel disconnected from the Earth, then we feel more justified in manipulating it for our own ends. It makes a great deal of difference if we regard nature fundamentally as sacred. Many people have criticised the Prince for what they regard as one-sided views, without realising the one-sidedness of their own viewpoint, which they take for granted. The Prince is always about bringing together rather than excluding, about a both-and rather than in either-or approach. His underlying philosophy embraces holistic science, integrative medicine and the agro-ecological approach to farming. Hence his criticism of a purely reductionist approach in science and medicine and an exclusively industrial approach to farming.

I was struck by a speech given by the Prince in 1969 at the age of 21, celebrating the life of Gandhi, 'who took tea with my great-grandfather wearing just a loin cloth and sandals, and who succeeded where no one else had in helping to replace my great-grandfather's title of Emperor of India with that of Head of the Commonwealth.' He observes that 'I myself have discovered in a small way that it is perseverance that counts, even if you are frustrated 10 or 20 times over.' He has been able to confirm the truth of his own words in his subsequent experience and the sustained need for, as he put it, 'effort, willpower and self-discipline.'

In the epilogue, the editors observe the strong vein of service running through the Prince's work, with a special emphasis on the individual in community. This is by no means abstract, but is always driven by 'specific concerns for particular people in particular places at particular times' involving the real issues they face, whether this is young people and their potential, hill farmers, stricken pubs, disappearing breeds or broken communities. He is driven by a passion to do what he can to help and especially for education in the broadest sense, which he has supported in many different ways,

recently through his Teaching Institute with its summer schools designed to ask fundamental questions and rekindle the passion of teachers. The reader comes away from the volume with a strong sense of the Prince of Wales's vision and commitment towards a better world for our children not only in terms of environment and communities, but also a richer inner life informed by beauty, compassion and wisdom. Given that the book is an expensive purchase for the individual, I would encourage readers to order it through their local library.

consciousness studies

Zen Brain Horizons

Peter Fenwick

TOWARDS A LIVING ZEN

James H Austin (SMN)

Massachusetts Inst. of Technology Press, 2014, 616 pp., £19.95, p/b - ISBN 978-0-262-02756-4

I confess that I've been a little tardy in my review and I must apologise to Network readers for depriving them of the knowledge in another golden book by James Austin. You may remember that at the end of my review of 'Meditating Selflessly' I felt that James had moved away from science to practice. The practice that he described in that book was so comprehensive, clear, helpful and far-reaching that I felt there could be little more to say about meditation and the science of meditation. But I was wrong. Completely wrong. His magnificent new book *Zen Brain Horizons, Towards a Living Zen* continues the thrust of Zen practice and science and how they are interlinked. In a field which is burgeoning and expanding James has again put the finger of science on the growing point, to point to the ultimate truth that is manifest through Zen.

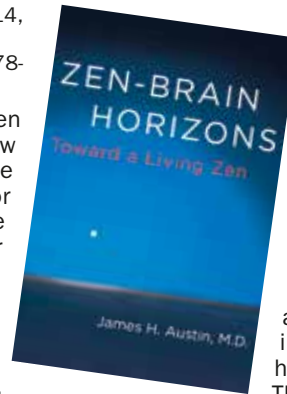
The book's cover in many ways says it all. A wonderful night sky, the dawn breaking with the morning star just above the horizon. As James goes on to tell us, the visual horizon is enormously important in our understanding of the neuroscience of Zen and the practice of Zen sitting. The book begins with a quote by Ralph Emerson (1803-1882). "It is a secret which every intellectual man quickly learns, that beyond the energy of his possessed and conscious intellect, he is capable of a new energy (as of an intellect doubled on itself) by abandonment to the nature of things." In a personal

introduction James reminds us of his own two experiences. In the first, he was "astonished to discover how clear my awareness became after my intrusive word thoughts stopped." He then goes on to remind us of what he has already written about in *Zen and the Brain* and *Zen Brain reflections*, what happened when he entered a state of Kensho, "My entire psychic sense of self suddenly dissolved while I was travelling to the second day of the retreat in London."

It is important to note his indebtedness to William James and the Buddha Siddhartha. He opens the book with two stories concerning two different old men who consult the Buddha. In the first story the old man asks to be informed about the spiritual path and also, as he has not much time left, about the cosmos and the afterlife. The Buddha refused to answer these latter points but did discuss the spiritual path, 'just give up your attachments'. On a second occasion

the old man again asked the Buddha fundamental questions about the universe, indicating that he was still highly attached in his meditations. The Buddha told him to give up all attachments; when he has done so he will then be beyond pain and bliss. In the second story again an old man, long practised in Zen, asks the Buddha – at a very inconvenient time – to help him with knowledge of the path. The Buddha is finally persuaded to give him almost the same message he gave to the first man. Upon hearing this message the second man immediately awakens and drops all attachments. His self disappears and he became beyond pain and bliss. These two stories illustrate the need to bring attention back from the thought world again and again, to give up wanting, needing, trying, so that attachments drop away and the world is revealed in its pristine state to the unencumbered mind.

Neuroscience has defined two systems; the attentional system, which is mainly the ventral brain, and the default system, or that of the idling brain, which is the dorsal brain. These two systems oppose each other. The default system is when the self becomes uppermost, when we chat to ourselves, think thoughts that are internalised. It is when we tell ourselves stories, live in the past and the future, in fact anywhere but in the here and now. The ventral brain, the allocortex, gathers information about the outside world and is not involved with the self and its 'dreaming.' What is immediately apparent from this description is that these two systems are polar opposites. The ventral brain



deals with the here and now, while the dorsal brain deals only with the past and future and is thus where our attachments, likes and dislikes, plans and hopes lie. The way of Zen is to continually rebalance the moment so that the ventral brain takes precedence and we move steadily along the path of reprogramming ourselves to be what is rather than what we hope to be. We should note how important this chapter is, as it is right at the cutting edge of the current thrust of consciousness research into non-duality. The non-dual person, usually after an awakening, has lost their narrative self (a much better word than ego) and is happy and free from suffering. A small section on Buddhist botany brings the chapter to an end.

Chapter 5, *A glimpse of 'Just This' in the Tang Dynasty*, looks at attention and awakening in Zen history, and gives a wonderful picture of various moments of awakening in response to different circumstances. The chapter ends by describing William James's huge contribution to elucidating the mind, streams of thought and religious experience: As James Austin says, *"The 17 essays in 'The Heart of William James' still pulse with systolic prescience. They exemplify a distinctive sensibility for today's readers who seek authentic psychological insight and spiritual nourishment"*.

James gives a comprehensive picture (Chapter 8) of recent research relating to attention, the self, and the effects of meditative states. In Chapter 10 he looks more deeply into attention and awareness and relates these to awakenings, both superficial and deep. He then goes on to give excellent case reports of the significance of elevating the gaze above the visual horizon, and hear we now see why the book is called *Zen Brain Horizons*. He refers back to the pictures shown in his previous book (*Meditating Selflessly*) of the quadrants of the visual field. The two upper allocentric quadrants relate to the distance and the 'not-self' whereas the two lower quadrants relate to the self and our egocentric processing. In his two case reports he describes how raising the gaze while describing a traumatic event allows the pent-up emotion stored in the memory system to be dissipated. These case reports show much the same results as EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing) which is the side-to-side scanning of the visual field while reciting the traumatic event, but James points out that he has not seen a report of EMDR which refers specifically to elevation rather than side to side. Many of us will have read accounts of the siddhis,

which, when they first develop are associated with colours being seen during meditation. As the meditator becomes more advanced, colours are seen surrounding people which have a personal meaning for the meditator. James describes the soft greens that arise in the upper left quadrant when the person is thoroughly familiar with Zen meditation and is relaxed throughout. The green colour eventually moves more centrally, changes to purple, and may arise in the same top left quadrant. After examining fMRIs of meditators James decided that this is probably the result of allocentric processing activating the fusiform gyrus where colours are seen.

The book ends with a fascinating chapter about possible future directions of research and the consequence that this will have for our understanding of Zen, Kensho and enduring happiness.

Will James write another insightful book on Zen? This time I'm not going to predict that there is nothing more to be said. I'm sure – and I hope – that there will be, so long as James continues actively to follow the current science and relates its revelations to the Zen process. Perhaps we can sum up the story so far with a haiku.

Is 'Just This' really
All we need for happiness?
Yes, it would seem so!

Dr. Peter Fenwick is President of the Network.

'I' Today but Maybe not Tomorrow?

Robert Charman

THE BRAIN: THE STORY OF YOU

David Eagleman

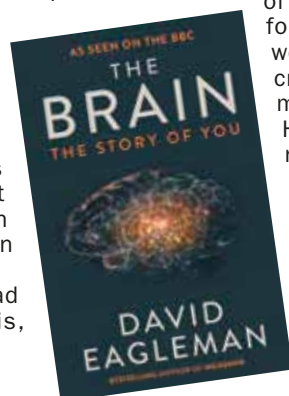
Pantheon Books, New York, 2015,
218 pp., Illus. £13.60. h/b -
ISBN 978 1 101 87053 2

Dr Eagleman directs the Laboratory for Perception and Action and the Initiative on Neuroscience and Law at Baylor College of Medicine, Houston. His research interests are neuroplasticity, time perception, synaesthesia, visual illusions and the developing field of neurolaw (the implications of neuroscientific findings for the basis on which we make laws, punish criminals and formulate methods of rehabilitation). He has published over 90 research papers, is the author of *Incognito: the Secret Lives of the Brain* (2011), co-author with Dr Richard Cytowic, Clinical Associate Professor of Neurology, George Washington University

Medical Centre, of *Wednesday is Blue: Discovering the Brain of Synesthesia*, co-author with Dr Jonathan Downar, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto, of *Brain and Behaviour: A Cognitive Neuroscience Perspective* (2016) and was the writer and presenter of the six hour television series *The Brain with David Eagleman*.

This book, which includes numerous neurological case histories, is a model of lucid writing accompanied by excellent illustrations. It is referenced by chapter end notes and ends with a glossary of terms that does not include an entry concerning spirituality, parapsychology, life after death or any related heading. Why, then, does it merit a review in the Network Review? The answer is that if Dr Eagleman is representative of the neuroscience community as a whole it presents the latest consensual thinking across the neurosciences concerning the relationship between brain and mind or, to be more accurate, between brain activity and mental activity including consciousness and sense of self. Whatever theories are formulated concerning the nature of psi, soul or spirituality we must start from what we know, or can reasonably infer, concerning the brain-mind relationship. From the standpoint of a neuroscientist Dr Eagleman synthesises our present knowledge of this relationship in six chapters headed *Who am I? What is reality? Who's in control? How do I decide? Do I need you? And Who will we be?* If these fundamental questions do not attract your immediate interest I'm at a loss to think what will.

According to Eagleman the basic premise of the neurosciences including neuropsychology is that each human mind (taken here as a collective noun including all forms of mental activity from the subconscious through everyday consciousness to whatever exalted state of meditative, spiritual, or transcendental experience one can aspire to) is an emergent property arising from the coordinated activity of billions upon billions of densely packed nerve cells, their trillions upon trillions of interconnecting circuitries carrying billions of bioelectrical impulses across a range of frequencies from 1-100Hz⁺ throughout the brain and cerebellum without cease. Feed into this mix incoming impulses from all our sense organs, outgoing motor impulses activating our muscles to move our bodies, sensory return impulses from skin, joints and tissues saying what is happening to our body 'out there' together with the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems controlling all our viscera, and one can obtain an impressionistic glimpse of our brains 'humming' with bioelectrical activity.



The premise that mind is an emergent property of brain and therefore dependent upon brain is an inference based upon the vast banks of data accumulated over the last two hundred or so years from worldwide clinical investigations and laboratory research findings. We do not know how our conscious awareness and sense of self arises from apparently non-aware physical brain processes but, the neurosciences say with one voice, the fact that, as yet, we do not know how does not alter the fact that it does. In support of this position Dr Eagleman emphasises the fact is that for every mental experience there is a corresponding correlate of brain activity without any known exception. Correlation of an A with a B does not, in itself, provide evidence of A-B causation or vice versa because causation requires a specific relationship between the two correlations. The premise of neuroscience is that this causal requirement is fulfilled because if the latter does not happen then the former does not happen and it never ever happens the other way round. The mental properties of mind must, therefore, emerge from the physical properties of the brain as there is no other credible interpretation of their relationship.

Dr Eagleman offers the analogy of a leaf cutter ant colony in which the coordinated activity of hundreds of thousands of individual ants results in the emergence of a super-organism with collective behavioural properties far more sophisticated and problem solving than any of its individual parts. Each ant, taken as analogous to each individual neuron, is programmed to follow simple rules of behaviour with no awareness of the whole but the organisational properties of the whole emerge from the continuously active sum of its myriad parts.

In his chapter on *Who am I?* Dr Eagleman says that when he holds a brain in his hands he remains in awe that this soft, dense, jelly like, structure weighing some 3 lbs with its deeply wrinkled surface seems so completely at odds with the mental processes it creates. *'Our thoughts and our dreams, our memories and experiences all arise from this strange neural material. Who we are is found within the intricate firing patterns of electrochemical impulses. When that activity stops, so do you. When that activity changes character due to injury or drugs you change character in lockstep. Unlike any other part of your body if you damage a small piece of the brain, who you are is likely to change radically'*. From birth onwards the brain endlessly reshapes its synaptic connections and therefore our mental processes and who we are by forming new circuitries joining different parts of the brain together in ever changing

functional unities. Commencing with the basic genetic programming that built the brain and how it functions the major determinants for our subsequent development as human beings are our physical and our social environments from babyhood onwards, resulting in concurrent changes to our neuronal circuitry and therefore our emergent selves.

Eagleman quotes as an example of these determinants how many adoptive parents found that children brought up from birth in the regimented, emotionally empty, sensorily deprived and communicatively barren world of Romanian orphanages were unable to understand their new world of loving parenthood. Tests indicated IQs in the sixties and seventies and EEGs showed 'dramatically reduced neural activity'. Encouragingly, neuroplasticity in response to new experiences enabled various degrees of recovery, with children under the age of two recovering best but with older children showing prolonged developmental deficits into adulthood. Their emergent self was permanently damaged. Teenage brains differ in the wiring of their connections from adult brains with the resultant differences in impulsive behaviour and attitudes that are the despair of parents. Finding our way round our surroundings, which seem so obviously 'out there', depends upon the two midbrain hippocampal nuclei that store geographically correlated neural maps. These subcortical nuclei are substantially larger and their neural wiring is far more intricate in the brains of London cabbies who have successfully taken some four years to learn 'The Knowledge' of London streets, hotels, shops, theatres, sports grounds and so on involving thousands of interconnected geographical locations than those of us who have not. Presumably, the hippocampal nuclei of those unable to complete the course may not have been up to the task. If they are damaged, then so is our conscious spatial memory. This is just one example amongst dozens of our unaware mental dependence upon our brains for our everyday reality.

Our personalities and resulting behaviour can be dramatically affected by brain pathology. Consider the following case discussed by Eagleman. On August 1, 1966, twenty-five year old Charles Whitman took an elevator to the observation deck of the University of Texas Tower in Austin. He then fired down at random into the crowd killing thirteen and wounding thirty-three others before the police killed him. They later found that he had killed his wife and mother the night before. Nothing about his everyday life and social relationships as observed by family, friends and colleagues indicated that he could possibly become a mass murderer. He was

an Eagle Scout and was working as a responsible bank teller to fund his engineering course with a bright future ahead. When they searched his home the police found the following typed note *'I don't really understand myself these days. I am supposed to be an average reasonable and intelligent young man. However, lately (I cannot recall when it started) I have been a victim of many unusual and irrational thoughts.....After my death I wish that an autopsy be performed on me to see if there is any visible physical disorder'*. When the autopsy was performed the pathologist found a small tumour pressing against the amygdala nuclei that carry neural correlates of fear, anger and aggression. As Dr Eagleman describes it *'this small amount of pressure on the amygdala led to a cascade of consequences in Whitman's brain, resulting in him taking actions that would otherwise have been completely out of character. His brain matter had been changing and who he was changed with it'*. What, one wonders, would have been the verdict if he had been brought to trial without any knowledge concerning that small tumour.

The answer to *'Who am I?'* is that there is no 'I' that remains unchanged over successive days and years. It changes everyday throughout life in parallel with correlated changes in our brain in response to changing circumstances even although, through the uncertain thread of memory, we retain the continuity of feeling that we are the same person as before but just a little bit older. If, says Eagleman, you were able to sit on a park bench alongside a series of yourself as a six year old, a mid teenager, in your mid twenties, thirties, forties, fifties and sixties to yourself in your mid seventies you would be meeting very different people in physical energy, outlook, emotions, relationships, ambitions and understanding of life. Our memories of who we think we were at any given age are very different to who we actually were at that time. Even our familiar 'I' has only a limited daily existence. Neurologically speaking, our conscious 'I' only arises as an emergent property when our billions of neurons are engaged in patterns of synaptic exchange across the whole brain whose collective purpose is to create our daily 'I-ness'. When we become non-conscious as in deep sleep our brain still remains active but in more discrete areas and our brain waves fall into frequencies of around 4Hz. The daytime 'I' no longer exists and only returns when our brain 'fires up' again next morning into a familiar pattern of cortical activity including activation of memories of yesterday's 'I'. Today's newly conscious 'I' seamlessly reconnects with the conscious 'I' of yesterday in apparent continuity of being as if the intervening

eight hour period of non-existent 'I' had never happened. If your brain does not wake up again, then nor does the emergent 'I' of you that is dependent upon it.

The answer to *What is Reality?* is that as far as your experiential reality is concerned it is a construct of the brain that, from babyhood onwards, has been genetically programmed to use its huge computational capacity to interpret the messages pouring in from its senses to create a psychologically emergent picture of the outside world and your experiential body moving within it. This applies to all species according to their survival needs. As Eagleman describes it the inferred physical reality as explored by physics is 'colourless, odourless, tasteless and silent. Outside your brain there is just energy and matter. Over millions of years of evolution the human brain has become adept at turning this energy and matter into a rich sensory experience of being' and later 'All of your sensory experiences are taking place in storms of activity within the computational material of your brain' which 'has no access to the world outside. Sealed within the dark, silent chamber of your skull, your brain has never directly experienced the external world and it never will'. The brain translates all incoming sensory impulses into a common currency of electrochemical signals, passes them through intermediate stages of incredibly complex computation that is completed by the cerebral cortex to create an emergent *mental reality of experiencing*. But in neurological reality Eagleman says that 'Everything you experience – every sight, sound, smell – rather than being a direct experience, is an electrochemical rendition in a dark theater'.

The apparently effortless immediacy of experiencing the 'out there-ness' of our three dimensional world of vision requires the computational power of a third of our brain to create and sustain. Eagleman illustrated this point by discussing the experience of Mike May. Aged three and a half he was blinded by a chemical explosion that scarred both corneas. Despite this handicap he became a successful business man and a champion paralympic skier, navigating the slopes by sound markers. In his late forties he underwent a new treatment that restored corneal transparency so his retinas could again supply his brain with accurate visual information. The result was not what he or anyone had expected. It was terrifying. Every visual experience was a discordant jumble of colours, shapes and movement without depth or coherence causing him great distress. Although this partially improved with time some fifteen years later Mike still had difficulty in reading, recognising faces

and facial expressions and still relied on his other senses for emotional security. His adult brain had lost the computational power of childhood necessary to convert his retinal signals into the mental creation of an outside world we take as an objective given. Somehow, our visual brain working in concert with all of our other bodily senses including movement and touch constructs an *experiential reality of 'out-there-ness'* that somehow invests the spatial features and properties of a pre-existing physical world out there in a species specific way for survival. All animals share the same public space that exists out there and envision it according to their needs.

What happens, then, to the mind when all incoming streams of visual and auditory stimuli are removed? When Alcatraz was a prison disruptive prisoners were locked in a cell called The Hole for days or weeks. Pitch black and in complete silence prisoners in The Hole lost all sense of time and everyday reality. Many became totally disoriented, banging their heads on the walls in despair. One ex-prisoner spent 29 days in The Hole for smashing up his cell. He told Eagleman that his mind replayed inner memories of family trips. He relived flying a kite as if he was back in that moment. Another inmate said that he saw an inner spot that expanded into a television screen on which he watched programmes. These experiences were not a form of daydreaming, they saw these pictures as completely real. In the absence of incoming sensory stimuli their active brains had created emergent inner realities as real as everyday reality.

Our experience of the rate of time flow has a rather elastic relationship with clock time. An interesting example is when in retrospect we recall the dramatic slowing down of time and rate of observed events as in the moments before a life threatening car crash or falling from a considerable height. What happened in a few seconds of clock time seemed to take for ages. To test whether perceptual time really did slow down during such a situation Dr Eagleman devised a wrist worn chronometer with numerals that alternated their pattern slightly faster than can be seen to change in normal time but should be seen if time slowed down. He and some very brave students then dropped 150 feet in terrifying free fall while looking at their chronometers, but despite post-fall certainty that time really had dramatically slowed down during the fall they were unable to see any alternation in number change. Neurologically, what happens in such life threatening circumstances is that our amygdala nuclei activate an incredibly fast incident observation and memorisation system that stores a vast amount of data for later review. As this review takes place at our normal,

much slower everyday processing rate it takes much longer to download so much dense detail, creating a post experience certainty of recall that time really had had slowed down.

So 'Who's in control?' As you will have guessed by now the first answer is our brain. You are totally dependent in everything you do from 'standing, walking, driving a car, recognising a friend, getting a joke, feeling hungry or thirsty' on 'vast computations happening below your conscious awareness. At this moment, just like in every moment of your life, networks in your brain are buzzing with activity, billions of electrical signals are racing along cells, triggering chemical impulses at trillions of connections between neurons. Simple acts are underpinned by a massive labour force of neuron activity. You remain blissfully unaware of all this activity but your life is shaped and coloured by what is happening under the hood: how you act, what matters to you, your reactions, your loves and desires, what you believe to be true and false. Your experience is the final output of these hidden networks'. Having said that Dr Eagleman then asks rather surprisingly 'So who exactly is steering the ship?' In brief, and sticking with this nautical analogy, the emergent *consciousness of you* is the captain and steersman who decides on your course, based upon the outcome of interacting variables of emergent *emotions, memories, imagined future scenarios, desired goals and logical thinking* as to how to get there. In that sense the main function of the brain is to create an effective, practical emergent *you* as without a daily *you* and your awareness and response to the world around you it cannot survive. An alternative analogy is that the emergent *you* acts as a cerebral CEO in charge of competing sub departments, deciding upon overall strategy but not needing to know detail.

How Do I Decide? Dr Eagleman takes the line that the brain is a battleground of competing neural networks linked to the emergent *you of likes and dislikes and decisions* as to whether, for example, your love of ice cream is greater than your desire to cut down on sugar for the sake of your health and waist line. An emotional desire to come to a decision after weighing up the alternatives is essential as without it you remain in a state of indefinite indecision. This depends upon an intact relationship between your orbitofrontal cortex (just above your eyes) that contain the frontal lobe neural correlates of intellectual assessment and creation of possible future scenarios of what must be decided and the midbrain emotional centres feeding information on the emotional pros and cons. Eagleman quotes the case of Tammy Myers who sustained

damage to part of her orbitofrontal cortex that connected to her emotional centres following a motorbike accident. Her intelligence remained unimpaired but she now finds making a decision almost impossible as although she can weigh up the pros and cons in intellectual abstract the drive to come to a decision has disappeared. In consequence, she often spends whole days of indecisive reflection on the sofa. This is a long chapter discussing, in part, how knowledge of the brain through brain imaging is being used to assist criminals to control their antisocial impulses and drug addicts to overcome their drug dependency by retraining brain circuitry.

Do I Need You? The short answer is 'Yes'. It seems that '*Normal brain function depends upon the social web around us. Our neurons require other people's neurons to survive.*' '*We are social creatures and an enormous amount of brain circuitry has to do with other brains.*' This chapter provides numerous examples to illustrate this point and the personal and social problems created when your brain has not got, or has not been able to activate, the necessary empathic social circuitry as in the spectrum from Asperger's Syndrome to severe autism. This section includes an intriguing example where, using transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) researchers applied a series of strong magnetic pulses to the dorsolateral frontal cortex of a participant who suffered from Asperger's Syndrome. Although a member of a rock band he was unable to understand and interpret social interactions so he retreated into a world of audiovisual technology. To the complete surprise of the researchers these pulses somehow 'unlocked' his ability to enter the normal social world. A whole emergent new self opened up as he suddenly felt part of society. He could now emotionally 'read' conversational meanings, bodily gestures and facial expressions. It was a complete revelation to him and, again to the surprise of the researchers, this change into a new, socially aware 'I' appears permanent.

Who Will We Be? Eagleman discusses recent advances in digital technology as in cochlear and retinal implants, patterns of sensory stimuli on the body or tongue based on spectacle mounted cameras that allow the brains of the blind to 'see' in an emergent 3D and many other such advances. He discusses the big question as to whether an emergent 'I' could ever be transferred from the brain by brain-digital interface and run on a comparable computational platform other than neurons. What if, in some future time, we do not have to die? 'Eagleman's frustration concerning the transitory nature of our emergent I' is summed up in the following quote

'When my friend and mentor Francis Crick was cremated I spent some time thinking about what a shame it was that all his neural matter was going up in flames. That brain contained all the knowledge, wisdom and intellect of one of the heavyweight champions of twentieth-century biology. All the archives of his life – his memories, his capacity for insight, his sense of humour – were stored in the physical structure of his brain, and simply because his heart had stopped everyone was content to throw away the hard-drive.'

This very readable book, which contains so much more of fascinating interest than can be presented in a review, raises questions about our true nature in an acute form. Is Dr Eagleman's interpretative standpoint concerning the relationship between brain and mind one that can be dismissed as 'neuroscientific hubris'? Or, based as it is findings from ever increasing research concerning this relationship, is his neuroscientific interpretation closer to reality as to our true nature? Is the 'I' of conscious thought, emotion and awareness an emergent phenomenon entirely dependent upon our brain reaching some critical threshold of cortical activity for us to emerge into daily temporary existence?

This way of thinking about ourselves and all animals as temporary brain-mind organisms based upon the input from our known sensory systems may well become common currency in society as a whole as more books, more websites, more blogs and more television programmes such as *Horizon* promote this point of view. If so, how will anyone be able to account in any creditable way for the claim of extrasensory phenomena such as telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition, apparitions and ghosts, let alone psycho-kinesis and psychic healing? What of NDEs and the implication that they are a portal into an afterlife? Does Dr Jimo Borigin's unexpected discovery of a period of intense brain activity in dying rat brains imply a possible neural correlate for human NDEs if all brains follow the same final trajectory unless resuscitated? This would be in line with Dr Eagleman's picture that allows for two-way interaction between the brain and the emergent 'I' of consciousness and underlying neural mechanisms. If this is the case then all talk of souls, spirituality and life after death is redundant.

This apparent two-way brain-mind interaction raises the unanswered question as to the nature of the emergent 'I'. For any such interaction

to occur the usual requirement is that the two agents concerned must be of the same nature. That is, they must be different in degree but not in kind as in energy conversions. So is the emergent 'I' of 'consciousness' a physical property of the same bioelectrical nature as our brain impulses and synapses? Does it, for example, consist of a daily emergent field of physico-mental energy, different in degree from its related brain activity but definitely not different in kind? Alternatively, is the 'I' of 'consciousness' and sense of 'self' a mental phenomenon only whose nature and properties are different in kind to the brain? If so, this leaves the problem of brain/mind interaction unsolved and possibly unsolvable. Either way the social and philosophical implications of neuroscientific research as to the relationship of brain and mind are profound.

Contemplative Neurophenomenology

David Lorimer

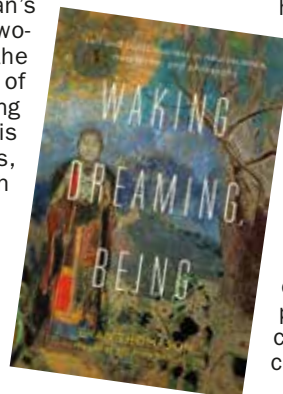
WAKING, DREAMING, BEING

Evan Thompson

Columbia University Press, 2015,
452 pp., £23.95, h/b –
ISBN 978-0-231-13709-6

In this subtle, brilliant and erudite study, Evan Thompson examines self and consciousness in neuroscience, meditation and philosophy to formulate a contemplative neurophenomenology, building on the work of Francisco Varela and drawing on over 20 years of Mind and Life dialogues with the Dalai Lama. Evan is the son of a cultural historian William Irwin Thompson and was exposed to an extraordinary range of influences growing up, including Asian religious texts and meditation practices, especially Buddhism. He regards Buddhism and neuroscience as sharing a critical approach to the central question of the book, namely is consciousness wholly dependent on the brain or does consciousness transcend the brain? He sees neuroscience and evolutionary biology as challenging the Buddhist view that the ultimate nature of consciousness is nonphysical or nonbiological. Equally, he argues for the inclusion of meditative insight within a contemplative neuroscience.

Thompson's basic argument and conclusion is that there is no scientific (reliable empirical) evidence to support the view that consciousness, including pure awareness, is not contingent on the brain. He contends that his viewpoint



is not materialist on the grounds that consciousness has a cognitive primacy and 'since consciousness is by nature experiential, and experience is primary and ineliminable, consciousness cannot be reductively explained in terms of what is fundamentally or essentially nonexperiential.' (p. 103) He abhors both the outmoded belief systems of religious extremism and the entrenchment of scientific materialism and reductionism. In the course of the book he weaves together neuroscience and Indian philosophy in his exploration of wakefulness, falling asleep, dreaming, lucid dreaming, out-of-body experiences, deep and dreamless sleep, forms of meditative awareness and the process of dying. In doing so he moves freely between analysis of Indian concepts and reports of ground breaking neuroscientific studies.

His understanding of consciousness as luminous witnessing awareness that as a precondition to knowing. Reportable conscious perception seems to be correlated with 'large scale synchronous oscillations in the brain' (p. 31), which does not seem to sit comfortably with his interpretation of near-death experiences (p. 305), of which more below. He returns frequently to the premise or working assumption of neuroscience that all mental phenomena, including conscious experiences, are physical phenomena correlated with brain activity taking place in a living body. This, however, still leaves the explanatory gap of how physical processes could possibly give rise to conscious experiences. The way in which one interprets one's conscious experience – whether or not this is wholly dependent on the brain – is conceptual and metaphysical. In this respect, while questioning standard emergentist views, he is not sympathetic to Galen Strawson's panpsychism, preferring to define physical as no longer nonmental or nonexperiential within a nondualistic framework where physical being and experiential imply each other or derive from something that is neutral between them (p. 105) – Bohm's implicate order would be one example.

In his chapters on dreaming, Thompson attributes a central role to imagination and the witnessing awareness developed in the course of dream yoga, a subject he debates with Alan Wallace. Imagination seems to permeate both waking and dream consciousness and in both cases it is possible to become mindful or lucid. It is when he moves on to discuss OBEs and NDEs that some readers – like myself – will part company with his analysis. Following Susan Blackmore, Olaf Blanke and Thomas Metzinger, he sees OBEs as essentially mental simulations. I discuss a different interpretation involving parallel spaces in my review of the book about Michael

Whiteman elsewhere in this issue. Metzinger acknowledges the force of experience in inclining people towards ontological dualism but prefers a research strategy involving the 'neurophenomenological reduction of paranormal belief systems', which he regards as seriously misguided and unparsimonious.

The chapter on dying is comprehensive, including as it does Thompson's experience of a workshop with Roshi Joan Halifax simulating the release and dissolution of consciousness. Within his metaphysical framework it makes no sense to speak of a phenomenology of death as 'experience ceases to exist.' This is in fact a metaphysical inference, and there is no reference to any of the work on survival, apart from that on reincarnation by Ian Stevenson. Here I found Thompson relying on methodological generalisations rather than engaging with the specifics of Stevenson's research. He remarks that all the evidence is anecdotal and quotes a reference from *The Skeptic* criticising Stevenson's statistical reasoning and concluding that his evidence is unconvincing. Readers familiar with Stevenson's work are likely to find Thompson's own view equally unconvincing.

The same applies to his analysis of NDEs where he criticises the conclusions of Pim van Lommel and Peter Fenwick. I was not persuaded by his observations on the timing of the experience where he puts forward the possibility that the NDE could occur in the few seconds before loss of consciousness – this is contradicted by the evidence for events accurately perceived apparently in real time during cardiac arrest. In order to be consistent, he has to argue that there is brain activity sufficient to support some kind of consciousness, although I find this hard to square with his observations on large scale synchronous oscillations in the brain necessary for reported conscious experience. His critique of the Pam Reynolds case assumes a mental simulation model as the only way of making sense of it so that he concludes (p. 309) that 'there is no compelling evidence for thinking that the brain is inactive or shut down when these experiences occur...on the contrary, upon careful examination this case actually supports the claim that near-death experiences are contingent on the brain.' Few people who are not already committed to the mental=physical equation would draw this conclusion. His discussion of veridical OBEs also claims that these are better understood as mental simulations

based on ordinary sense perception. However, he is right that the studies conducted in rigorously controlled clinical conditions have so far not yielded any positive results. However, these genuine real life cases cannot subsequently be subjected to the scientific approach to evidence, but are better understood using a rigorous legal approach instead, as Victor Zammit suggests.

In his final chapter, Thompson discusses the nature of the self using a model first articulated by Nagarjuna. He rejects what he calls neuro-nihilism – that there is no self – preferring an enactive view of the self as a dependently arising process that is nevertheless not an independently real entity (p. 324). He elaborates this in terms of self-specifying systems of autopoiesis or self-making that are also conceptually dependent on our cognitive frame of reference. The self as an independent entity is a delusion within his understanding of the self as a mental projection onto the five Buddhist mind-body aggregates of form, feeling, cognition, inclination and consciousness. Such a process self could not survive death.

As I said at the outset this is a subtle and brilliant study making the case for a contemplative neurophenomenology that, unlike Marjorie Woollacott in the book reviewed below, does not stray beyond the neuron but remains loyal to and consistent with the working hypothesis of neuroscience ultimately equating in some way the mental with the physical and ruling out by definition the possibility of consciousness transcending brain function. I do agree with the author, however, that a humble approach of living with uncertainty and not knowing is appropriate in this area of ultimate mystery, but there is more evidence out there than he is ready to embrace.

Beyond the Neuron

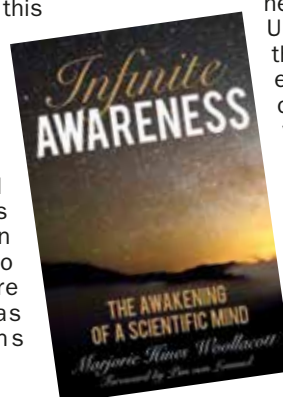
David Lorimer

INFINITE AWARENESS

Marjorie Hines Woollacott

Rowman and Littlefield, 2015, 285 pp., \$38, h/b – ISBN 978-1-4422-5033-6

Marjorie Woollacott has been a neuroscience professor at the University of Oregon for over thirty years and a meditator for even longer. Following the work of Eben Alexander and Pim van Lommel, who contributes the foreword, she makes the case for an expanded scientific paradigm in which consciousness is primary. In doing this she integrates her own experience of what she calls infinite awareness in meditation with consciousness research



that cannot be accommodated within the prevailing materialist paradigm. She shares her own quest, including her energetic initiation into a meditative tradition and her study of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy.

In looking at the central question of how consciousness is related to brain function, Pim defines a scientific approach as asking questions with an open mind rather than categorising a scientific explanation as by definition reductionist and materialist, as neuroscientists are trained to do. The subtitle - the awakening of the scientific mind - is instructive as this brings together the subjective and objective aspects of our existence. For the author, this includes distinctive experiences of energy flow and special states of consciousness. One important interface is the evidence for neuroplasticity whereby the structure of the brain is modified through meditation practice. Three chapters look at consciousness from the bottom up, then the top-down perspective espoused by Roger Sperry and the dualism of Sir John Eccles, and finally consciousness as a continuum. The author is very clear that the materialist paradigm leaves no room for free will and intention, which she identifies as the paradox of bottom-up reasoning - why should we pay attention to views based on neural determinism? She also shares how her new more peaceful state of mind enabled her to stop criticising her husband by dissolving her own sense of irritation.

Woolacott then moves on to discuss the implications of near death experiences, the work of Ian Stevenson on children who remember previous lives (including the remarkable experience of James Leuninger who remembered a life as a World War II air force pilot), the placebo effect, research on hypnosis, distant intentionality and healing. All this evidence suggests that the mind can affect physiological processes, which cannot be explained by current scientific theory. The author has also for some years taught an undergraduate course on complementary and alternative medicine, and it is interesting to note how two thirds of the students are sceptical at the beginning of the course, especially with respect to homeopathy - where one student asserted that if there is no mechanism, it cannot be science. Perhaps, though, the mechanism may be based on physics and energy rather than molecular biology.

One very distinct parallel emerges between states of consciousness in the near death experience and meditation. Eben Alexander observes that NDEs provide evidence for a type of mental functioning that varies inversely, rather than directly, with the observable

activity of the nervous system. This suggests that the brain inhibits certain kinds of expanded mental processes. In the course of writing the book, the author came across the work from the University of Virginia summarised in the book *Irreducible Mind*, and, more recently, in *Beyond Physicalism* (both of which have been reviewed in these pages.) She describes her meetings with Ed Kelly, Jim Tucker, Bruce Greyson and Michael Grosso. All of these thinkers have been struggling with scientific prejudice against their consciousness research and have been led to postulate a universal mind beyond individual consciousness.

The final chapter revisits the consciousness-brain interface, starting from the work of William James in formulating a filter theory. Consciousness is regarded as vast and limitless beyond time and space and can be experienced by human beings only in a limited form. She cites James' seminal Ingersoll Lecture on Immortality without referring to one of his key sources in the Oxford don F.C.S. Schiller, whose *Riddle of the Sphinx* (1891) I regard as essential reading and which I discuss in my own book *Survival?* She does, though, bring in Myers, Bergson and Aldous Huxley. James sees the brain as 'straining, sifting, canalising and individualising' the vast consciousness beyond it. She also quotes the work of Paul Marshall, to which Larry Dossey referred in his recent *Mystics and Scientists* lecture (she could also have referenced his work in this area). Marshall gives a very good articulation of the filter theory and its implications, which is consistent with a panpsychic or panentheistic worldview also taken by Kashmiri Shaivism, which the author has studied.

I think she is right in observing that states near death or in meditation can reduce the brain's filtering mechanism and allow the mind 'an extrasensory experience of the expanded consciousness that is always present, but is usually unperceived. (p. 228) she then brings in the work of Henry Stapp and John von Neumann on quantum mechanics and mind brain interactions. This provides a coherent top-down theory that is capable of explaining the evidence she discusses. She ends with Christof Koch's significant change of worldview. He was a collaborator with Francis Crick and initially shared Crick's view that we are nothing but a pack of neurons. He now believes that we can never account for how neural circuits create consciousness: 'subjectivity is too radically different from anything physical for it to be an emergent phenomenon.' So consciousness seems to be associated with the brain rather than produced by it. This is a courageous book that adds to

the growing evidence that we must transform and expand our scientific view of consciousness to postulate its primacy and recover our own human dignity in the process.

Broken Open to Love

David Lorimer

DEATH – THE LAST GOD

Anne Geraghty

O Books (John Hunt), 2015,
214 pp., £12.99, p/b –
ISBN 978-1-78279-709-8

I am writing this, appropriately, on the 25th anniversary of my father's death in 1991, just before our annual *Mystics and Scientists* Conference – the only one I have missed in over 30 years. In one of the many wisdom stories in this book, a sage explains that a happy life is one where grandparents die, then parents, then children. This does not sound too happy to the questioner until the story is reversed where children die first, then parents, then grandparents. The author found herself in this fundamentally challenging position when her only son died of an accidental overdose at the age of 34. It is this sudden loss and its aftermath that breaks her open to love and has resulted in one of the most profound books I know about death and its relationship to love and life. It is also appropriate that I can hear loud music in the distance (I'm writing this outside in the evening sunshine) as her son Tim loved music and parties. Indeed, his friends arranged just such a party on the anniversary of his death.

A central theme running through the book is the paradox of the death of the body, the ending of individual time, with strong evidence for the continuity of consciousness, in this case through a series of extraordinary dream encounters. As Tim died in his sleep, he was evidently unaware of what had happened and therefore deeply confused. Anne goes to see his body after a couple of days then senses his presence in the room and explains to him aloud that he has died. This proves to be a liberating if painful moment as Tim becomes aware of his new possibilities. Her sense of loss is exacerbated by guilt and remorse as her past and the ramifications of her relationship with Tim come back. It turns out that she left him for long periods during his childhood to pursue her own quest for liberation and enlightenment with Osho. This



had a fundamental effect on him, as she learns more deeply during an Ayahuasca trip as she berates herself for being a bad mother - this tension is later resolved partly through a process undertaken during Tim's lifetime, but also in an extraordinary encounter including Tim and Osho where the perfection of the pattern is perceived and understood. Incidentally, Osho had also appeared to her the day after his death and Tim had written a critical book about the community and his mother's involvement in it.

We live in a culture that tries to control and deny death, even if it is the one certainty in life. Our individualism has fed the ego's sense of separation and while we project our hopes onto life, we project our fears onto death. Anne sees death as fundamentally an encounter with ourselves and the life we have created - at a deep level this means soul-making, our contribution to the ongoing life process. And death, as Monika Renz points out in her book that I reviewed in the last issue, is the surrender and dismantling of the ego and where, as represented in the Tibetan Book of the Dead, we face our own self-created demons. In her case, Tim's death dismantled her whole identity and life, so that she literally died to who she was before. The narrative shows just how excruciating this process was, but the alchemical outcome is a rare level of insight into the dynamics of life and death and the way in which the love we create can transcend death, as witnessed in the many powerful encounters with Tim that she recounts. It is also significant that his father, an atheist, has a dream about him where he is faced with a brick wall. One brick is removed, and through it he sees the smiling Tim. He does not believe that this means anything, and Anne encourages him to take the wall down - it is partly that the mind cannot really understand death anyway.

In one encounter with Tim, he remarks that 'the art of living and dying is to be totally engaged and committed to life while alive and let it all go in an instant when you die. Some are better at the engagement, others at the letting go.' In another, he explains that he has quite a lot of un-lived life to get through, and, pointing to a collective of young people who died in wars, he says that they are using their un-lived life to try and raise people's awareness of the stupidity and futility of war. He himself is part of a creative group inspiring musicians and writers - and because they have no ego, it does not bother them that no one knows what they are doing. He also uses some of this un-lived energy to help his mother through his death, 'which is not what it seems.' His consciousness now flows through different life forms - he belongs to the cosmos. Elsewhere,

Anne writes that 'death ends lives but not relationships. Death can be described as a transformation from matter to energy, actuality to potential, time to eternity, form to spirit, existence to oblivion... our relationships to the dead continue but in a new form'. I hope this conveys a few nuggets from the wisdom of the book.

Another extraordinary incident is where on another Ayahuasca trip she volunteers to help her brother, who had died of pancreatic cancer. She locates him in a limbo state where part of him is ready to go to the light while the other part is full of unresolved conflict, that he himself is unable to process. She then takes this into her heart, transforms it and liberates him as a result. It is a moving and inspiring episode. In another vision, she sees 12 generations of her Irish family stuck in the grim business of survival and has the experience that she and Tim have also been able to free them. There is a more specific story about unravelling a relationship with her mother, who presents her with a stone heart. Gradually, they both realise that they have been acting out a family drama which they can now resolve.

There is much more I could say about this epic book, but I encourage readers to make their own deep journey through it and reflect on how it applies to each of us. Perhaps one of the most important messages of all is that love is the bridge between the worlds, because when a person dies, our love for them does not. We make the love that makes us and that also creates what is eternal: 'we become what will redeem us, forgive us our mistakes and give us eternal life.' So love creates the deathless while death gives life its precious value. And since love is eternal life, it is in the end even more powerful than death. The book is subtitled 'a modern book of the dead' and I think it more than lives up to its title with invaluable insights that can be gleaned from it as a guide not only to death, but ultimately to living our lives to the full.

See also www.dimensionsofdeath.net and Conscious TV interview <http://bcove.me/ytd2rygv>

Home Consciousness Continuum

David Lorimer

VISTAS OF INFINITY

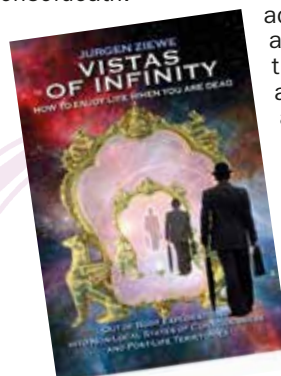
Jurgen Ziewe

www.vistasofinfinity.com, 2015,
268 pp., no price given -
ISBN 978-1-326-35338-4

Jurgen Ziewe has been meditating and travelling beyond the body for over 40 years by shifting consciousness into nonphysical states of awareness with enhanced lucidity that gives him access to a huge range of afterlife realms in a similar way to Robert Monroe and, in the 18th century, Emanuel Swedenborg. For readers like myself who are familiar with a wide range of literature in this area, the picture that he draws is a consistent one and, as such, represents a further line of convergence in our understanding of what happens after death. He sums up an overriding law as follows: 'when the relay station and filter, which is our brain, stops functioning, the body is returned to its individual atoms, our conscious and subconscious mind become our new external reality.' (p. 22) Swedenborg said something very similar whereby the inner becomes the outer. Further on, he defines the afterlife by saying that 'the place you will live in after you die is a manifestation of your inner life.'

Towards the end of the book, Ziewe reiterates this point by saying that our physical nervous system acts like a shield to block out the subtle movements of energy that we put out. When the shield is gone at death, we are suddenly confronted with ourselves and our output (see also my review of Anne Geraghty above). Everything we see will be a clear mirror of what we are: 'we will not only see it, but will feel it intimately too' as witnessed in the life review. In the course of the book, he gives many illustrations of this fundamental karmic law where we receive back what we have put out, positive and negative. It is generally feasible to work through this process by shedding light on it and orienting oneself in loving service to others. This can initially be complicated by the fact that many people do not realise they have died and are in a space very adjacent to our physical vibration and manifestation. He relates the development of his mother and the reconstitution of her appearance as a young woman, while also encountering his father and various other relatives in what he calls a continuum of consciousness.

An important contemporary lesson can be learned from his perception of the unspeakable suffering in



the afterlife of a (misguided) suicide bomber. Ziewe describes how the person is surrounded by the very real thought forms of his victims and the representation of their pain, and his own understanding 'that the fate of his victims and the sufferings could never be reversed or erased.' However, in all cases the way out is one of love, service and forgiveness. He explains that our actions create an entanglement of energy that is recorded on what he called the greater Consciousness system or cosmic hard drive - all these energy patterns ultimately have to be harmonised according to the law.

In common with other accounts, our powers of creative manifestation in these other worlds are greatly enhanced, but we do have responsibility for how we use these capacities, and cannot separate ourselves from the seeds we have sown. He describes the higher realms as ones of beauty and love also characterised by the feeling of homecoming, the sense that one deeply belongs. A key theme is the overcoming of our sense of separation by the realisation that we cannot truly separate ourselves from Home, Source or unifying Singularity of Consciousness because it constitutes our essence and sustains everything in being. To realise this oneness is awakening, and we are each an individualised centre or anchor of this same oneness in a vast and intricate pattern or network.

Deep meditation is one way of accessing the stillness at the core of our being and attuning ourselves to it. Ziewe sums up two purposes in the universe: 'one purpose is a limitless expansion and regeneration in new and different permutations of being; the other purpose is a blissful life in service to others.' It is possible to live from this stillness and oneness with a sense of universal identity and therefore of love and compassion towards all, so his ultimate advice is just this: realise your unity with the whole of life and consciousness, and use your own life as an expression of loving service to others. In this way, actions of love and goodwill become a stepping stone towards higher consciousness, whether here in this life or after death. In the end, it is not so much the intriguing experiences of this eye-opening book that are enlightening, but the lessons drawn from them in terms of how best to live our lives.

ecology-futures studies

Animating our Hearts

Martin Lockley

REWILDING OUR HEARTS; BUILDING PATHWAYS OF COMPASSION AND COEXISTENCE

Marc Bekoff

New World Library, 2014,
198 pp., \$14.95, p/b -
ISBN 978-1-57731-954-2.

Marc Bekoff, professor emeritus of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Colorado, Boulder is a "gentle" man. He is quite famous as a tireless animal rights activist who approaches his calling, with positive, firm, non-militant and proactive persistence. Author of a dozen books, many with words like "animal" and "compassion" in the titles, he is also well-known as a friend and collaborator with Jane Goodall, DBE, who is also among the world's most conscientious animal rights activists. As a University of Colorado academic (from another campus) I've known of Marc's work for some time, met him once or twice, and shared mutual associations with other advocates of conservation. We are variously involved, some of us peripherally, in what some have called the New Nature Movement in which Marc has distinguished himself as "one of the leaders."

But as Marc and Jane would remind us, having compassion for mistreated animals and ecosystems, or fighting crass materialism and consumerism involves more than lip service or joining a movement with "leaders" and green environmental associations. It involves a change of lifestyle, heart and consciousness, which in turn involves action and leading by example. This does not mean living like a survivalist, "off-the-grid." Rather, Marc defines the premise of "rewilding our hearts" by saying that "caring is OK. In fact...it is essential." Wilding or being wild therefore is, or should be, a natural and comfortable human condition, whereas to suffer alienation and "dis-ease" is to be "unwild" and conditioned to an unnatural existence where we suffer what some have called a "nature deficit disorder." [See my review, **Network 118**, of *How to Raise a Wild Child*, by Scott Sampson, another Colorado resident: it is after all the wild west!] Likewise to resist our natural inclinations and potential for compassion is to pass on the other side of the street, to be *Homo denialis*, a bad Samaritan, or a "slacktivist,"



who sees or admits no evil, or need for conscientious action. [Complacency is perhaps a convenient trap into which our compassionate inclinations too easily take refuge when we fail to challenge questionable deeds appropriately].

As children we mostly love animals and are spontaneously playful and friendly to one another.

We warm to the sense of belonging to humanity and the organic world. We enthusiastically love life and our innate connection with it is what Eric Fromm aptly called "biophilia." We are naturally comfortable with compassion, empathy and coexistence rather than strife or alienation, and in today's interconnected world coexistence is increasingly important. All this shows that we only have to cherish and nurture the compassionate side of our nature to realise a more harmonious world. But as Marc points out, progress in this sphere involves some urgent work. Knowing we have compassionate instincts is not enough. [As one activist put it "wearing a button is not enough."] Action is required whether it means becoming a vegetarian, reducing our consumerism and carbon footprint, recycling, supporting green causes or influencing friends to help save the planetary environment. The worst case climate and environmental scenarios are dire, but every mitigating action helps reduce the threat a little, and just might help shift the collective consciousness. As Marc says "inaction is inexcusable." So Marc's social movement creed promotes the "eight Ps" which involve being *proactive, positive, persistent, patient, peaceful, practical, powerful and passionate*. "Make the most of the best and the least of the worst" he advises, advocating gentle persuasion over militancy. The economic benefits of green technology are already helping persuade the recalcitrant deniers of the old school that the gentler, environmentally-friendly pathways are better.

Some PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) advocates have gained a reputation for militancy and extreme positions. But it is not extreme to object to mistreating animals, or plants (forests?) for that matter, as long as you protest peacefully. You can chose whether to swat a fly, or let it find its way out of your house, just as you can chose whether to let corporations and developers cut down woods or drain wetlands in your community. The statistics on how many factory farmed animals are killed each year for our dinner tables is horrifying: not millions or even tens of millions, but hundreds,

perhaps thousands of billions of fish, mammals and birds. How that number might be reduced if we all ate less meat, at the same time reducing the need for pasture which is used 20 times more inefficiently than crop land. As a lousy student in school I managed to avoid dissecting animals in biology class, and remember vividly lamenting the death of a nematode worm a few years later in my zoology lab petri dish at university. At the time I was an idealistic vegetarian and even drew a little cross, in my notebook: I evidently thought it a Christian worm! This natural reaction is so common, that recently students have been excused from assignments involving any kind of vivisection. 50 years ago Spike Milligan campaigned against forcing dogs and rabbits to smoke cigarettes, and quite right too: it sure ain't natural, and the argument that it might help humans is feebly self-serving. Thankfully while some food corporations are making last ditch attempts to outlaw protests against factory farming, many labs that conducted animal experiments are moving in another more "humane" direction, rethinking their practices and substituting models.

Part of the shift in consciousness that goes with the New Nature Movement is conservation psychology defined as "the scientific study of the reciprocal relationships between humans and the rest of nature, with a particular focus on how to encourage conservation in the natural world." This may be of interest to SMN members, as is the paradoxical fact that humans need to realise they are not an exceptional species [in terms of sentience], but at the same time may have to come to terms with being "the only species that can really change things for the better. We are that powerful, and in that sense we are that exceptional." It is on that note that Marc ends, positively. We are capable of a) recognising the harm we do, the problems we create, and b) addressing, mitigating and reversing them. This is perennial wisdom, not unlike the Hegelian dialectic: thesis, antithesis, synthesis. It is part of the human condition to be aware of what we do that is both good and bad, and how our actions reflect on the positive compassionate or darker sides of our nature. Surely to be human is to be humane. *"Rewilding is part of a global social movement that can unify us."* "We live in a magnificent yet wounded world." We inflict the wounds partly on ourselves, but we also have the concept of healing and the wounded healer. By healing ourselves we will also heal those with whom we coexist. This very sentiment highlights our compassion and ability to animate our hearts, remember the vital soul or "anima" and make compassion and personal rewilding all the rage.

Connecting with Nature's Intelligence

David Lorimer

RESTORING THE SOUL OF THE WORLD

David Fideler

Inner Traditions, 2015,
310 pp., \$18.95, p/b –
ISBN 978-1 620-553596

David Fideler's background is in philosophy and history of science, but he is also a musician sensitive to the wonders and beauty of nature, and he lyrically describes a number of his own experiences in this book. In this respect, he quotes the Greek philosopher Anaxagoras who, when asked why anyone should wish to have been born replied 'in order to contemplate the heavens and the structure of the world-order as a whole.' Fideler's starting point is that, although we have the most advanced technology, we have forgotten what it means to be alive in a living universe. Our mechanistic outlook and focus on objective ways of knowing cut us off from Nature and therefore from a deeper sense of meaning derived from this connection.

The four parts cover awakening to the beauty of nature, the death of nature and the rise of alienation, Anima Mundi and the rediscovery of the living universe, and finally cultivating life in a global community. History makes it clear that the cosmovision or world view of living universe rather than a dead vision has prevailed throughout most cultures. Theory has been balanced with experience and people have sought a harmonious relationship with the cosmos that has also been characterised by a sense of beauty. Science and philosophy have sought unity through understanding form and order. For Plato, the World Soul 'is the intelligent and harmonious principle of proportion or relatedness that exists at the heart of the cosmic pattern and allows all things to unfold in the best possible way.' For Alexandrian and Greek philosophers, except perhaps in the abstractions of Aristotle, there is a sense of participation in a larger whole. For Plotinus, 'we are in a reality that is also within us.'

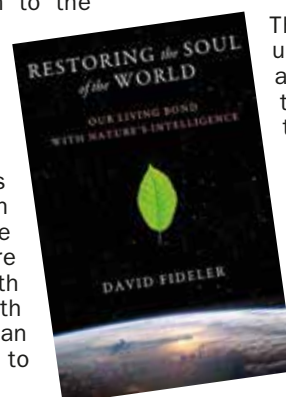
The author moves on to the themes of mediaeval alchemy where we also find an engagement with living Nature, which Jung defines as transformation itself. Creative decay gives rise to new forms, death leads to rebirth. He contrasts the austere spirit of the desert with the lushness of Earth and quotes the theologian Lactantius who begins to

develop the idea of a designer removed from creation. At this point he could have added that this austerity applies to attitudes towards women and the body, and more especially sexuality. There is then some reawakening in 12th century Chartres with an alignment between the World Soul and the Holy Spirit. Thomas Aquinas mentions that beauty requires, wholeness, harmony and radiance. This leads on to Renaissance Florence with the insights of Bruno, Ficino and, subsequently, Paracelsus.

At this point the mechanical philosophy arrives, as developed by Galileo and Descartes leading on to Francis Bacon then Newton. Fideler realises that Newton had an alchemical side to him, but he had to hide his Hermetic interests and expressions of belief in living Nature. Bacon's philosophy also encourages a spirit of power over and exploitation of Nature, even though he too had esoteric Rosicrucian interests as documented in the work of Peter Dawkins. The next chapter discusses the development of thinking about the unconscious and saw the importance of the imagination in the work of Goethe, Blake, Schelling and Coleridge. They saw underlying reality of the world not as matter but nonmaterial patterns of relationship and had a keen sense of reciprocity between humans and Nature. Freud was more mechanistic in his understanding but Jung brought back a gnostic and alchemical understanding and a sense of inner connection to the processes of life. More recently, we have the emergence of ecopsychology.

The author moves on to the history of modern science and the reanimation of the universe in our understanding. The determinism of classical physics gives way to fields, relativity and quantum theory, nonlocality, the Anthropic Principle, self-organisation and autopoiesis, complexity and chaos theory, living systems and systems theory, the Gaia hypothesis, symbiosis and synergy. This gives us a completely different cosmovision or world view based on participation rather than the remote detachment of the observer: 'the universe brings forth life and mind – but life and mind work to shape the universe.' (p. 219)

This new vision of a living universe can help underpin a revolution on our attitudes to Nature. We also now have the picture of the Earth from space and the mystical experiences of astronauts like Edgar Mitchell. Fideler thinks that three things are needed to live consciously in a Cosmopolis as understood by ancient philosophers: 'a real, felt sense of our bond with the transcendent



order of which we are part; a vision of living Nature and an appreciation of Nature's intelligence; and an ethical concern for society based on our intrinsic kinship with others.' (p. 223) In the final part, Fideler describes the contribution of biomimicry towards working with Nature. He discusses the work of John Todd in ecological design and argues, rightly in my view, that sustainability is not enough. We need regeneration. In this context, he could also have mentioned the work of Viktor Schauberg on water and agriculture. At the end, he offers the metaphor of gardening as a constructive human engagement with nature. Work like this is going on, but it is small-scale compared with the overall destructive impact of human activity. As Bede Griffiths also maintained, we do need a new vision of reality to inform our thinking and corresponding action. This book not only provides the necessary background but also the substance of such a vision that now needs to be communicated and acted upon more widely. This in turn implies new thinking about wellbeing that goes beyond the imperative of economic growth, as I discuss below in my review of *Love, Fear and the Destiny of Nations*.

The Evolution of Consciousness and the Future of World Governance

David Lorimer

LOVE, FEAR AND THE DESTINY OF NATIONS (Volume 1)

Richard Barrett

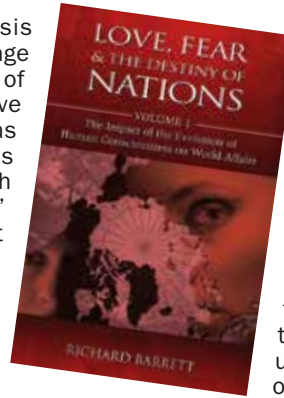
Fulfilling Books, 2012, 418 pp.,
no price given, p/b –
ISBN 978-1-105-63932-5

Richard is Founder and Chairman of the Barrett Values Centre and former Values Coordinator at the World Bank. Here he provides a historical overview and prospect on the impact of the evolution of human consciousness on world affairs and governance structures; it is based on his very extensive research over a 15-year period involving 3,500 organisations in more than 40 countries. Instead of equating development as economic growth or even sustainability, he redefines it in terms of the evolution of human consciousness by way of previous definitions involving survival, security, power and righteousness. His new definition is closely related to human well-being, democracy, freedom from fear, and happiness; it is aligned with new indicators while going beyond them. His thesis – similar to Elisabet Sahtouris – is that 'we need to learn how to cooperate with each other for the good of the whole, and to do this we need an integral approach' – based on the work of Ken Wilber's four quadrants (mind, body, culture and society).

His succinct diagnosis of our current challenge is that 'the problems of human existence have become global, whereas the societal structures we have for dealing with them are national.' It has been evident for several decades that our international institutions are inadequate to the task and that we need to expand our sense of identity and shared values. Behind the unwillingness to cede sovereignty, Richard sees a larger issue of lack of trust, which applies particularly to politicians. Overall, he sees a need for a shift from world run by independent nations to one run through collaborative regional and global governance. One problem with this, as we see in the current EU debate, is that these supranational organisations are bureaucratic rather than democratic and are not sufficiently accountable. However, I think he is right in his analysis of the overall direction of human social evolution and its underlying biology. As the title suggests, there is a gradual shift from fear towards trust and then love, although the way that world events are reported often goes in the opposite direction.

His scheme involves three stages and seven levels of consciousness with their corresponding motivations and developmental tasks: surviving, conforming, differentiating, individuating, self-actualising, integrating, and finally serving. He explains in some detail the corresponding stages of societal development: band, tribe, city-state, nation, cohesive nation, regional grouping and global. One can understand that these constitute different levels of identity and belonging representing an overall move from competition and self-promotion towards cooperation and service. I found his analysis of cultural fears extremely helpful, addressing it does power relationships and inequality, masculine and feminine, and dealing with uncertainty. On this basis, he is able to categorise nations at one of three stages in the move from fear to trust to love. He finds that Nordic countries come out top, especially in relation to inequality. He then moves on to a more detailed assessment of cultural values.

The second part takes the ultimate measure of the quality of democracy as the level of trust, which is by definition inversely proportional to the level of what he calls cultural DNA fear. He sees democracy as essentially a means of regulating the power and influence of governing elites and increasing the number of people involved in societal decision-making. He identifies seven value drivers, devoting a chapter to



each: freedom, equality, accountability, fairness, openness, transparency and trust (in terms of both character and competence). Again one can see how these issues are reflected in the EU debate. From the point of view Richard's analysis, a Brexit would represent a backwards step away from integration towards nationalism, but on the other hand one can also understand the arguments of the other side in terms of values and subsidiarity. His vision is a larger one and based on the fact that the Earth is a unified territory and humanity's collective life support system; and the corresponding view that the only way to manage the Earth and its resources is 'through a global system of governance that works for the good of humanity as a whole, not just for the most powerful nations, and supranational corporations.' So his essential point is an emphasis on one Earth and the interconnectedness of humanity and therefore on the need for higher-order cooperation that represents a more advanced consciousness based on service rather than exploitation.

If one agrees with his underlying argument, then the most important question becomes how we move from here to there, bearing in mind the thrust and support of the evolutionary process. This requires an understanding of the two principles of delegated sovereignty and endowed legitimacy. The diplomat Lord Mark Malloch-Brown writes that we now live in an unregulated hell where environmental impacts are shared globally (and unequally), 'but the solutions remain blocked at the national level.' Changing these institutions may involve a fundamental crisis that demands new forms, but also the further development of empathy and compassion. Richard lists nine obstacles that we need to overcome in order to build a sustainable future for everyone on the planet, but the key issue is that we do not yet have the necessary leadership paradigm based on a new mindset. These leaders will have to embody trust, empathy and compassion and they will need to be developed – we do not yet have them to hand. This is the work of the Barrett Values Centre promoting development as democracy and equality rather than elitism and power. Luckily, the necessary resources are already in our hearts and in our deepest human values. This visionary book helps readers understand our global position and how we can all contribute towards moving beyond existing limitations to a world that works for everyone. www.valuescentre.com, www.newleadershipparadigm.com

general

A Transformational Journey

David Lorimer

MY DOUBLE LIFE I – This Dark Wood

Nicholas Hagger (SMN)

O Books (John Hunt), 2015,
605 pp., £25.99, p/b –
ISBN 978-1-84694-590-8

As one of his friends remarked, Nicholas Hagger's double life not only refers to the contrast between his mystical journey and intelligence work for MI6, but also to the fact that he has crammed in double the amount of experience into his life. In this first volume, he describes his background, upbringing and education, then his career up to 1973. The book consists of 15 episodes of contrasting dualities such as literature and law, wisdom and intelligence, establishment and revolution, illumination and nationalism, meaning and disenchantment. Nicholas uses the symbolism of 8 clockwise and 13 counter-clockwise spirals in a pinecone to illustrate these tensions.

Worcester College Oxford plays an important role in the story. His knowledge of Roman coins enabled him to gain a place and be in contact with Sir John Masterman, the Provost, whom he later found out had played a crucial role in World War II intelligence, and gave him the necessary introduction to Whitehall. Later, in 1978, he was discussing his experiences with the then Provost, Lord Asa Briggs, who urged him to write up the full story of his experiences, especially the Gaddafi revolution in Libya. His father wanted him to go into law and politics, but he chose literature and poetry instead. He was an early reader of Colin Wilson's *Outsider* and took life as an existentialist very seriously, even knocking on Sartre's door in Paris as a form of free act. He also visits Colin Wilson on a number of occasions, which he finds extraordinary stimulating intellectually. Among other important meetings are those with Montgomery, Hemingway, Blunden, E.W.F. Tomlin in Japan, a drunken Peter O'Toole in Oxford and Ezra Pound in Italy. Pound told him that T.E. Hulme had said to him in 1915 that a writer should be able to put his essential message down on half a postcard, and that the rest was application and elaboration.

Nicholas' main teaching postings were in Iraq, Japan and Libya. In Japan, he also becomes a private tutor to Prince Hitachi, the brother of the Emperor, and speechwriter

for the Governor of the Bank of Japan. He immerses himself in Zen and has an important encounter with Junzaburo Nishiwaki, who summarises the manifestation of the Absolute and the wisdom of the East in the formula $+A + -A = 0$, which Nicholas applies to the dialectic of his life episodes. During this time in Japan, he has a chance to visit China in the spring 1966, and is the first to discover the Cultural Revolution by interviewing senior Chinese officials - Western journalists were about six months behind. In late 1968, he becomes a lecturer at the University of Libya and begins his intelligence work while also writing as a journalist. A number of his articulate articles are printed in the appendix.

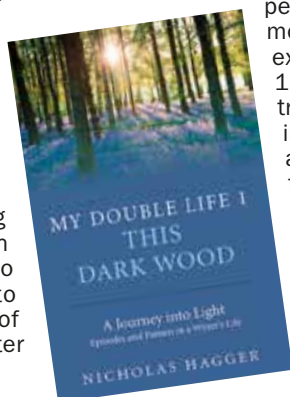
Nicholas has written separately about this time in his life as he was on the inside of another pro-Western coup that was meant to take place on September 5, but was pre-empted by Gaddafi on September 1, partly as a result of an article published by Nicholas on 24 August. This leads to a tumultuous period where his marriage collapses and he is beaten up and nearly executed. He vividly describes the challenges of life under this regime, but puts up an inner resistance so as not to succumb to these psychological terrorist tactics. His personal encounter with Gaddafi is fascinating - he tells Gaddafi's 'executioner' that his is the power of the pen rather than the sword. The reader learns in detail how the intelligence services operate in such a scenario, which gives everyday life a tremendous intensity. In the meantime, he is going through a purgation of suffering and loss at a personal level.

The next important development is his work as an unofficial ambassador for the Prime Minister Edward Heath in relation to black Africans and their liberation movements, but more especially with respect to the influence of China and the Soviet Union. He makes significant trips to Brussels and Tanzania. In the meantime, he takes work at an ESN school and lives in London. Here one gains an insight into what it is like to be a spy in terms of surveillance, bugging and one's room being ransacked for papers. One has to be in a constant state of vigilance and acquire techniques for shaking people off. During this period, he also has his most important mystical experience in September 1971 (an appendix tracks these experiences in more detail). He was aware of the timeless flow of light and love, to which he surrenders. All this is described in detail with diary entries from the time. It gives him the insight that his vision of truth was

in conflict with the deceptive world of intelligence, itself in thrall to the agenda of the New World Order, about which Nicholas has written separately. This deception even extends to his relationship with his first wife's new husband, who is in different branch of security.

Even at Oxford, Nicholas had been warned that working for intelligence would eventually take over his life and control it. The culmination is a meeting with a senior intelligence officer where he is asked to sign a document saying that he will never see his daughter Nadia again. It is, of course, an impossible demand and they don't expect him to sign. Later, he finds out that the reason for his severance is a change of attitude to China and that the Prime Minister can no longer take the risk of having an unofficial ambassador. The official warns him that if the Chinese try to recruit him, they will know. He reflects that his exposure by the KGB in Fleet Street following the defection of a man he had been working with meant that he was operating with the full knowledge of the KGB and was therefore too much of a risk for the SIS to work with. Hence this ruthless demand to secure his severance and his conclusion that the SIS was ultimately an insensitive and inhuman organisation. He has had no contact with them since 1973 but has written this extraordinarily revealing account to set the record straight. He mentions one other significant aspect, namely that his projects would be denied publicity, and indeed it is surprising that his voluminous writings have not received more recognition. His experience of nationalism at this time was an important factor in his development of a universalist philosophy.

In the epilogue to this volume, he reflects on his double life as lecturer, poet, then teacher, agent and journalist. The layered pairs of opposites in the 15 episodes represent the tension between the positive and negative aspects ($+A$ and $-A$ or double helix) that impel a transformation within the central self. I think he is right that this pattern and unity of episodes and layers is universal 'as an archetypal pattern of transformation and progress through experience towards a vision of the unity of the universe.' We all have a chance to live at this soul-based contemplative level beyond our ego-based activity of hedonistic enjoyment, but we do not all avail ourselves of this opportunity. However, I also agree that nothing is wasted in terms of our experience and that 'all experiences are essential to the final form of the self and to the pattern of its life.... in all lives the potential for a successful quest is present.' It is the work of what he calls the central self to unite and reconcile these episodes and conflicting sequences so that 'behind the unity of each being is the unity of



Being' and the same transforming law of Nature that governs not only the process and structure of pinecones but also that of human lives.

The inner and outer journey that Nicholas describes in this first part of his autobiography takes the reader to the heart of the human condition with its tension between opposite forces and the significant choices we all have to make in the course of our lives. One of these concerns the depth at which we ultimately live - things may be more comfortable on the surface, but there is greater intensity and fulfilment if we engage with the depth of life as well, with plus and minus, time and eternity, life and death, each of which is necessary to the other and to the unity of the whole. Nicholas has made a profound statement with this account of his life, and I look forward to reviewing the second volume in the next issue.

A Transforming Life

David Lorimer

GOETHE – A SHORT INTRODUCTION

Ritchie Robertson

Oxford 2015, 142 pp., £7.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-19-968925-5

In 1878, Matthew Arnold wrote of Goethe (1749-1832) that he was 'in the width, depth, and richness of his criticism of life, by far our greatest modern man.' My first acquaintance with him was at school when learning German with a brilliant teacher Roy Giles who brought his poetry alive, and then again at University where I read German. Much later, I came across his science through Brian Goodwin and others, which led back to Steiner and the idea of a science of qualities. This short book covers six main areas of Goethe's life and work beginning with love and moving on to nature, classical art and world literature, politics, tragedy and religion.

It is appropriate to begin with love, as this played such a great role in Goethe's life and poetry. In his work he relates

love of all kinds and at all stages of his life, with some women inaccessible and others where he had a much more physical relationship, sometimes described in graphic detail in his poetry. The journey to Rome in 1786 was hugely liberating, freeing him up from his administrative responsibilities in Weimar, where I once visited his house. The striking aspect is the contrast between the public rooms at the front and a very small rooms, including his bedroom, at the back. Goethe became famous at the early age of 25 with the publication of his bestselling novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. He joined the Duke of Weimar the following year, and the author describes the range of administrative duties involved with responsibilities for mining, road building, maintaining the army and finance. His practicality reminds one of Swedenborg, who was supervising engineering projects at the same time as recording his inner visions.

The chapter on nature is mainly concerned with his science. It is important, I think, to understand that Goethe was primarily a contemplative poet rather than a detached observer - hence his opposition to mechanised objectivity. He was highly sensuous and visual, leaving some 3,000 paintings and sketches. He was also influenced by the work of Spinoza and impressed by the dynamism and transformative capacity of nature. He tried to understand things from the inside out, hence his interest in form and emergence. Interestingly, he uses the word theory in its original Greek sense of contemplation or looking. The author gives an interesting explanation of *Steigerung* or intensification where Goethe refers to the task of distilling his individuality still further. He asks if Goethe was really a scientist, and it is here that he could have done with some more detailed references to current Goethean science in the work of Henri Bortoft and Arthur Zajonc. This is more sympathetic to a

developmental rather than molecular approach to biology. Then, in connection with his theory of colour, there is a highly critical book written in the 1930s by Sir Arthur Eddington.

The chapter on classical art and world literature shows how Goethe regarded himself as a classicist even if some critics treat him as a romantic. He read French, Italian and English as well as Latin and classical Greek and translations from Persian and Asian literature. He had a particular sympathy for the Greeks, characterising their way of life as 'freer, more spontaneous, closer to the senses, less intellectualised than the modern world.' They celebrated the body as well as the mind, and Goethe was reluctant to prise these apart or indeed to separate himself from Nature. It was interesting to find out how little he thought of Dante - the devaluing of the physical world in Christianity might have something to do with this.

The chapter on tragedy compares Goethe's work with other writers and analyses his major plays. The most important point is his rejection of catharsis or false consolation and his insistence that his characters should rebound and do all the good they can. Goethe was also wary of conventional morality (he lived with Christiane Vulpius for many years before marrying her), taking Nature for his model, with its balance of creative and destructive energies. The author sees the redemption of Faust as due to his never abandoning desire and always striving for something that lay beyond him in terms of transformation and purification; also healing through the power of Nature. The author refers to the imaginative appeal for Goethe of the transmigration of souls without really taking it seriously. For me, dying and becoming is central not only to the life of Goethe, but to life in general.



“The grass is always greener where you water it.”

– Anonymous



books in brief

David Lorimer

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

SCIENCE-PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

Images of Time – Mind, Science, Reality

George Jaroszkiewicz

Oxford 2016, 305 pp., £25, h/b.

A fascinating and wide-ranging study of time, drawing on physics, mathematics, philosophy, religion, history, science fiction and even films. A leitmotif throughout the book is the Royal Society maxim '*nullius in verba*' - do not take anyone's word for it and test things for yourself. For the author, this involves avoiding metaphysics and focusing on empirical content, although metaphysical assumptions are themselves unavoidable. The main themes are concepts of time, classical time and quantum time. The author begins with a number of stimulating definitions, none of which is complete in itself and which are informed by paradigms, as he explains. The first chapter also explains many versions of the arrow of time, including thermodynamic, psychological, evolutionary and causal. On the other hand, time is in a sense cyclical, as Mircea Eliade elaborates. The relationship of observers to time involves contextuality, and the author quotes Heisenberg's warning that human language enables the construction of sentences without any content. Interestingly, he quotes Teilhard to the effect that the universe we know is a joint product of the observer and the observed.

He goes on to quote another insight from Teilhard (with approval) that our interpretation of the universe is not satisfying unless it covers the interior as well as the exterior of things, mind as well as matter. Many theories of everything focus only on the outside. The range of the book is such that nothing is omitted, even if it is treated in short order. There is a history of subjective images of time, cultural and literary images, objective and mathematical images, illusory and causal images, then time in physics and biology, the dimensions and architectural time with themes developed from classical physics, relativity and quantum theory. These include time travel, imaginary time, irreversible time and quantised space-time. At times the treatment is quite mathematical and technical but the narrative remains very clear. The author distinguishes carefully between conjecture and empiricism and I enjoyed his observation in the epilogue of a growing realisation that thinkers of the past were easily as good as we are - including Aristotle. This is a comprehensive and highly readable account.

Ockham's Razors

Elliot Sober

Oxford 2015, 314 pp., £17.99, p/b.

Most readers will be familiar with Occam's razor or the principle of parsimony that states that simpler theories are better than more complex ones, other things being equal. This must be the most comprehensive treatment of the subject, providing as it does a history, parsimony in evolutionary biology, then in psychology with respect to chimpanzee mind-reading, and in philosophy. The history chapter explains a variety of versions, starting with Aristotle's principle that nature does nothing in vain and the covering argument between geocentric and heliocentric astronomy. In

the case of Newton, his formulation is that 'no more causes of natural things should be admitted than are both true and sufficient to explain their phenomena.' This naturalistic thought is taken up by Hume on the uniformity of nature, an argument he uses to dismiss the evidence for miracles. John Stuart Mill offers a more subtle formulation that we should not believe anything for which there is no evidence: the principle is methodological rather than ontological - to do with ways of knowing rather than the nature of reality.

There is an extensive discussion of Bayes and Bayesianism concerning the probability assigned to a hypothesis in the light of new evidence. Sober compares this with the idea of model selection and the falsification approach of Popper. In the psychology chapter, the author asks if chimpanzees are mind readers or just behaviour readers, which brings up the problem of blackbox influence - in this case the mechanisms or intervening variables that mediate the connection between stimulus and response. The last chapter may be of most interest to readers as it discusses atheism and the problem of evil as well as the mind-body problem and the causal efficacy of the mental. These raise the question of naturalism and identity theory where answers will depend on prior commitments and one's overall worldview. For me the important point is to use the principle with integrity rather than as a knee-jerk reaction in defence of naturalism and materialism. This book gives a subtle insight into the scope and limits of Occam's razor.

The Natural and the Human

Stephen Gaukroger

Oxford 2016, 402 pp., £30, h/b.

This book is the third volume of a magnum opus on science and the shaping of modernity - previous volumes have covered the periods 1210 to 1685 and 1680 to 1760 in the case of *The Collapse of Mechanism* and *The Rise of Sensibility*. This current book covers the period 1739 to 1841 (Hume to Feuerbach), so we may expect further volumes to appear. The scholarship is prodigious and his main thesis highlights the significance of the fundamental shift in scientific enquiry from the natural to the human realm, involving the naturalisation of the human - a process that has continued since that time. This means attempting to understand human behaviour and motivations in empirical rather than theological or metaphysical terms.

The first part covers the dichotomies of understanding in terms of reason and sensibility as well as the limits of certainty with the introduction of probability theory. This leads on to rethinking the nature of matter more in terms of force than mechanism. The second part covers anthropological medicine, philosophical anthropology, the natural history of man with the emergence of imperative disciplines such as anatomy, geography and history, and then social arithmetic and the rise of quantification. These disciplines formulate their own empirical questions. The third part discusses the naturalisation of religion along with the historicisation of Christianity and dogma and the rise of the idea of the evolution of religion. It is fascinating to read Bayle, Gibbon, Strauss and Feuerbach on these topics and to realise how radical they were in their own time. The reader comes away with a more nuanced understanding of how the sciences have shaped the modern outlook - the book is a real *tour de force*.

The Concept of Nature

Alfred North Whitehead

Cambridge 2016, 132 pp., £14.99, p/b.

First published in 1920, this classic series of Turner Lectures by Whitehead represents an early attempt to get to grips with the new physics of relativity and its implications for philosophy of science. He thought that we needed a new concept of nature given realism and the structure of our perceptual knowledge. He resisted the attempt to bifurcate nature into mind and matter as he worked towards his magnum opus *Process and Reality* that came out about ten years later. He distinguishes thought about nature from sense-perception of nature, remarking that nature is self-contained for thought. He begins with this relationship between nature and thought, moving on to a critique of theories of bifurcation of nature. He then conducts a philosophical analysis of the major concepts of time, space and motion and the nature of objects. The reader engages with a major philosopher formulating a complex new set of ideas that are then summarised in the extra chapters at the end. Whitehead introduces his own terminology such as 'observational present' and 'percipient event' as key elements of our experience, thus extending the reader's grasp and vocabulary – the book will be of particular interest to philosophers of physics and historians of philosophy.

On the Scent

Paolo Pelosi

Oxford 2016, 263 pp., £18.99, h/b.

The cover of this book features a steaming cup of coffee with the subtitle 'a journey through the science of smell' – a field in which there has been tremendous progress over the last 40 years and in which the author is a world expert. Smells are created by volatile molecules interacting with hundreds of receptors in the nose whereby a small change in the shape of the molecule is sufficient to transform a pleasant smell into a stench. Scientists have been investigating the chemical language of smell while perfume companies tried to shape it to their advantage. As humans rather than dogs, we are primarily driven by the visual system – dog owners will know that a dog's sense of smell is far more important to them, and the area of the brain dedicated to processing olfactory stimuli is larger than the visual area. The author sees smells as more related to pleasure rather than being essential for survival as in other animals. The author covers the whole field, and in particular the molecular aspects and the role of pheromones as messengers of sex and danger. He also looks at the biochemistry of olfaction and odorant-binding proteins. Some sections are pretty technical but nevertheless accessible to general readers. It is a fascinating exploration at the interface between science and a particular form of qualia.

13.8

John Gribbin

Icon Books 2015, 240 pp., £16.99, p/b.

John Gribbin is one of the most engaging and informed of popular science writers who also has a very good grasp of the history of science and biographies of its principal characters, which makes this a highly readable account of the history of cosmology. He sets out what he calls the most important factor in his introduction, namely the agreement between quantum theory and relativity theory that separately give right answers to the question of the age of the Universe – 13.8 billion years, just older than the ages of the stars it contains, as should be the case; they are just a little bit younger than the universe. Gribbin takes the reader on a tour of how we know the ages of stars and the age of the Universe using a number of different methods. One of the most interesting episodes is seeing how early indications of the Big Bang theory were missed by researchers originally committed to the Steady State theory. He still finds it mind-blowing that only 5% of the Universe is formed of the matter

with which we are familiar, 25% of cold dark matter and the rest is a form of dark energy. He concludes that the finding that the age of the Universe is just slightly older than the stars is both the ultimate truth of science and the ultimate proof that science is the best way to understand how the world works.

Physics – A Short History

J. L. Heilbronn

Oxford 2016, 228 pp., £10.99, h/b.

J. L. Heilbronn is the editor of the *Oxford Companion to the History of Science*, a role that stands him in good stead when addressing the history of physics from quintessence to quarks. He points out that for the Greeks, physics stood between logic and ethics and was for many years referred to as natural philosophy. The progression of the focus of learning moves between independent private schools in antiquity, the court and library and Islam, then universities, academies and now university-government-industry. The book is effectively a short history of ideas that moves around the cultures of Europe depending on time and place, so there is a fascinating chapter on Islamic contributions. All the principal developments are described along with their personalities, and I found it interesting to learn the extent to which Newton's work was a response to Descartes. There is an interesting discussion of the reception of Newton's theory of gravity, which some people considered magical – he was simply describing the phenomenon. Physics, along with science in general, was professionalised during the 19th century. Cosmology also features prominently, since many physicists were trying to work out the nature of physical laws in relation to the existence or nonexistence of God. Heilbronn makes his own position clear in the last chapter when he aligns himself with views of Steven Weinberg, associating progress of physics with dedeification and the deanthropomorphisation of nature. I sympathise with the view that we no longer need capricious deities and traditional dogmas, but, for me, jettisoning the spiritual dimension is throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Making all Things New

Ilia Delio

Orbis Books 2016, 218 pp., £25, p/b.

Subtitled 'Catholicity, Cosmology, Consciousness', this impressive and erudite study is full of stimulating new ideas and connections between religion, spirituality and science. The author holds doctorates in pharmacology and historical theology, and is unusually well read. She defines catholicity as a conscious awareness of how everything forms one thing and has the power to reconnect the various dimensions of life as they reflect an underlying wholeness. Her overall vision is profoundly influenced by Teilhard de Chardin, which is also indicated in her subtitle. The word cosmos has been central in Western science and philosophy, and the meaning of catholicity has evolved both inside and outside the Church; the mediaeval synthesis of microcosm and macrocosm was overtaken by mechanistic lawfulness. 20th-century science, however, has introduced new understandings of wholeness and emergence, with what Teilhard called the complexification of consciousness; this wholeness is also relational.

The author then moves back to Jesus as a strange attractor and borrows some metaphors from quantum mechanics to describe baptism and Eucharist as forms of entanglement and the resurrection as a quantum phenomenon. Although I found this ingenious, I did not find it convincing as for her the resurrection seems to consist of living on in our relationships; this is poetic rather than factual language, as in the sentence that 'Jesus lives on in the heart of the universe in a new relatedness'. The idea of the Church as an open system, especially since Vatican II, is an interesting line of thought, and there is ample evidence that Pope Francis is moving in that direction. An open systems theology is an intriguing

idea, and the author shows how Teilhard's main ideas embody this. She encourages the Church to see revelation as process, relatedness and patterns of organisation. In her conclusion, she calls for a new catholicity, a new religion of the world based on an integrated consciousness of the whole, a deep relationality and a deepening of inner and outer wholeness: in short, recognition of connectedness as a basic reality of our existence. It is hard to disagree with such an inspiring aspiration.

Quantum Mind and Social Science

Alexander Wendt

Cambridge 2015, 354 pp., £19.99, p/b.

In this brilliant and seminal work, Alexander Wendt ambitiously transcends the assumption that consciousness and social life can be understood in terms of classical physics, and recasts the ontology of social science in quantum terms by defining consciousness as a macroscopic quantum mechanical phenomenon. This represents a long overdue overhaul of assumptions and updates social thinking about the nature of reality. In classical terms, consciousness is often regarded as an anomaly and understood in mechanical or deterministic terms (there is no room for intention and free will), while it is integral to quantum theory, more so in some interpretations than others. The first chapter lays the groundwork for a quantum social science before three very lucid chapters explaining quantum mechanics and its challenges to the classical assumptions of materialism, atomism, determinism, mechanism, absolute space and time, and the subject-object distinction; there is also a very lucid account of five interpretations of quantum theory, including that of David Bohm.

The second part develops the theme of quantum consciousness and life through quantum brain theory, a discussion of panpsychism and neutral monism and the formulation of what he calls a quantum vitalism. Here the author combines the physical claim that the brain is capable of sustaining coherent quantum states with the metaphysical claim of panpsychism that consciousness inheres in the very structure of matter. He discusses this with respect to cognition, experience and will. The key to his quantum vitalism or pansychism is quantum coherence and here draws on the work of Mae-Wan Ho. He makes the very interesting claim that the essence of life is in fact subjectivity - matter only becomes life when organised into quantum coherent wholes, and intentional phenomena are in fact quantum mechanical. He believes, rightly I think, that the new materialists have failed to come to grips with hard problem of consciousness and remain caught up in the limits of the classical world view. (p. 147)

The next part elaborates a quantum model of man, discussing cognition, choice, agency and non-local experience in time. Then there is a section on the cultural entanglement implied by language and other minds, and the argument is brought together at an ontological level with the formulation of a quantum vitalist sociology where he summarises the shortcomings of the existing mainstream approach and argues for a new naturalism of quantum consciousness that allows human beings to be conscious, free and purposive. All this is underpinned by 'a phenomenological vitalism in which subjectivity is constituted by a physical but nonmaterial and unobservable life force: quantum coherence.' He sees humans as walking wave functions rather than classical machines so that human experience now has a home in a universe imbued with meaning. This book is a real game changer and an extraordinary interdisciplinary achievement that deserves the widest readership.

The Destiny of the Universe

Gerard M. Verschuuren

Paragon House 2014, 176 pp., \$19.95, p/b.

The author is a geneticist working at the interface between science and religion – here he engages with the major questions of philosophy of science and religion, taking the reader on a journey leading to a wider and deeper understanding of the scope and limits of science – beyond the how to the why. In doing so he provides a largely missing philosophical background that many scientists naively ignore by not understanding the nature of their own subject and its corresponding ways of knowing. He gradually widens his enquiry from law and order to divine intelligence and from an impersonal deism to a personal theism – a God recognisable to Christian theology. Not all readers will be comfortable making the whole journey towards the Great Unknown but the author provides good reasons to justify his arguments.

What is Life?

Christopher Busby

QTP Publications, 125 pp., £10, p/b.

Taking his cue from Erwin Schroedinger's book of the same title, Chris explores the origins and mechanisms of living systems based on a lifetime of research starting from molecular physical chemistry. He hypothesises that 'the key processes in living systems involve transfer of energy at infrared frequencies', and that this energy exchange is the life force. He notes that living creatures are hotter than their surroundings, and that this enables them to borrow energy, which is created and sustained by infrared radiation. As a specialist in the health effects of ionising radiation, he sees this as a principal cause of increased cancer incidence. He also gives some indication of the possibility of curing cancer through hyperthermia, that is heating up the tumour so as to cause 'more signals from the more remote tissue in the normal cell community without changing the signal resonance from the tumour community.' This leads him to speculate that treatment using selected frequencies might be successful. All this will be of particular interest to biologists working on health issues.

Creating Scientific Controversies

David Harker

Cambridge 2015, 260 pp., £18.99, p/b.

Subtitled 'uncertainty and bias in science and society', this is an important work bringing to bear insights from the philosophy of science to what Harker calls created controversies. We associate science with authoritative reliability, objectivity, facts and rationality, but this does not remove the less stable human element. The point of departure is the way in which cigarette companies tried to promote the impression that there was no scientific consensus about the safety of their products. These tactics have now been applied in other areas, including food and drink, using doubt and uncertainty to confuse the public and protect industry interests. Sometimes, the inherent caution and uncertainty of science is misused. The first part draws lessons from the philosophy of science in terms of understanding its nature, the empirical approach, theory-laden observations, under-determination and lessons from the history and sociology of science.

The next part looks at biases, including confirmation bias, cherry picking of evidence, overconfidence and straightforward logical fallacies. The author provides a taxonomy of created controversies and how to detect them. The situation arises when it is claimed that there is an ongoing scientific debate about a matter on which there is in fact an overwhelming scientific consensus. Doubt and uncertainty are magnified, and this is then abetted by the journalistic search for balance, which can give a platform to extreme views. The third part describes number of created controversies in more detail - principally anthropogenic climate change and

the intelligent design issue. In the first case, there is an overwhelming scientific consensus called into question largely by interests supported by the oil industry. The second gives a very good account of the discrepancy between expert and public opinion where 'a personal sense of incredulity is not an objection to the evidence and arguments that favour the central components of evolutionary biology.' There are then shorter discussions of HIV and AIDS, vaccinations and autism, and GMOs. Readers will have their own views on these topics, which will not necessarily be those of the author, who I think underestimates some of the widespread problems associated with vaccinations while recognising the benefits (the pharmaceutical industry defends its interests vigorously in this respect). The controversy over GMOs is also identified as one of the deeper values and, as the author himself states, is arguably not a created controversy - I found his discussion helpful. Harker has done readers a great favour by so clearly delineating the nature and significance of created controversies.

MEDICINE-HEALTH

Restoring the Healer

William Dorman, DMin

Templeton Press 2016, 182 pp., \$14.95, p/b.

Drawing on his extensive experience as a hospital chaplain, William Dorman provides a compassionate and instructive guide to spiritual self-care for healthcare professionals in danger of physical and emotional burnout. Healthcare systems around the world are being cut to the bone, putting more pressure on professionals subject to increasing bureaucratic procedures that can crowd out the healer. The twelve chapters contains clinical stories from which various inferences drawn, along with prayers, meditations and reflections expressed in a universal language. People working in hospital inevitably come across tragic and sometimes avoidable situations that shake them to the core. It is tempting to depersonalise, but this route is not recommended by Dorman. Rather, people are encouraged to practise self-care, find balance, contend with limits and possibilities, express encouragement, compassion and kindness, and rediscover their passion; all this in the face of suffering and death. The final chapter encourages an attitude of gratitude as a basic spiritual disposition and contains a beautiful story about a surgeon expressing his gratitude for his team even in the face of apparent failure. The book can be highly recommended to anyone in the business of caring for others.

Nature Cures

N.H. Hawes

Hammersmith 2016, 1,130 pp., £24.99, p/b.
www.naturecures.co.uk

Subtitled 'the A-Z of ailments and natural foods', this is an extraordinary resource that is the distillation of the website above. It falls into three sections: a comprehensive account of all aspects of the human body and bodily systems where a healthy nutritious diet is important and natural medicinal foods can help. This is followed by a section on hazards to human health, while the third section is an A-Z of nature cures safeguards including such topics as minerals, detoxification, household cleaners, pickling, raw juice therapy and daily essentials. The book is the result of 10 years of serious research and should be on every family bookshelf. Where useful, the foods are cross-referenced against conditions that they may help, while foods are listed with their significant components. There is also a certain amount of specific advice, for instance on alcohol and coffee. The format and index make it relatively easy to consult and as the book is a major contribution to the promotion of natural health and excellent value at the price.

Goodbye Parkinson's, Hello Life!

Alex Kerten with David Brinn

Divine Arts 2016, 232 pp., \$16.95, p/b.

Alex Kerten runs a clinic in Israel, and people, around the world to experience what he calls his gyro-kinetic method for eliminating the symptoms of Parkinson's and regaining good health. This combines positive thinking, dance therapy, behaviour modification and martial arts and is based on 30 years of experience. Patients are encouraged to change their scripts, tune into their bodies and live in the present. The second section gives hands-on directions for various exercises, while the third discusses the role of music and the importance of these spires or caregiver. The publisher actually experienced the treatment himself, and it had a dramatic effect - hence his encouragement to write this very helpful book, which every patient should read and activate on a journey of new possibilities beyond conventional medical treatment, which of course still has an important role.

The Ethics of Personalised Medicine

Edited by Jochen Vollmann, Verena Sandow, Sebastian Waescher and Jan Schildman

Ashgate 2015, 285 pp., £70, h/b.

In this context, personalised medicine (PM) is understood as the application of biological data to improve the diagnosis, therapy and prevention of diseases. It has become a symbol of medical progress and better healthcare, but has given rise to controversial debate in relation to its promises. In the last issue (p. 62) I reviewed a book on the decision trap created by an overly deterministic and statistical approach to the subject where patients become gene and risk carriers. Three main understandings of the term are cited: PM is not new because medicine has always been individualised; it is in fact holistic healthcare, as many readers might suppose; and it is treatment targeted at stratified subgroups using various genetic and molecular biomarkers. Apart from Chapter 6, most of the discussion is focused on the third view. Various sections explore concepts and contextual aspects, clinical research with a focus on oncology, personalised medicine and healthcare systems and some recommendations in the oncological field. My impression is that the third view is more accurately called stratified medicine, although personalised or individualised medicine is rhetorically more attractive. Much of the discussion is at a specialist in technical level, and the authors conclude that targeted treatment is realistic for only a minority of patients going to multiple genetic variations and the interplay between environmental and genetic factors.

PHILOSOPHY-SPIRITUALITY

Radical Awakening

Amoda Maa

Watkins 2016, 255 pp., £9.99, p/b.

Much is currently being published on awakening and non-duality with the concomitant deconstruction of the ego and sense of separation. I agree with the author when she says that there is an urgency today to evolve beyond an egocentric perspective in which we experience ourselves as separate from each other, from the world and from life. Our planet is looking for a more interconnected humanity. Metaphysically, this means recognising that we are all manifestations of the one divine life. When we see the divine in everyone, all separation dissolves and we become aware of our true identity. The author describes her own process of surrender, leading to an experience of unbounded spaciousness. So the book invites readers to embrace every moment and realise that every experience can reveal our true nature. The injunction to welcome everything is perhaps the most challenging and evokes the most resistance. The author rightly criticises the spiritual materialism of our time, which

associates becoming spiritual with doing spiritual things rather than looking inside ourselves. Indeed, reading books like this can be another form of distraction from taking responsibility for our own inner reality. If the first stage is finding God in everything, then the next is awakening in the midst of everyday life, to which the second part of the book is devoted. Here there is much valuable practical advice from one who has herself trodden the path.

Spirit of Fire – The Life and Vision of Teilhard de Chardin

Ursula King

Orbis Books 2015 (1996), 258 pp., \$26, p/b.

I reviewed this book when it first came out, and now a further 20 years have passed since the death of Teilhard de Chardin in 1955. It is a moving, informative and sympathetic account of his fascinating life, with all its difficulties and challenges. He was born into aristocratic circumstances, which perhaps helped give him a certain independence of mind. He entered the Jesuit order in 1899, spending time in Jersey, Egypt and England during his training. He was interested in geology and palaeontology from an early age and spent many years in China from the 1920s onwards. It is clear that his experience as a stretcher bearer during the First World War made a great impression on him, but during this time he also wrote some significant mystical works. Like Rupert Sheldrake, he was fundamentally influenced by Henri Bergson, who contributed to formulation of his evolutionary vision with many terms such as the noosphere and the Omega Point that have passed into common usage.

The chapter on faces of the feminine introduces the importance of love and his long friendship with his relation Marguerite Teilhard-Chambon. Ursula describes his intense relationship with the American sculptress Lucile Swan from 1932 and the enormous inner struggles both underwent - he in relation to remaining true to his vocation despite the censorship of the authorities. He even gave her his private diaries in order for her better to understand his situation. Seeing them together in one of the many photographs in the book conveys a strong impression of closeness. Teilhard had many friends and supporters, both personal and professional, but the initiative remained with the authorities and his central ideas remained unpublished. In her postscript, Ursula reflects on Teilhard's legacy and its progress over the last twenty years. People from across a wide range of disciplines have been inspired by his work. She mentions the mutual embeddedness of noosphere and biosphere, for instance in connection with ecological justice, reminding readers that the noosphere was for him a deeply spiritual dimension. Above all, she says, his love of life and deep hope can still speak to us today. I strongly recommend this book, especially to readers unfamiliar with his life, but also as a reminder of one of the great and visionary lives of the last century. It is richly illustrated with black and white photographs and contains many inspiring sidebar quotations from his work.

Teilhard de Chardin - Seven Stages of Suffering

Louis M. Savary and Patricia H. Berne

Orbis Books 2016, 119 pp., £10.99, p/b.

This profound book is based on an essay by Teilhard on the meaning and constructive value of suffering, where he sees suffering as containing a potential energy that can be transformed into the ascensional force of the world. His vision is that suffering transformed into a shared longing for healing could hasten the advent of the kingdom of God. In the introduction, the authors give an account of Teilhard's own suffering. It is easy to forget the opposition of the Church to his work that not only resulted in none of his major work being published during his lifetime, but also long periods of exile and isolation, even during his last few years in New York. His body was buried without ceremony in a grave with

a stone that did not even have his full name engraved - an extraordinary reflection, given the influence of his work over the last 60 years.

The basic structure is given by seven stages of suffering based on resistance, transformation and union. The fundamental propositions at the beginning of the book are that pain and suffering are inevitable, that we are called to participate actively in God's evolutionary project, that human suffering can generate energy for this, and that Christian spirituality is represented by the cross. As the book moves through the various stages, readers are given instructions about how to transform the energy of suffering and focus it on a particular person or healing. There are moving prayers and examples of practice. The whole process takes place within what Teilhard called *Le Milieu Divin* in which we have our being. There are times when people have to move beyond the hope of cure to healing in a wider sense and can use their suffering in the service of growth. Suffering can involve an enormous expenditure of energy, and with a little focus this can be redirected. One woman, while she was dying, put up a Care Page on the Internet, where she encouraged people in a similar situation to be grateful for small things. The final chapter culminates in detachment and forgiveness as one moves into the transition of death. This book is an important spiritual resource for the suffering and dying.

Suffering: if God exists, why doesn't he stop it?

John Morris

Circle Books (John Hunt) 2016, 71 pp., £5.99, p/b.

In this short, succinct and accessible account endorsed by many public figures including Martin Rees, John Morris tackles head-on the issues raised by theodicy - God and the problem of evil and suffering. He himself has a profoundly handicapped grandson, so speaks from personal experience. There was much public debate on the subject following the 2004 tsunami - in a similar vein to the 1755 Lisbon earthquake. The classic statement of the problem is that an omnipotent and omniscient God cannot also be good because he lets suffering continue - so he is either lacking in goodness or power or both. The God envisaged by the author is both personal and loving but one who has restricted his/her power in order to guarantee creativity and freedom. He/she is, as Whitehead suggests, involved in the evolutionary process with a moral purpose to multiply goodness and bring growth out of agonising situations - suffering is then part of the package where virtue can be chosen for its own sake. In comparing the philosophies of other religions, Morris feels that the Christian suffering God is a real advantage. Many readers will be familiar with these arguments but the lucid exposition encourages them to revisit and perhaps rethink them. There can be no definitive answer, but as humans we should feel obliged to engage with the challenge.

Christ and the Cosmos

Keith Ward

Cambridge 2015, 271 pp., £18.99, p/b.

Keith Ward will be well known to many readers for his work on science and religion as well as philosophical theology. In this reformulation of Trinitarian doctrine, he introduces various historical perspectives and biblical sources of Trinitarian thought before criticising a social approach that he thinks ultimately incoherent; he contrasts his view of three forms of existence in one divine Subject with those who refer to the Trinity as a society or communion of three individual subjects. He explains that for him God as Father remains transcendent to all creation, God as Son manifests in creation, while God as Spirit unites creation to the divine (p. 220); in other words, transcendent, incarnate and immanent in created things. His central argument for this formulation is 'because *theosis* is the purpose of creation, and the heart of Christian faith. This universe is created in order that autonomous persons can come into existence,

can shape their own lives freely and creatively, and can find their fulfilment in being united to the divine in love.' I find this an inspiring vision where Jesus is the self-expressive unfolding of the divine will, 'the embodied Ideal of human personhood.' (p. 245). The last chapter explains why a modern formulation of the Trinity must be cosmic, in view of our new knowledge of the nature of the universe. Here Keith builds on the work of Whitehead and John MacQuarrie with his primordial, expressive and unitive forms of divine action - on our planet, this can be expressed through the Christian faith, but it might take different forms elsewhere without changing the essentials. Although quite technical, this book provides an important update of thinking about the Trinity.

The Logic of Enlightenment

Dave S Henley

iff Books (John Hunt) 2015, 221 pp., £12.99, p/b.

Subtitled 'a cognitive theory of spirituality', this searching and analytical book should, according to its own argument, have been subtitled 'a non-conceptual theory of spirituality.' It ranges over philosophical and spiritual themes from East and West involving our fundamental orientation in life, the nature of the self, paradox and meaning. Writers like Tolstoy have arrived at the limits of logic and rationality and suffer a loss of meaning that can only be transcended through a new form of perception and understanding as given in mystical experience, which the author explores. The self is recontextualised within the Self, the separation inherent in the mental and conceptual is transcended. This process highlights the limitations of Western philosophy, encapsulated in the Upanishads: 'that which is not comprehended by the mind but by which the mind comprehends - know that to be Brahman.' Meister Eckhart realised this, but not Descartes or David Hume. They did not arrive at a state of pure consciousness, which is the underlying feature of meditation.

Henley explores the nature of paradox and contradiction, and it is here that there is a large gap in his reading, namely Iain McGilchrist's work *The Master and his Emissary*, with its discussion of the different capacities of the left and right hemispheres of the brain. Paradoxes are generated by the very operating system of the left hemisphere, but can be understood intuitively by the right (the same applies to jokes). So part of the argument attributed solely to mystical experience can also be resolved by understanding the relative roles of the hemispheres. The rest has to do with the development of self-awareness through spiritual practice that transcends thought so as to allow a direct experience of pure consciousness or the Tao or Atman. This is not so much a conceptual change (p. 146) as a move beyond concepts and indeed the existential choices of continental philosophy (although, as he points out, it is related to the fall and redemption of man). So the level of enlightenment involves 'not only knowing who you are, but also a higher form of intelligence' (p. 205). Given that enlightenment is by definition inconceivable, it can only be represented by symbols, which is what religions have done. For Henley, the path involves surrendering the primacy of conceptual thought (of which this book is full!) and taking up a spiritual practice that puts one consciously on the path. This is a stimulating exploration for readers conditioned by Western rationality.

Do We Need God to be Good?

C. R. Hallpike

Christian Alternative (John Hunt) 2016, £13.99, p/b.

Much strident rhetoric has been written by new atheist philosophers and scientists about the negative effects of religion in terms of war, hatred and intolerance, restating similar arguments by Russell and others 100 years ago. The author of this original book is an anthropologist and as such has a different perspective on the social origins of morality as observed in cultures around the world. He argues that moral ideas are essentially social and can be

reinforced by religious systems encouraging the cultivation of personal virtue. Basic to his understanding is the way in which we form group identities that define us both within the group and over and against other groups. He shows through powerful experiments that even artificially created groups soon reflect a dynamic of amity and enmity. So after an introductory section on human nature, the author moves on to religion and morality where he demonstrates that religion is very much more than a belief in supernatural beings and exhibits a sophisticated level of reasoning equal in every way to the most rigorous of modern scientists. In considering the outlook of Epicurus and ancient materialist atheists, he remarks that they prioritise individual pleasure and do not think there is such thing as society. Religious ethics can provide a higher perspective on social ethics and move people beyond a selfish approach.

The next chapter discusses the nature of humanism, quoting extensively from AC Grayling. The prime values seem to be autonomy and rationalism, involving the primacy rather than the transcendence of the self. Hence the glorification of success. The author considers the humanist critique of religion, responding to some of the commonest criticisms. In the last chapter, he tackles the humanist claim that the world would be a much better place if religion could disappear and atheist rationalism replace it. Scientifically, he shows how a purely biological approach tends to lead to the denial of consciousness and free will, as we also find in behaviourism. In other words, it is essentially impersonal and objective when we know from our own experience that the real value of life is in fact subjective. Based on this view that removes the human dignity of the individual, totalitarian atheist regimes have killed millions of people during the 20th century. On the other hand, we also have a growing culture of narcissism. This all provides a sharp corrective to the more simplistic biological and humanist views of selfish individualism. Instead, the author asks how adding the spiritual dimension of existence to the material dimension changes the kind of ethical system we can have. In Christianity, the fatherhood of God is linked to the brotherhood of man, and the dignity of the individual is assured. He also reminds us that appalling acts committed in the name of religion cannot in fact be justified in the name of that religion.

The Tradition of Liberal Theology

Michael Langford (SMN)

Eerdmans 2014, 166 pp., \$18, p/b.

This is a clearly written and accessible overview of liberal theology, an approach that seeks the balance between religious faith and reason. The book begins with an overview of the term that leads into an analysis of eleven typical characteristics of the liberal tradition and theology. This will be particularly helpful to those readers less seasoned in the field with its discussion of reason and revelation, free will, toleration, the combination of faith and works and a minimal number of basic teachings, in contrast with more fundamentalist approaches. Liberals are wary of an overemphasis on miracles but nevertheless engage with the resurrection, which Michael briefly discusses. The account of thirteen key figures in liberal Christian tradition makes interesting reading and contains a number of well-known as well as less well-known people including, interestingly, Elizabeth I. This gives the reader a good understanding of the tradition and its development. The final part looks at some alternatives, including materialism with its own rigid dogmatism and facile connection between evil and religious belief. Michael is a reliable and sympathetic guide to the issues he so lucidly expounds.

Availability**Robert J. Wicks***Ave Maria Press 2016, 141 pp., £9.99, p/b.*

The main influences on this thoughtful book are Thomas Merton and Henri Noewen. To be available is to be present to oneself, others and God; also to live life in a prayerful fashion in the presence of God. The first part considers the themes of uniqueness, failure and forgiveness, self-awareness and clarity, all of which are related and underpinned by critical self questioning. For others, we can become a caring presence, and for the author it is important this be based firmly in Christianity. There are questions for reflection at the end of each chapter and a selection from Scripture. Prayer can also help develop the necessary self-awareness and compassion. I was struck by a passage from Jean-Pierre Dubois Dumeé about the need for an interior life - for silence in the midst of noise, contemplation in a century of action, peace among outbursts of violence, quality to counterbalance quantity, slowness to compensate for speed, and the need for human warmth when everything is being rationalised or computerised. The book is a searching inner examination, a call to live with real spiritual integrity.

The 22 Laws of Inner Peace**Eliphas Levi***www.22laws.com 2016, 98 pp., no price given.*

Eliphas Levi (1810-1875) was a well-known mystic and sage in his day and in this short book, translated from French, he sets out a number of principles for inner peace including working on one's character, humility, doing one's duty in the present by doing good today is not seeking the glory that comes from the impulsive admiration of men. Then there are a number of instructive fables and two short pieces on how to attract your desires and create good opportunities - we are advised to believe that we can do something, then act. The last section contains some striking quotations: 'the law is slow and consistent progress is the universal law of nature;' 'it is the imagination alone that accomplishes all miracles;' and 'the source of most diseases is in emotional disorders; we must begin by meeting the soul, and then the cure for the body will quickly follow.'

You are History**Gordon Phinn***White Crow Books 2015, 159 pp., £11.99, p/b*

This is the third volume in the eternal life trilogy and subtitled 'the soul, the higher self and our state of divinity'. The content shifts between Gordon and the perspective of his Higher Self or Monad, which expresses itself through a number of partly parallel lifetimes in different time periods - so there is a sense of group identity over time. Hence the title and the phrase 'you are everybody, everybody is you. You are history.' In this view, we are all fundamentally expressions of the one light and are capable of bridging personality with the Higher Self when we remember to do so. The Monad is the Soul of which we are an evolving aspect subject most closely to influences within our own group. A key practice is that of witnessing - the observer consciousness, which can help bring about a more harmonious relationship between the personality and the Soul. Towards the end of the book, there are some interesting quotations from other authors also writing about the Monad, including Blavatsky, Leadbeater, Bailey and more recently Chris Bache and Jane Roberts. The term used by Emerson, oversoul, is a popular one and encourages the reader to identify more with the core oneness that underlies our individual expressions. In this sense, the One is present in the many and it is the task of the many to realise their oneness with the One.

Enso Morning: Daily Meditation Gifts**Jacob Watson***O Books (John Hunt) 2016, 347 pp. £13.99, p/b.*

This collection of morning blessing letters was written over a six-month period as part of a thesis at Matthew Fox's University of Creation Spirituality. Each contains seven sections: welcome, silent meditation, affirmation of physical self, then of the emotional and spiritual self, blessing for the day and gift of the day. They are very simple and direct and, although indexed at the front, the gift is not revealed until the end. Readers are reminded each day is a real gift and that the quality of our lives largely depends on the attention we give to everyday matters and sensations. Sometimes he uses imagery, as in imagining you are standing under a waterfall that washes out your feelings and the corresponding blessing is that whatever is not necessary can fall away, keeping us clean, fresh and pure. The best way of using this book is as intended, namely as a morning ritual, either opened at random or by selecting a particular appropriate theme. It is an inspiring exercise.

PSYCHOLOGY-CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES**Consciousness from Zombies to Angels****Christian de Quincey***Park Street Press 2008, 306 pp., \$18.95, p/b.*

This wide-ranging book takes the reader through philosophy, science and mysticism in a study of the nature of consciousness. In the form of an owner's guide for the mind. For philosophy, this is the hard problem, for science, arguably the final frontier and for spirituality an abiding mystery. The book is structured into seven steps for transforming your life: watch your language, identify the problem, learn how to look, recognise your patterns, know yourself, embrace your shadow and practise transformation. On the journey, we need to use the faculties of reason, observation, feeling and intuition. By approaching consciousness from these three different angles, the author is able to help the reader clarify various meanings and processes and the lenses we use to understand the world. The scientific section explores hardwiring for God and co-creative quantum consciousness, the author adds his voice to the many thinkers who are now claiming that consciousness is primordial and cannot be fully understood through a third-person perspective. He calls this plate-glass science rather than looking-glass science. The latter entails subjectivity, engagement and quality, meaning, growth and transformation. This naturally leads on to the third part of spiritual practice and the mystical journey with its focus on feelings, the perspective of the witness and the cultivation of silence. The book will appeal specially to readers are looking for an integrated understanding of consciousness including philosophy, science and mysticism.

Essays in Truth – Glimpses into Reality**Nick Roach and Sally Powell***NR Publishing 2015, 193 pp., £9.99, p/b –
www.nickroach.co.uk*

Nick Roach began his spiritual quest at an early age and underwent a prolonged process before he came to the experience that 'I am this'. He studied with Barry Long, who taught that 'stillness is the way.' I recently watched an interview with Barry shortly before he died, which was very interesting indeed. This book takes the form of a spiritual blog addressing various questions under the heading of enlightenment, insights, truth of love, revelations and world religions. His partner Sally also contributes a section. The questions are those that many spiritual seekers will be asking and Nick's answers are clear and direct. His fundamental practice is being aware of where you are and what you are feeling, which leads eventually and perhaps suddenly to the

insight that your true nature is what you are behind your thoughts, beliefs and feelings – pure being. He goes beyond the non-dual cliché that there is nothing happening to no one and sees liberation as beyond enlightenment. Nick and Sally write eloquently about love, both making a key distinction between having sex and making love – for the man this means loving the woman selflessly and consciously (Barry Long also writes eloquently about this). The book offers a wise and compassionate perspective on enlightenment and the spiritual life.

Positive Psychology

Bridget Grenville-Cleave

Icon Books 2016, 245 pp., £6.99, p/b.

Many readers will be familiar with the term positive psychology, pioneered by Martin Seligman and his colleagues. Oddly enough, positive psychologists make very little reference to other pioneers in the field such as Abraham Maslow's humanistic psychology. Positive psychology has managed to penetrate some universities to a larger extent than either humanistic or transpersonal psychology. It has always struck me as a huge shortcoming that psychology undergraduates will for the most part have never heard of Ken Wilber, Charles Tart and Stan Grof. That aside, this is an excellent practical introduction to the field. The author reminds us of research indicating that around 40% of our happiness is determined by intentional activities over which we have control. While the main features of positive psychology are thoroughly covered, such as positive emotions and relationships, barriers to well-being, meaning and purpose, character strengths, mindset and accomplishment, the author includes other important lifestyle factors as well - emotional intelligence, appreciative inquiry, gratitude, mindfulness, nutrition, resilience and exercise. There are practical activities interspersed throughout the book so that readers can treat it as a research project. In the final analysis, it is our attitudes that are key, as the author explains in her helpful discussion of different explanatory styles based on optimism and pessimism. She encourages us to savour life rather than spend the average 3.5 hours a day watching TV (over three working days a week!), which doesn't seem to make us happy anyway.

The Mindfulness Key

Sarah Silverton, with Vanessa Hope and Eluned Gold

Watkins 2016, 175 pp., £7.99, p/b.

This authoritative book, with a foreword by the pioneer of mindfulness, Professor Jon Kabat-Zinn, is also endorsed by the Centre for Mindfulness Research at Bangor University. Although there are many books on mindfulness now on the market, this one stands out with its clear instructions and explanations along with practical exercises and illuminating case histories. It is focused on dealing with stress, anxiety and depression. The first part gives an overview of mindfulness and its practice, while the second works with life's difficulties, applying mindfulness techniques to depression, stress and anxiety, relationships, children, carers and illness. At any point it is possible to step back and become aware of one's emotions and reactions. One can slow down from constant doing to the stillness of being. This can also apply to ordinary daily activities such as eating, breathing and walking. Applying mindfulness to, for instance, pain, can transform one's perceptions and help people move forward. The same applies to reactions to a serious diagnosis. Mindfulness also seems to enhance empathy, which is important for carers. We can all benefit from living more mindfully, and this book shows us how it can be done.

Mindfulness

Tessa Wyatt

Icon Books 2016, 218 pp., £6.99, p/b.

It is symptomatic that publishers are bringing out their own guides to mindfulness so that I am reviewing two in a single issue. Tessa Wyatt did her training in the centre where Sarah Silverton works and has been part of the Parliamentary group on mindfulness that recently published a significant report. Needless to say, there is an overlap in the contents between the two books, which are both well written and set out. The emphasis of this book is less clinical and chapters are single words such as space, breath, body, attitude, reacting, and sensations. Exercises and personal reflections are built into the text such as the simple act of really tasting a couple of raisins. The author emphasises the importance of being in the moment non-judgementally and accepting feelings as they are. Both books encouraging readers to slow down and create pauses in our frenetic activities as well as in our thoughts. I liked the idea of listing nourishing and depleting activities and seeing how one can re-prioritise one's life. On balance, I would recommend this book as an introductory text and the other one for those with a more clinical slant.

The Psychology of the Internet

Patricia Wallace

Cambridge 2015, 392 pp., £27.99, p/b.

It is a giddy thought to think how much has happened with the Internet since the first edition of this comprehensive book in 1999. The approach is research-based and provides fascinating insights into our online behaviour while encouraging critical thought about the Internet and its development. The various chapters cover the new psychology of impression formation (your online persona), group dynamics, online aggression, the psychology of interpersonal attraction, altruism, online gaming, child development, gender and sexuality, privacy and surveillance as well as addictive properties. The author asks if there has been an increase in narcissism, citing calls to self-focused action in Facebook and Google plus. Personality types also play a role whether on an individual or group basis. A 2010 study of 2000 generation M2 children and adolescents found that average total media use was more than 7 1/2 hours a day, an increase of 20% from five years earlier. If multitasking and multi-screening are factored in, then the figure jumped to 10 hours 45 minutes.

This raises the possibility, discussed in Chapter 11, that we are almost constantly online with the emergence of a 24/7 working week. This makes it hard to achieve so-called work/life balance involving managing blurred boundaries and spillover into personal life. There is a good discussion on the prevalence of Internet addiction. It turns out that, according to one US survey, one third of teens and young adults check Facebook at least every 15 minutes – and a Taiwanese tourist visiting Melbourne walked right off the pier while checking her Facebook app; the rescue was complicated by her trying to swim while holding her phone above the water! Apparently a key factor is FOMO – fear of missing out – and those with high scores spend more time trying to stay connected. As for the future, there will surely be surprises in store but overall developments are likely to continue to reflect positive and negative aspects of human nature.

Ghostology**Steven T. Parsons***White Crow Books 2016, 282 pp., £12.99, p/b.*

Ghostology is simply defined here as the study of ghosts, distinguishing it from ghost hunting and parapsychology. It is a study that implicitly goes back to the earliest times. I myself never use the term ghost, preferring apparition instead. The author has a scientific and technical background, as is apparent from the contents and approach of the book, including a chapter on critical thinking. He goes into the investigation process, for instance how to question a witness, before dealing with aspects of monitoring and measuring and moving on to more technical and specialist matters. Sometimes a change of temperature can be significant, and some apparitions can be assessed electromagnetically. The environment as a whole needs to be monitored and measured with the best equipment, on which the author gives plenty of advice. He has a chapter on electronic voice phenomena and a corresponding one on sound recording. He also advises on photography and video and discusses more generally the nature of light. Towards the end, he provides strong evidence that so-called orbs in digital photography are in fact dust particles, an argument reinforced by a recent discussion with a visiting neighbour. In short, this book is the most comprehensive and authoritative guide to the field.

ECOLOGY AND FUTURES STUDIES**Earth Matters****Richard D. Bardgett***Oxford 2016, 191 pp., £18.99, p/b.*

Subtitled 'how soil underlies civilisation', this highly readable and authoritative book bridges the science of soil into a general readership and as such should be widely read by environmentalists and others. He makes clear that the proper and sustainable management of soil is a critical imperative as mismanagement has led to the demise of previous civilisations. This is particularly important for us as modern industrial methods compromise the organic matter in soil. Bardgett explains how soil forms over many millennia in different layers depending on climate, temperature, human intervention and the passage of time. Biodiversity is important in our soils, even if there is a certain redundancy in terms of replacing certain elements. He mentions Sir Albert Howard in this context, but not Lady Eve Balfour, founder of the Soil Association. Her book is not in the index. In passing, he mentions the importance of *terroir* in the production of wine. Large amounts of soil are paved over or developed every year - this is particularly the case in China, where it has had an impact on domestic food production. Another chapter deals with effect of war on soil - the land in northern France is only just recovering completely after 100 years. Then he considers soil and climate change (soil as a carbon sink) and prospects for the future in terms of dealing with rapid soil change. This requires soil to be placed on the political agenda, as has already happened in the UN. Bardgett concludes, rightly, that 'soil needs to be considered as an investment to be protected and cared for, and as part of the support network for human life.' And, he could have added, all life, not just us humans.

Hope and Grief in the Anthropocene**Lesley Head***Routledge 2016, 181 pp., £90, h/b.*

This book is part of the new series on researching the Anthropocene, a term that is becoming increasingly familiar and which is explored in some detail here. The primary irony is that the term stands for the fundamental influence of humans on the biosphere, but at this point things are

no longer under our control. Moreover, we are still using the assumptions of modernism that include separation of humans from nature and the hope of progress towards a better world. The author feels that we are in fact going through a process of denial and grieving with the loss of the modern self and its corresponding hope, with the looming prospect of an increase in disasters and catastrophes. We are living within this unstable system and trying to work on it at the same time while moving from a model based on impact towards one based on relationships and participation. This means not so much having hope but practising it; this is poignantly put by an environmentalist who feels that she is a kind of schizophrenic where part of her brain thinks that her children don't have a future, while the other says that we have to keep going anyway. So far as the future of the planet is concerned, we all find ourselves somewhere on the continuum between optimism and pessimism, but we are expected to express hope even if this is none too realistic in view of what we know. The final chapter suggests how we can operate as Anthropoceneans - we have emotional work to do, we have to come to terms with uncertainty and develop relational rather than linear concepts, we need to realise allure embedded in the earth and learn to share. The author is quite right that we need a new operating system and provides helpful signposts along the way.

China Confronts Climate Change**Peter H. Koehn***Earthscan 2015, 209 pp., £32, p/b.*

If one did not already realise, the foreword to this significant book highlights that China is currently responsible for one third of the world's greenhouse gas output and 16 of the world's 20 most polluted cities live within its boundaries. In the wake of Paris, actions in China assuming even greater importance. The traditional approach is centralised and top-down, but these policies may not be implemented on the ground. Hence the importance of this book and what it reports in terms of grassroots initiatives within China's regions to address climate change. This includes some grassroots pressure owing to the effects of pollution on health, particularly air quality. Although China is developing industrially and still building large numbers of coal-fired power stations, they are also leaders in renewable energy, particularly wind and solar. They have plans in place for vast eco-cities, one of which opening in 2020 will accommodate 800,000 people. The author criticises this for still being based on the centrality of the car even though public transport will be well developed. In his conclusion, he highlights the importance of multilevel governance, 1% actions that make a small contribution, and consumptive responsibilities in which we can all take part by thinking more carefully about what we buy.

Famine, Affluence and Morality**Peter Singer***Oxford 2016, 86 pp., \$9.95, h/b.*

The title essay of this book first came out in 1972 at the time of a vast refugee crisis involving 9 million people East Bengal. It was originally published in *Philosophy and Public Affairs* and has continued to create a huge stir around the world. Bill and Melinda Gates contribute the foreword, where they remark that child mortality before the age of five has dropped from 20% in 1960 to 5% now, but that still represents 6.3 million a year from conditions like diarrhoea, pneumonia or malaria that we know how to prevent or cure. Even back then, Singer had become a vegetarian and was giving 10% his income to Oxfam. In his new preface, he gives examples of readers who have founded inspiring initiatives and reflects on the uncomfortable conclusion of his article that very few of us are living fully ethical lives.

This becomes clear when one considers that in some cases as little as \$200 can save the life of a child. Most of us could afford this sum, but we choose to spend our money

on other things, including luxuries like dining out, or in my case wine. His argument is straightforward: 'if it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it.' Of course, millions of people are in a similar situation and do not, for instance, contribute \$5 to a cause - in which case, Singer argues, we are still morally obliged to contribute as much as we can. This is not just out of charity, but rather duty. Putting figures on his argument, he suggests that if a household earns \$50,000 and spends \$30,000 on necessities, they should give away \$20,000. The household earning \$100,000 can give away \$70,000 (although more tax would be deducted). When he applies this analysis to the top 10% all Americans, giving away between one third one of the top and 10% at the bottom would generate \$404 billion a year, while the cost of fully meeting the millennium development goals is only \$189 billion a year. Lester Brown applies a similar argument to governments, but in either event it is clear that there is a lack of political will and/or personal moral commitment. Every reader will need to gauge their own response to this powerful plea.

Philosophy of Nature

Svein Anders Noer Lie

Routledge 2016, 220 pp., £95, h/b.

This philosophical treatise challenges the view that any form of manipulation of nature is equivalent to any other form rather than reflecting on how we should change nature. The author argues instead that because things have natures, there are in fact good and bad ways to manipulate them. He regards naturalness as a description of the way things are rather than how they ought to be. Perception therefore precedes ethics since our descriptions have a bearing on our values. The first two chapters are perhaps the most interesting for the general reader as they discuss different interfaces of natural, for instance in relation to culture, or as intrinsic. The second chapter provides a history of concepts of naturalness in Western philosophy, leading onto the author's own view based on dispositions and what he calls relational realism with a more applied discussion on wilderness stewardship in the last chapter.

DEATH AND DYING

A Lawyer Presents the Evidence for the Afterlife

Victor and Wendy Zammit (www.victorzammit.com)

White Crow Books 2013, 285 pp., £11.99, p/b.

When I was working on my own book *Survival* in the early 1980s, my chapter on evidence considered the topic both from a scientific and legal point of view, and I consulted the then authoritative book on the subject, namely *On Evidence*, by Sir Rupert Cross. This is very significant for a case history approach as one-off events cannot be repeated in a laboratory so that one is trying to ascertain what is actually the case and whether it has been reliably reported and indicates proof beyond reasonable doubt. The doubt of what Zammit calls the closed-minded sceptic is far from reasonable and rejects any evidence on *a priori* grounds. This never entails looking at the evidence or actually trying to disprove it, but rather ignoring it altogether. In this book, the Zammits present a compendium of evidence not only about the afterlife, but about psychic faculties more generally. It is not a question of belief, but rather about weighing the evidence, of which a great deal has accumulated over the last 140 years. When sceptics are cross-examined, they usually come up short because they simply don't know what they are talking about. I remember a TV programme where a studio member said that reincarnation was impossible, but he had read nothing, including Ian Stevenson. His opinion was therefore uninformed and consequently invalid after uninformed.

The impressive bibliography lists all the main sources, while the topics covered in the 32 chapters include mediums, near death experiences, out of body experiences, deathbed visions, remote viewing, mediums, xenoglossy, past life memories and instrumental trans-communication. In my view, some areas of evidence are much stronger than others, but the whole historical accumulation has been sufficient to convince the vast majority of open-minded sceptics who previously knew nothing about the topic. Sir William Barrett is correctly quoted as saying that 'I have failed to find that a single person who ridicules the evidence for the afterlife has given to the subject any serious and patient consideration.' The final chapter contains what I think is an excellent summary of points gleaned from the afterlife literature that can be repeatedly observed. Even taking this short section on board would be helpful to people unfamiliar with the field. A combative and courageous book on a vital topic.

What is a Near-Death Experience?

Dr Penny Sartori

Watkins 2016, 140 pp., £7.99/ h/b.

Penny Sartori is a nurse well known for her research on NDEs and is the author of *The Wisdom of Near-Death Experiences*. This book is part of a new series (www.whatisseries.com) of introductions to life-enhancing topics with practical applications. It begins with 20 compelling reasons for reading the book before explaining key features – chapters as questions and answers, case studies, focal points and follow-up. Penny covers elements of NDEs - who has them and under what circumstances, life changing effects, scientific explanations and lessons from the NDE. Useful case studies illustrate a particular aspect of the experience and there are reviews of cases from non-Western countries. Some reported changes focus specifically on spiritual outlook relating to values, purpose and perception of interconnectedness. Penny calls for an expansion of our scientific understanding to embrace the insights of the NDE in a wider concept of consciousness. Along with her supervisor Peter Fenwick, Penny believes that NDEs have important implications for how we treat the dying. The list of further reading is rather academic for a popular book and does not include Peter and Elizabeth Fenwick's *Art of Dying* nor the popular books by Anita Moorjani and Eben Alexander.

Psychology and the Near-Death Experience – Searching for God

Roy Hill

White Crow Books 2015, 284 pp., £12.99, p/b.

As the title suggests, this book takes a psychological approach to the near death experience that takes its reality and consequences seriously. It draws on a very wide range of experiences, some of which are recounted in detail, to formulate life as a learning journey where we learn to love (and forgive) better. The author reviews the features of the NDE and places it within a wider science of the soul as developed by psychologists such as Jung where God is immanent in the human being. This helps bring science and spirituality together. He explores the dark side of these experiences and lost souls more generally as well as the role of guardian angels. The book is informed by the author's strong faith, so that he writes sentences like 'misusing time equates to wasting God's gift of life', a phrasing that may not appeal to everyone. His fundamental message is a call for spiritual transformation and the co-creation of a new world in which love plays a more predominant role - which of course has been the core message of Christianity for 2000 years. The book certainly encourages readers in that direction.

Only Love Remains**Attilio Stajano***Clairview 2015, 209 pp., £14.99, p/b.*

The powerful stories in this book convey lessons from the dying on the meaning of life and raise the important question of the relative roles of euthanasia and palliative care. The space given by palliative care assists the dying process 'in a world that denies death and regards the time of dying as a useless, painful and absurd time.' The implication is that it is better to limit this time rather than live through it, yet there are precious lessons to be gained in this liminal period. The request for euthanasia often conceals anguish and despair and the feeling of being a burden - yet the dying can remind us of what really matters in life, especially love and forgiveness of which there are a number of examples in the 20 or so case histories. I think the author is right when he maintains that 'the greatest desire of the dying is to have their needs and fears listen to; to be acknowledged as people who have relationships and the role they can still play, and to be respected for their dignity as people, neither compromised nor conditioned by their illness.' As Monika Renz points out in her book reviewed in the last issue, this period is an opportunity 'to free ourselves from our conditioning and the clutter of existence that accumulates during the frenzied business of living.' As he says, at the end only love remains.

Soul Comfort**Alistair Conwell***O Books (John Hunt) 2016, 83 pp., £7.99, p/b.*

This is a reflective book on grief through the related concepts of consciousness, love, death and transformation. Death implies grief for the survivors but this will be affected by the person's understanding of life and death. The author's overall view is that death does not extinguish consciousness but transforms and distils it by removing the outermost layer of the ego to reveal a deeper soul consciousness. To see death spiritually is to experience grief in the same way and be open to transformation. He also takes NDEs as actual experiences of death. Conwell's propositions are both factual and poetic, inviting deeper reflection as the reader progresses. He sees consciousness as a connective ground, love as indestructible, death as a transition to a new state of consciousness, grief as the pain of love, and transformation as a part of the spiritual journey. This is uplifting while being based on deep insights into the processes involved. My only caution is the overuse of 'merely' - one can understand why it is used but death is not 'merely' the conclusion of a single chapter of life.

More Things you can do when you are Dead**Tricia J. Robertson***White Crow Books 2016, 177 pp., £11.99, p/b.*

This is the follow-up to Trish's previous book, with 'more' added to the title. As with the first one, the treatment of the subject is down-to-earth and based on 30 years of fieldwork and extensive knowledge of the relevant literature. As such, this puts Trish in a strong position to convey the strength of the evidence as well as objections - frequently uninformed - to this line of enquiry. The various chapters cover materialisation, dropping communicators, earthbound spirits, poltergeists, possession and possession, reincarnation and mediumship. There is also an excellent chapter on paranormal healing with 15 first hand case histories. Communications come through many channels and the cumulative weight of evidence is very considerable - most objections are in fact metaphysically based on the philosophical conviction that such events are in principle impossible, in spite of the many intellectually reputable people who have investigated them. Swedenborg makes a welcome appearance at two places in the book. Trish makes a good case for continuing fieldwork to complement laboratory studies. The only unsatisfactory chapter was a very short one on quantum thinking, where the point made could be incorporated elsewhere in the narrative. I enjoyed the final

comment on Richard Hodgson ostensibly communicating as himself to a sceptical team who exclaimed 'Well, if I'm not Hodgson, he never lived!' An informative and stimulating read.

A Long Letting Go**Marilyn Chandler McEntyre***Wm B. Eerdmans 2016, 123 pp., \$15, p/b.*

These Christian meditations on losing someone you love are written by a professor of medical humanities and former Professor of English who is also a long time hospice volunteer. The sections are short and devotional with four main headings: accompanying, witnessing, mourning and words for keeping watch. The stories are accompanied by prayers and she draws on the experiences of her own family, particularly the deaths of her mother and father. There are fears to be faced, despair, hope, confession and forgiveness as well as setting the house in order. Sometimes one just has to wait and accept the growing remoteness of the dying relative whose focus is moving elsewhere. Then there is release and gratitude for a good life lived. I like the idea that we have our bodies on loan, to be given back rather than up when we move on. A moving and compassionate book.

GENERAL**Strategy – A History****Sir Lawrence Freedman***Oxford 2013, 751 pp., £16.99, p/b.*

This book was acclaimed by the Washington Post as arguably the best book ever written on strategy. It is an extraordinary achievement that literally does cover the history of strategy from its origins in evolution to modern day sophistication. The word is now ubiquitous, as Freedman points out in his preface, beginning the book with the sentence: 'everyone needs a strategy.' Although there is no agreed overall definition of the word, it is about balancing ends and means, identifying objectives and methods, and judiciously using available resources. The context is often one of competition or conflict where coalitions may be advantageous and strategy itself must be flexible in response to unexpected events. The first part looks origins, with chapters on the Bible, the Greeks, Sun Tzu and Machiavelli, and Satan. The story of David and Goliath epitomises the victory of the underdog, while the Greeks developed the key concepts of *bie* (strength) and *metis* (cunning) as alternative modalities. He sees Milton's Satan as lacking in prudence and wonders why he ever thought he could succeed against God (he nearly does with Job).

The subsequent parts deal with strategies of force, strategy from below, strategy from above, and theories on strategy. The scope of the book is truly encyclopedic but Freedman writes in a lucid style accessible to the general reader, who is carried along by the elegance and momentum of the narrative. Network readers will be interested in what he has to say about Tolstoy (there is also a section on Borodino). He uses the narrative of *War and Peace* to criticise Clausewitz's approach. He then reappears in a discussion of Weber and again as a key influence on Gandhi, who read his book *The Kingdom of God is Within You* and translated his article *A Letter to a Hindu*. The whole chapter on nonviolence is highly informative within the spectrum of approaches from below. Strategy from above mainly concerns management, while the limits of strategy become apparent with the emergence of dynamic complexity, which opens up a role for stories and scripts. It would have been interesting to have read some analysis of the political strategy of Vladimir Putin, who seems to be using a combination of denial, obfuscation and force - but maybe this is just another combination of the Greek strategies of strength and cunning. The book is a masterly and definitive account of strategy.

A Foot in the River**Felipe Fernandez-Armesto***Oxford 2015, 294 pp., £20, h/b.*

This book about change in human cultures draws on a huge range of disciplines across the sciences, social science, history and linguistics, bringing evidence to bear on the author's thesis that human cultures are not in fact subject to evolution in the normal sense. There are no fully predictable determinants to our behaviour so that we are able to create or recreate our worlds through the free use of the imagination. His argument is that 'cultures do not evolve, develop, progress, nor follow any linear, predictable or regular trajectory. They just change: sometimes more, sometimes less, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse.' This contrasts, for instance, with the orderly organic process of Spengler and the cyclical ideas of Toynbee, who is only mentioned in passing. When the idea of evolution is so culturally pervasive, it is tempting to impose this on society, which the author strenuously resists. However, he does argue that ideas are the main motors of change in human cultures and one can see that as a driver behind technological innovation beginning in the human mind.

His analysis of change goes back to the Greeks with Heraclitus and Parmenides, then looking at the thought of Augustine and more recently of Bergson, Marx and Darwin. There is a chapter on culture in other species such as chimpanzees, elephants and dolphins. The author covers very thoroughly the variety of cultural evolution models on offer, pointing out the shortcomings in each. One can appreciate his observation that cultures can make self-destructive adjustments in their relationships with the environment, as we are currently doing - which hardly represents an evolutionary advance. The chapter on the imaginative animal contains the essence of his argument, that we draw on memory and anticipation as well as imagination in framing new possibilities. The current acceleration of change results from the enormous exchange of ideas that is now possible. It is also clear that we will need new and serviceable ideas applied to the unprecedented challenges that we now face. This is a stimulating and wide-ranging read.

The Note from Heaven**Githa Ben-David***Watkins 2016, 252 pp., £10.99, p/b.*

This unusual book is how to sing yourself to higher consciousness, liberating your true voice and reconnecting with your higher Self. The title refers to the tonal expression of the divine state that we all have within us in this vibrational universe. The I is likened to a flute, which is nothing in itself but through which the wind can sound. The first part gives detailed instructions about how to establish contact with the note from heaven, which is likely to be close to A. It also explains the function of the chakras and the importance of breathing. Surrender is a key part of the process. The book then moves onto the practice of singing and creative music making. The second book is a manual for singing yourself free through what the author calls regressive cell-singing as a means of dissolving blockages. She points out that the Christian psychology of sin, shame, fear and guilt have imposed a collective trauma on the West and shaped the pain body with its four primary feelings that I am not good enough, that I don't want to be here, that I'm not allowed to be here and that I don't belong here. The practice of the book is demanding, and the author recommends an hour a day of singing, so prospective readers will need to make a real commitment. Having said this, the book provides a comprehensive route map.

Memoirs of the Bright Side of the Moon**Ginger Gilmour***Angelscript 2015, 635 pp., no price given, h/b.*

Ginger Gilmour is an artist and sculptor who trained with Cecil Collins and is totally devoted to the quest for and expression of beauty and love, as the odyssey of her life shows. Her journey takes a sudden turning with the advent of Pink Floyd guitarist David Gilmour in her life and she sets off for England from Michigan to forge a new life. Much time is spent on the road in different parts of the world and in raising a family, but David eventually leaves and she is left to plough her own furrow while developing as an artist and mystic. The Sufi mystic Irina Tweedie becomes an important influence in her life as does Jungian Dr Gerhard Adler. The book is illustrated with photos of her exquisite sculptures that are a tribute to the sense of beauty that inspires her - and not in terms of outer appearance but rather from inward significance as an expression of her spiritual journey. Her studio becomes a sanctuary where she creates and reflects the beauty of life as the title suggests - on the bright side of the moon. It is an inspiring tale of courage and artistic integrity.

Feng Shui – Hay House Basics**Davina Mackail***Hay House 2016, 229 pp., £8.99, p/b.*

Many readers will be familiar with the term *feng shui* but know little about its history and practical implications. This book serves as an ideal introduction in terms of both theory and practice, making one see one's house with its contents and spaces in a new way. One realises how we are affected by our surroundings, and what we can do about it. The properties and movement of *chi* are central and one can readily understand the distinction between beneficial and harmful *chi* - the latter stagnating in dark corners and accumulating in blocked passages. The balance of Yin and Yang is also very important as is balance in one's life more generally. The chapter on clutter and clearing it out is worth the price of the book on its own. The author regards it as the most important section of the book. She identifies a number of familiar excuses for not getting rid of clutter, such as that the object might come in useful, it was a gift, I've had it for a long time, it may be worth money in a few years, and it just needs fixing. She gives a clutter checklist that readers will find all-too-familiar! She also helps one remember where this all is. As we all know, clutter is steeped in emotional attachment, and emotions may create resistance to letting it go. Having just cleared out some stuff from our storage room, I know how liberating it feels - although there is always more clutter accumulating!

The Master Communicator's Handbook**Teresa Erickson and Tim Ward (SMN)***Changemaker Books (John Hunt) 2015, 172 pp., £8.99, p/b.*

Widely endorsed by senior industry and NGO clients with whom they have worked, this book delivers its title with a great deal of practical advice and valuable illustration. We are all capable of becoming better communicators, and this book shows you how. The six sections deal with communicating ideas, communicating with authority, answering questions, creating connection, changing minds and leadership communications. A particular focus is people who want to change the world, which is addressed specifically in the last section, partly with a triangle featuring dissatisfaction, urgency and hope in order to create motivation to change. They think that messages should be concise, concrete, connected and catchy, and show how best to structure presentations and use body language to good effect. Sometimes, as they show in a chapter on micro-messages, body language contradicts the message but it contains the essence of the communication. In terms of persuasion, it is important to understand the nature of frames as mental structures and how best to modify these. Essential reading for those who want to communicate, influence and inspire.

Character Nation**Jonathan Birdwell, Ralph Scott, Louis Reynolds***Demos 2015, 104 pp., £10, p/b – downloadable from www.demos.org*

Character education is a fast moving field with the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham at the forefront. James Arthur and his colleagues have proved very influential across political parties, and the current Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan, is a strong supporter. In this short report, the Jubilee Centre teams up with Demos to produce an introductory overview of the field with special emphasis on character education policy in England. The report makes extensive recommendations in terms of embedding the development of character in the educational system. This also entails reforming the Inspectorate and supporting teachers so that initial teacher training covers the delivery of character development and moral reflection. Although much government thinking focuses on the so-called performance virtues involving such characteristics as grit and resilience, the Jubilee Centre highlights the importance moral virtues to underpin these. There is no doubt that interest in the field is expanding internationally, as witnessed by the attendance at the annual Jubilee conference in Oxford in January. The report is an important step towards the idea of a character nation.

Working with Truth**Murray (Nick) Nicholls (SMN)***Free download on <http://bit.ly/RMGceE>*

Subtitled 'communications with intelligences beyond individual physical consciousness', this book chronicles Nick's journey, full of improbable meetings and synchronicities conveying the strong impression of other intelligences at work behind the scenes. Many experiences have led him to the conviction that many individuals continue to be conscious after death in a frequency range not normally perceivable. Here communication is based on thoughts, images and emotions, and may include dreams and their interpretation. This also implies that we co-create our reality. Among the

most interesting themes in this book are Nick's encounters in connection with First World War graves. His companion on one occasion was given a number of names that they subsequently found in a war cemetery. On a subtle level, Nick is able to help spirits move on and also seems to have been involved in the same way with Afghan veterans, who do not realise they have died. The most remarkable incident concerns poems that he received that seem to have been influenced by Wilfred Owen. One particular moving reflection ends with the line 'May light renew these bodies, healed, when truth and death, will be revealed. It turned out that there is an inscription on Owen's grave running 'Shall life renew these bodies? Of a truth all death will be annul.' From this brief description, readers can appreciate that they may have to fasten their seat belts when reading this account.

Manifestations of Mind in Matter**Ilebele Abel***ICRL 2008, 153 pp., \$19.95, p/b.*

Ilebele Abel is a Dutch artist whose visual art and music is in dialogue with developments in consciousness research. This book presents a number of conversations about art, science and spirit as we come to terms with our new understanding based on modern science. Participants include Bob Jahn and Brenda Dunne, Roger Nelson, philosopher Hans Gerding, parapsychologist Dick Bierman and biophysicist Roeland van Wijk. This is already an indication of the scope of discussions across boundaries and these are based on perception, perspectives and thinking about these, for instance in terms of images and metaphors, forms and structures. In that sense, the metanarrative embraces these various fields and seeks out their commonality and ways in which we can expand our own understanding. The discussions are accompanied by illustrations of Abel's art in a number of different styles. The questions raised about spirituality, consciousness, subjectivity, time, causality and coherence may not be susceptible to a full answer but these stimulating dialogues invite the reader to consider things from various points of view incorporating both scientific and artistic perspectives.

*“Twenty years from now you will be more
disappointed by the things that you didn't
do than by the ones you did do.
So throw off the bowlines.
Sail away from the safe harbor.
Catch the trade winds in your sails.
Explore. Dream. Discover”*

Mark Twain

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Information & Registration: laszloinstitute@gmail.com

The Scientific and Medical Network is a leading international forum for people engaged in creating a new worldview for the 21st century. The Network brings together scientists, doctors, psychologists, engineers, philosophers, complementary practitioners and other professionals, and has Members in more than thirty countries. The Network is a charity which was founded in 1973 and became a company limited by guarantee at the beginning of 2004.

The Network aims to:

- challenge the adequacy of scientific materialism as an exclusive basis for knowledge and values.
- provide a safe forum for the critical and open minded discussion of ideas that go beyond reductionist science.
- integrate intuitive insights with rational analysis.
- encourage a respect for Earth and Community which emphasises a spiritual and holistic approach.

In asking searching questions about the nature of life and the role of the human being, the Network is:

- Open to new observations and insights;
- Rigorous in evaluating evidence and ideas;
- Responsible in maintaining the highest scientific and ethical standards;
- Sensitive to a plurality of viewpoints

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