

book reviews

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science-philosophy of science

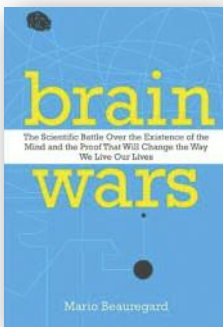
A New Model of Mind

David Lorimer

BRAIN WARS

Mario Beauregard

Harper, 2012, 250 pp., \$26.99 h/b – ISBN 978-0-06-207156-9



Mario Beauregard quotes the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard as saying: 'there are two ways to be fooled. One is to believe what isn't true; the other is to refuse to

believe what is true.' A modern statistical equivalent of this insight distinguishes between a Type I error when we mistakenly conclude that there is an effect when there really is none, while Type II mistakenly concludes that there is no effect when there really is one. This highly significant book discusses a whole range of neuroscientific and consciousness studies and demonstrates for anyone with an open mind that we do indeed need a new model of consciousness that takes in the whole range of human experience rather than trying to squeeze anomalous and transcendent phenomena into a materialistic understanding. As Mario points out, much of what he discusses is anomalous only in terms of what he calls the false assumptions of scientific materialism. Here we are dealing with similar issues to those discussed in my reviews of Eben Alexander and Chris Carter below, namely the way in which philosophical assumptions and peer pressure join forces to delay real progress in expanding the scope of a science of consciousness.

The particular strength of this book, which is summarised in the articles section by the author, is that it encompasses the whole range of issues and shows how these are connected and why we need a new model of mind. The key question is whether there is a difference between our brains and our minds or consciousness. The materialist

framework answers in the negative, based as it is on the assumptions of physicalism, reductionism and objectivism. These have proved extremely powerful in the development of neuroscience, but they become a stumbling block if we try to constrain the whole range of human capacity within this framework. The placebo/nocebo effect, the subject of the first chapter, is radically at odds with the deterministic tendency within science in general and neuroscience in particular. It establishes downward causation from the conscious mind, which one finds reflected in other areas discussed such as neurofeedback and neuroplasticity. It turns out that the power of belief is extraordinarily significant and that we can exercise conscious control over the development of brain structures. As the Dalai Lama states: 'in a real sense the brain we develop reflects the life we lead.' If we change the mind, we can correspondingly change the brain and body.

Hypnosis is another important area for consideration. It used to be used, and still is on some occasions, as an anaesthetic. The power of suggestion is illustrated by the case where a man visualised himself as a pregnant woman. When he arrived at the hospital three months later, he had an expanded abdomen, one enlarged breast and was suffering from morning sickness. Another study showed that subjects reported a lowering of self-assessed pain while reduced brain activity was found in areas of the pain network. I think Mario is right in hypothesising that hypnosis can help lower the normal barriers that prevent us from using the extraordinary intelligence within. In this respect, he echoes the conclusions of Thomas Jay Hudson from over 100 years ago.

The last few chapters address consciousness at the margins: psi, near death and mystical experiences, with which many readers will already be familiar. These are discussed theoretically and illustrated with case histories to give the reader a feel for the phenomena. Mario remains connected to neuroscience throughout these discussions, but it becomes clear that the existing theories need to be expanded. Just this afternoon, a colleague pointed me to a debunking article by Oliver Sacks, who mistakenly supposes that scientific investigations must of necessity be naturalistic. This equation was established by TH Huxley and others, but was disputed by the likes of Alfred Russel Wallace. Throughout, it looks as if we are talking about correlations rather than causes.

The book ends with a forecast of a great shift in consciousness. However, scientific materialism will not easily give up its ideological stranglehold, and many will continue to insist that modern neuroscience will sooner or later completely explain the nature of mind and consciousness. It seems to me crucial that books like this should be read by psychology and neuroscience undergraduates because most if not all of their teachers will not be familiar with the kind of evidence discussed in this book, and if they were would feel professionally threatened. Conveying the scientifically based message of this book corresponds to the mission of the Network as envisaged by its founders: that science must be distinguished from scientific materialism and that there is a genuine spiritual dimension to human existence. As Rupert Sheldrake has indicated, liberation from materialist dogma would free up the spirit of enquiry and open all kinds of interesting questions for research. In addition, Mario's model corresponds to the renewal of values based on the deep interconnectedness of mind and nature. This transcends the exploitative mentality of economics as well as the mechanistic framework of science. All this makes it very important that these ideas should be widely disseminated and discussed - this book is a highly significant contribution and starting point.

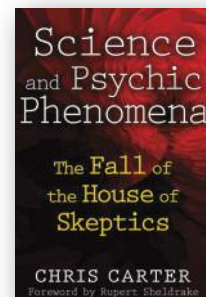
Paradigm Wars

David Lorimer

SCIENCE AND PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

Chris Carter

Inner Traditions, 2012, 303 pp., £15.99, p/b – ISBN 978-159477451-5



This book is somewhat optimistically subtitled 'the fall of the house of skeptics', and the experienced reader wonders if this is a forecast rather than a statement of the current

situation. The foreword by Rupert Sheldrake provides a brilliant summary and commentary on the book. As readers will be aware, Rupert is at the forefront of the paradigm war (Mark

Woodhouse's expression) between so-called sceptics and believers. (See) Sir Leslie Stephen, founding editor of the Dictionary of National Biography and father of Virginia Woolf, wrote an essay on the scepticism of believers in the 1860s. Updated, his point would be that sceptics are as much believers as those whom they call believers: a nonbeliever is also a believer. As Rupert points out, the passions aroused by the argument over the existence of psychic phenomena are 'quite out of proportion to the phenomena under dispute.' As he also explains in his recent book, the underlying reason is that the nature of science and deeply held worldviews and belief systems are called into question. It is argued that the paranormal contradicts the established principles of science, when it is in fact only the established principles of scientific materialism that are contradicted; in other words not so much science as philosophy. In addition, the psychological structure of orthodoxy and heresy is reproduced in science.

The real issue is less about evidence than its interpretation in the light of differing presuppositions or philosophical assumptions. Rupert himself began by thinking that properly controlled studies would prove convincing, but he found that some sceptics still dismiss the evidence out of hand and assume that it must be flawed or defective. If they do actually look at the evidence, it is with a view to finding as many flaws as possible; and even if they do not find any, they brush it aside on the basis that such phenomena are a priori impossible. In addition, as Carter shows in the case of a US report, they sometimes try to prevent the evidence from being discussed in public or excise the relevant parts. Just this morning, I was reading an article about William James that is relevant to this discussion. He was one of the academics studying Mrs Piper in the early days. While many of his distinguished colleagues were persuaded by the spiritualist hypothesis, James remained on the fence, probably because he was worried about his reputation among his colleagues. The politics of knowledge and the sociology of science mean that one can open oneself to scorn and ridicule if one espouses an unorthodox viewpoint.

The book is divided into three parts: the first explains the nature of the controversy in historical terms, then there is discussion of the experimental evidence for psi and a section asking if it would contradict established science. There follows a section on parapsychology as a science. However, the most important aspect, as already mentioned, is the psychology involved. New phenomena can cause cognitive dissonance with one's established views, which will determine how

plausible one considers the evidence. We invariably interpret evidence according to our preconceptions, and can dress up resistance to new ideas with sophisticated language like antecedent improbability. Something is only antecedently improbable in terms of a particular framework, even if the phrase sounds impressively objective. The review of the evidence is extensive, and much of this will be familiar to those in the field. The person who knows little might be impressed with the statement that the National Research Council report states that the committee found no scientific justification from research conducted over a period of 130 years for the existence of parapsychological phenomena. It is not mentioned that the chairman of this committee asked Robert Rosenthal to withdraw the part of his report favourable to parapsychology, or that two of the main characters, Ray Hyman and James Alcock were members of CSICOP, now renamed the Committee for Scientific Investigation.

Carter quotes a statistical report by Jessica Utts observing that as robust a psychological effect would not be questioned in other areas of science and that it is unlikely that the consistency of results could be explained by methodological flaws. In spite of this, Hyman insists that parapsychology is incompatible with relativity and quantum theory. In this connection, Carter quotes a 1946 letter from Einstein saying that, from a physical standpoint, we have no right to deny a priori the possibility of telepathy and that we should not walk through the world wearing blinders. It is clear that the incompatibility between established science and parapsychology stems not from relativity and quantum theory, but rather from the mechanistic assumptions of classical science.

A new metaphysics of science including non-locality, emergent properties and the causal role of consciousness can readily accommodate parapsychology. As Carter insists, true scepticism involves the suspension of belief rather than disbelief and that much scepticism is in fact counteradvocacy. He has provided an excellent summary of the debate, which should be on the reading list of undergraduate psychology and philosophy of science. However, as I said at the beginning, the resistance is so widespread that this kind of pseudo-scepticism is likely to continue. As the founders of the Network pointed out 40 years ago, undergraduates are imbued with materialism along with their science, and little attempt is made to disentangle the two.

What do YOU believe?

Martin Lockley

THE PARANORMAL: WHO BELIEVES, WHY THEY BELIEVE AND WHY IT MATTERS

Erich Goode

Prometheus Books, 2012, 335p., US\$ 15.95, p/b - ISBN 978-1-61614-3



In *Paranormal*, Erich Goode (Stony Brook, University, New York) promises that, as a sociologist, he has no interest in promulgating or debunking any particular belief, even

though he wants to investigate assertions that are "intellectually and sociologically problematic." He maintains his neutral stance well, and offers some interesting statistics and reasons why you, and others, might believe what you do. Moreover he contends that "people who hold paranormal beliefs are as psychologically normal as people who don't." However, one necessary prerequisite is to define paranormal, in relation to what is generally defined as normal. [Presumably a similar distinction defines natural v. supernatural]. Goode defines paranormal as a *socially constructed*, phenomenon created by social actors (e.g., scientists, usually blessed by institutions of higher learning) who 'label' paranormal as what "most scientists *believe* violate one or more laws of nature" (his italics). In most cases paranormalism is not, he says, pseudoscience. Thus, Goode does not endorse the opinions of scientific actors as necessarily correct. In fact he notes that the scientific consensus that solid objects consist of whizzing particles in empty space or that the earth spins at ~1000 mph while zooming at ~67,000 mph around the sun is quite difficult to believe! Thus, what a society believes depends on the prevailing or "hegemonic" opinion. His thesis is that the paranormal is "a social product much like political ideology, voting behavior and religious belief and behavior." [Don't many regard certain political ideologies and cultural belief systems as verging on the paranormal!]

What do you believe, or believe in? Angels, witches, ESP, psychics, astrology, healing crystals, pyramid power, levitation, foretelling the future, past lives, ghosts, communing with the dead, the spiritual significance of coincidence, numerology, aliens, UFOs, stigmata, Bigfoot, the Bermuda triangle, creation of the world in 4004 BC? Do you endorse creationists influence educational or legislative policy? If not, should Native American creation myths influence the policy of the US National Museum, as they have? Are you emotionally stirred by any of these

issues? Goode contends that "paranormal beliefs are not an esoteric, marginal sphere of human existence; they are absolutely central to social life." He also asks if America is a "religious outlier" with 65% of the populace regarding religion as very important compared with about 25% in Japan and many European countries? Here he opines "yes," and regards this religious or spiritual tendency as one that inclines to paranormal beliefs.

Do you have an "approach" to so called paranormal issues? Do you believe the basic facts of science are correct, but incomplete, and that scientists may fail to draw the right conclusions from evidence of subtle energies and so forth? If so, Goode would put you in the "affirmation / subsumation" category. (As opposed to other affirmation categories, such as a/violation or a/dimensionalism –the latter affirming a spiritual realm where different reality principles operate). There are also the negative categories (disbelief/disregard, disbelief/debunk) popular with dyed-in-the-wool scientism aficionados. Goode taught a course on the Paranormal and invited his students to contribute their interesting perspectives, some included as chapter appendices: they run the gamut from scientific skepticism to powerful paranormal experiences "all too real" to dismiss easily.

The book has three parts. The first, the introduction, deals with Paranormal and Scientific thinking and the sociologist's distinction between emic (insider) and etic (outsider) viewpoints. The second section takes four topics as case studies (Astrology and Psychic predictions, Creationism, Parapsychology and UFOs), and the third deals with institutional connections: i.e. paranormalism in religion, the media, politics and social movements. All in all quite a comprehensive approach. In part 1, Goode tackles problems of science including teleology, the differences between experimental and historical disciplines, and the fact that social sciences cannot merely study the natural order 'objectively' but almost always deal with moral, political and ideological issues. In part 2 Goode highlights strong distinctions among his chosen topics. On the subject of creationism, he stresses familiar issues regarding different national attitudes towards evolution and creationism. The USA is nearly 60% pro creationism, ranking "nearly dead last in the likelihood of accepting evolution as true and nearly first in believing in the creation." (Only Turkey ranked higher on creationism). In comparison, in Japan and most European countries only 20-25 % are pro-creationism. On the subject of Parapsychology Goode regards researchers in this field as representative of a "completely professional ... scientific community" displaying unusually rigorous methods,

designed to keep out sloppy and questionable practitioners. They are, he concludes, far more scientific than practitioners in other fields of paranormal research (and many scientific fields). He cites those like Charles Tart and Harvey Irwin who essentially consider that paranormal and PSI phenomena merely appear to be "outside" natural law, but soon likely to be shown to have naturalistic explanations. He also mentions the practical applications of PSI, which have attracted attention, and significant funding, from the CIA and other government establishment agencies and corporations. Personal accounts, such as Robert McConnell's *Joyride to Infinity* dealing with how he became a parapsychologist, offer interesting insights based on experience and lifelong quests in the field.

In Part 3 on the subject of religion and paranormalism we learn that a *Time* magazine survey found ~80% of respondents believe in heaven. Is this because "paranormal thinking shares the spiritual foundation of all religions"? Does this explain paranormalism's popularity in the media? Why is the underdog investigator of the paranormal so often the hero, fighting scientific skeptics with stubborn anti-paranormal prejudices and dirty secrets? The skeptic exposing charlatans is never the hero! Why are paranormal beliefs so widespread and why isn't the *dominant* scientific interpretation of reality also the most *popular* view? Goode admits that it is rather "peculiar" that until now sociologists have largely avoided these questions. [I find it interesting that most religious creeds are considered paranormal by sociological definitions, and so not treated as separate spheres: so the Bermuda Triangle and Seventh Day Adventism could be sociologically equivalent!] He concludes by hinting that science misses something when regarding paranormal thinking as delusional and curable by a "stiff dose of pedagogy. The fact is that some of us are attuned to the spiritual dimension, while some... remain spiritually unmusical."

SMN members may be disappointed to know that wild tabloid fantasies about dinosaurs on Mars are less popular than a generation ago. But while people are perhaps growing less credulous about the overtly ridiculous, they can still enjoy alternatively ridiculous movies like *Men in Black*, where paranormal is normal, and fun. More importantly, perhaps, it is encouraging to know that sociologists like Goode have their spiritual ears tuned to paranormal signals and what they say about the human sociological condition. Our psychological inclinations to take such spiritual music seriously is evidently a healthy sign of human curiosity. Thus, the paranormal

does not arouse undue or judgmental sociological skepticism. On the contrary Goode appears to accept the human propensity to believe in paranormal possibilities as quite a "normal" manifestation of our multicultural, socio-spiritual belief systems. What do you believe? Or should I ask what do you "normally" believe?

Martin Lockley is an Emeritus Professor of Palaeontology and Evolution at the University of Colorado Denver and author of *How Humanity Came into Being*.

medicine-health

An Ingenuity Gap

David Lorimer

THE FUTURE PUBLIC HEALTH

Phil Hanlon, Sandra Carlisle, Margaret Hannah, Andrew Lyon

McGraw Hill, 2012, 181 pp., £24.99, p/b – ISBN 978-033524355-6



In her foreword to this innovative and stimulating book, Sarah Stewart Brown, professor of public health at Warwick Medical School, observes that the authors are surely right

in their basic assumption that things cannot go on as they are either in public health or in society at large: first, as we are failing to make significant progress on key public health issues, and secondly because our societies are going to need some fundamental restructuring in order to tackle sustainability and long-term economic challenges. The book is divided into three parts: public health past and present, modern public health challenges and a framework for future public health policy. The authors share a passion for new thinking and have been involved in academic public health, various consultations, the International Futures Forum and NHS Scotland, so they draw on a wide range of experience.

It becomes clear right from the beginning that each era of public health faces its own challenges, which are generated by the nature of contemporary social and economic development. In our time, these include overconsumption, drug and alcohol abuse, addiction, rising rates of mental distress and corresponding static or diminishing levels of well-being, along with increased health inequality. Other

wider factors such as climate change, population growth and peak oil will also have a significant impact in the future. Our inner world is equally important since it dictates our self-identity and values. Science sees us as complex biological machines that have developed as a product of chance and time. It operates predominantly within an ideology of scientism. We are also individuals subject to biological and economic competition. Nature is predominantly understood in mechanistic terms and as an economic resource to be exploited. Our values are broadly those of economism, materialism, individualism and consumerism - our economic identity is given primacy over social and spiritual identity. In this context, the task of public health is to create and sustain the conditions for health and well-being and promote a change of worldviews towards positive and transformational change.

The historical development of public health is a fascinating topic in itself. The authors identify four overlapping waves since 1830, each of which brought its own improvements in sanitation, rational scientific approach, technology, the development of the welfare state and social security, interventions to prolong life, and identification of risk factors and lifestyle. Each of these waves has its own concepts and determinants of health, as well as models of public health and health care within a particular demography. They document successes in each wave, for instance the decline in smoking prevalence in the fourth wave, even if this took several decades to achieve. They then describe the situation of public health today and the overlapping domains of health improvement, health protection and improving services. A particular challenge of our time is hospital acquired infections and the emergence of highly resistant strains of bacteria - just today I was reading about a beagle who has an 80% success rate in identifying hospital patients with *C difficile*. They see this problem as 'an emergent property of the complex system of factory style hospital care', commenting that it will be difficult to find a solution to this within the current mindset.

Moving on to more detailed treatment of modern public health challenges, the authors look at the enduring problem of health inequalities, the fallout of modern culture, the challenges of obesity ('overwhelmed and overweight'), addiction, population growth and ageing, and finally the challenge of sustainability within a public health context. Here they introduce Ken Wilber's integral theory with his four quadrants applied to public health - individual/collective and objective/exterior - showing the interface between the inner world, culture, physical body and outer social

structures. They develop this further in the last part of the book. They have an original take on obesity by describing humans as obesogenic organisms who for the first time find themselves in an obesogenic environment - one where they are encouraged to eat more (of the wrong things) and exercise less. This situation is reinforced by sophisticated marketing on the part of food companies. It is also useful to reflect that the problems of the minority in terms of drug or alcohol use are in fact the tip of the iceberg and reflect wider social norms as well as the nature of market economies and consumer cultures. Going forward, population ageing will be a major challenge especially if increased longevity corresponds to an extended period of chronic morbidity, with all its associated costs. Overall, the authors conclude that 'some of our most intractable health, social and global problems are the product of modernity.'

The final part proposes a radical new perspective on public health, arguing that five key features are required - that the model should be integrative, ecological, ethical, creative and beautiful. This brings them back to Plato, with his focus on the good, the true, and the beautiful corresponding to morality, science and philosophy, and art. They suggest that current thinking is insufficient, and needs to be supplemented not only by ethics and aesthetics, but also by new trends within the disciplines, for instance systems thinking and holism. There are interesting proposals for reducing the ecological footprint of the NHS and for creating more beautiful healing environments. The authors conclude by arguing that our situation today is a race between empathy and entropy. We are capable of transformational change, but often not until things become too uncomfortable to continue. Although the book is written with health professionals in mind - and one hopes that it will be widely read - it will be of interest to any reader concerned with understanding the history of and prospects for public health in the 21st-century.

A Message of Wisdom and Hope

Larry Culliford

BACK TO SANITY: HEALING THE MADNESS OF OUR MINDS

Steve Taylor (SMN)

Hay House, London, 2012, 280pp., £10.99 p/b - ISBN 978-1-84850-547-6

Steve Taylor deserves an award, some kind of medal, perhaps a knighthood. He is of a new and welcome breed of psychologist: one who really cares about people, who wants to understand them in a way that acknowledges how tough life can be, and who wants to help. Brilliant! Writing in forthright, engaging

and accessible language, without being overly mysterious, he clearly recognises that psychology needs a spiritual dimension to make sense.

For page after page, as I read this book, I just kept saying inwardly to myself, "Yes... Yes!" over and over. Like a wise physician, Taylor diagnoses and names a malady, elucidates causative and contributory factors, then makes sensible recommendations for its remedy. Importantly, his book is about a disease that affects every person past the innocence and wonder of childhood. He calls the psychological disorder, which besets most of us infected by western culture, 'Humania' (hu-mania), and ascribes to it two main elements: 'ego-separation' and 'cognitive discord'.

Ego-separateness results from a strong sense of individuality that enforces duality between the world and us. It creates a feeling of aloneness and disconnection, and of somehow being incomplete. In contrast with traditional indigenous peoples, who perceive the world as a benevolent place, to us it seems indifferent, or even vaguely malevolent. As a result, we have an exaggerated fear of death, and our thoughts chatter away constantly to distract us.

Taylor describes 'thought-chatter' as a perpetual stream of thought whizzing around our heads, taking us away from the moment, often leaving us feeling unsettled and uneasy. He associates it with the second main element of humania, 'cognitive discord', with wandering minds that are pervaded by the non-present, consequently unhappy and unfulfilled. This leads to what he calls 'elsewhereness' and the madness of constant wanting. As he describes it, these in turn lead to the collective madness of warfare, colonialism, inequality, social oppression and the folly of environmental destruction. How wonderful if these could all be put right!

Many people experience moments of lightness and ease in their lives, when mental discord fades away. In the book's second half, Steve Taylor encourages the search for this 'inner harmony'. The most direct and effective way of healing humania - temporarily, at least - is through the regular practice of meditation. Through the brain's continuing capacity for development - so-called 'neuro-plasticity' - what begins as temporary, he tells us, can be made permanent. "It is possible for us to create a new kind of psyche, he says, and goes on to describe eight stages in this process. His recommendations do not exactly amount to the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism, but there are similarities, with emphasis not only on meditation, but also on service to others. He extols the virtues of living slowly and simply.

The final chapter, 'A New Self and a New World', concentrates on the benefits of working successfully

towards healing ego-separateness and cognitive discord, and therefore of overcoming humania. New energy becomes available, and a sense of liberation supervenes, freedom from the constant anxiety and self-doubt that so many continue to live with. The pressure, to seek new pleasurable experiences and avoid unpleasant ones, to constantly do things rather than simply be, is off. Joy is experienced without the need for any particular external source. There is simply the happiness that is part of the essence of being human.

As Taylor puts it, "We no longer need to bolster the fragile ego with psychological attachments like possessions. We don't need to believe in anything, to hope for anything, to possess anything, or to uphold an image of ourselves as good-looking, successful, knowledgeable or powerful". We come to feel, he says, self-sufficient and complete; and for this reason, we no longer need hold to a group identity. We no longer need to join partisan social, political, religious or other groups, or to follow fashions. Overcoming a sense of separateness also transforms our relationships, opening us up to other people, bringing us into closer empathic connection and communication with them so that, from natural compassion, we find we have a genuine and effective desire to help, rather than to manipulate them for our own ends.

The final, perhaps most important observation in this book reports that the end-point of humania is global chaos and destruction; yet, "If a large enough number of people could transcend humania, the world would be a vastly different place." That means, to save the day, enough people must experience inner harmony and healing. According to Taylor, there are already signs that this is beginning to happen. Increasing numbers are discovering that life can cease to be painful and dissatisfying, becoming a glorious adventure, full of joy and wonder. After years of being asleep, he says, we wake up. After years of escaping from the present, the world and our own selves, we can now learn to rest comfortably within them. His call to self-development and maturity is also a message of hope.

'Back to Sanity', following his earlier 'Waking from Sleep', and 'Out of the Darkness' (both reviewed favourably in the Network Journal), continues Steve Taylor's admirable series of books nudging us – individually and collectively – towards wisdom and enlightenment. We should all hope that sales are massive, and that huge numbers of people take their contents to heart.

Larry Culliford is the author of '*Love, Healing & Happiness*' (O Books, 2007) and '*The Psychology of Spirituality: an introduction*' (JKP, 2011).

philosophy-religion

Paradigm Attack!

David Lawton

MIND AND COSMOS: WHY THE MATERIALIST NEO-DARWINIAN CONCEPTION OF NATURE IS ALMOST CERTAINLY FALSE

Thomas Nagel

Oxford, 2012, 144 pp., £15.99, h/b – ISBN 978-0-19-991975-8

This book makes no mention of altered states of consciousness, healing, psi, OBEs, NDEs, survival or mysticism – it has nothing to say about the extraordinary or the paranormal, except, in one instance, to deny the existence of ghosts (p. 41). Nagel's book is about the normal and the ordinary – life, evolution, consciousness, cognition and value. It is short in length but not short on substance. This book is *dense* – and a challenge to review.

Nagel argues that 'a theory of everything has to explain the emergence from a lifeless universe of reproducing organisms, the consciousness of some of those organisms and the development of consciousness into an instrument of transcendence that can grasp objective reality and objective value' (p.85). He argues that the materialist neo-Darwinian paradigm is *not* that theory. His argument against it is twofold.

First, he argues from the failure of psychophysical reductionism. For example, what it's like to be a bat cannot be reduced to what a bat is like: behaviourally, neurologically nor *in any other way*. (Some) organisms are 'irreducibly subjective centres of consciousness' (p. 42). What it's like to be a bat is grounded in being a bat, and to be a bat is to be an organism, so biology cannot be a wholly physical science. To be an organism is to be part of the world and hence the world cannot be wholly physical. Thus, the materialist neo-Darwinian paradigm is (almost) certainly false.

Second, he argues from the implausibility of the orthodox materialist account of the origin and evolution of life (that on which consciousness is grounded). He asks about the likelihood that self-reproducing life forms should have come into existence spontaneously solely through the operation of the laws of physics and chemistry and that, as a result of physical accident, a sequence of viable genetic mutations should have occurred that was sufficient to permit natural selection to produce the organisms that actually exist. Nagel contends that the available scientific evidence does not require us to subordinate the incredulity of common

sense, and that the prevailing doctrine is an assumption governing the scientific project rather than a well-confirmed scientific hypothesis. Thus, the materialist neo-Darwinian paradigm is almost certainly false.

We need a new metaphysics and new science – a new way of seeing, understanding, thinking and knowing about ourselves and the world – mind and cosmos. The new paradigm must, according to Nagel, be anti-reductionist and non-accidental in respect of life, consciousness, cognition and value, and it must describe 'a single natural order that unifies everything' (p. 7). Much of the book is devoted to thinking about the nature of such alternative conceptions.

Nagel rejects dualism because it does not meet the criterion of unification, and for the same reason, though he endorses their scepticism about the orthodox reductive view on the origin and evolution of life, cannot embrace the theism/neo-theism of a transcendent (intervening) entity proposed by the defenders of intelligent design.

A new paradigm that is anti-reductionist, non-accidental and unifying must, given the historical nature of evolution and cosmology, account not only for the nature but also the origin of life, consciousness, cognition and value. Nagel devotes a chapter each to the latter three.

The explanation of the nature and origin of consciousness could be either emergent or reductive. Nagel argues that both fail, even when the reduction is neutral monist and not materialist. Emergence fails because, unlike the emergent liquidity of water, there is no systematic relationship between the microelements and the macro state. Such emergence for consciousness would be 'magical' and unexplained, as would be origin of such an emergence. A neutral monist/panpsychist reductionism would also fail for the same reason as materialist reductionism, there would be no explanation of the part-whole relationship as there is in spatio-temporal physics and chemistry and the origin of the combinatorial powers of the panpsychist microelements would also remain unexplained. However, Nagel does favour a neutral monist view over the emergent one and invokes a natural teleology with teleological laws to overcome its problems.

In the chapter on cognition, Nagel focuses on the human 'capacity to transcend subjectivity and to discover what is objectively the case' (p. 72). Reason cannot be explained as a mere extension or complication of consciousness and 'any evolutionary account [materialist or non-materialist, reductionist or anti-reductionist] of the place of reason presupposes reason and cannot confirm it without circularity... thought moves us beyond

appearance to something we cannot regard merely as a biologically based disposition'. Again emergent and reductive explanations of the nature and origin of cognition fail. The part-whole problem is especially problematic for a reductive model as rationality 'seems necessarily a feature of the whole conscious subject'. Nagel plumps for *radical* (panpsychist?) emergence backed up, once again, by a teleological account of its origin.

The final chapter is on value. Nagel is a moral (and aesthetic) realist. Moral realism is not compatible with a Darwinian account of values, therefore, for Nagel, the Darwinian account is false. There are moral truths as there are physical, psychological or arithmetical truths. Nagel again invokes an immanent teleology to support his moral realism. Nagel's moral realism is emphatically *not* a metaphysical theory (à la Plato). I agree with Nagel's moral/aesthetic realism but not with its being purged of any higher metaphysical/spiritual context.

This disagreement highlights my major problem with Nagel's thinking: Nagel's mind seems hermetically sealed within what J.H.M. Whiteman called 'one-level naturalism' – whatever the ultimate nature of that level might be. Nagel seems pathologically afraid of any kind of dualism – he is as afraid of any hint of a ghost in the machine as he is of ghosts per se. Nagel is a one-world humanist and seems to be wilfully ignorant of the paranormal and the extraordinary, and yet, in his own words, vis-à-vis the inclusion of irreducible life and consciousness within a new theory, 'the more a theory has to explain, the more powerful it has to be' (p. 89).

This book makes me wish that Nagel were a philosopher of genius, but, self-confessedly, he lacks the kind of intelligence and powers of imagination to produce anything that might displace the materialist neo-Darwinian paradigm. He proposes *radical* emergence as an explanation of mind but he is incapable of being radical enough in his own thinking, though he acknowledges that 'we should expect theoretical progress in this area to require a major conceptual revolution at least as radical as relativity theory' (p. 42 – my italics). His invocation of an immanent teleology, which he characterises at one point, à la Schelling, as 'the lengthy process of the universe gradually waking up and becoming aware of itself' seems intuitively OK but ultimately ad hoc. Nevertheless, anti-reductionist, non-materialist philosophers such as Thomas Nagel and Raymond Tallis are our unknowing allies and their powerful critiques of the current orthodoxy in the metaphysics and science of the normal and ordinary are, I believe, of invaluable assistance in the development of a new paradigm that will, one day, include the

paranormal and extraordinary. It was great to meet you in person.

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

Cosmic Harmony

David Lorimer

THE WHOLE ELEPHANT REVEALED

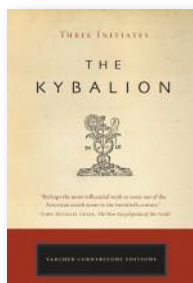
Marja de Vries

Axis Mundi Books, 2012, 403 pp., £18.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78009-042-2

THE KYBALION

The Three Initiates

Filiquarian Publishing, 2006, 135 pp., h/b (available on Amazon) – ISBN 1-59986-825-3



The title of the first book refers to the famous Hindu story where each blind person reports a different aspect of the elephant and assumes it represents the whole animal. The subtitle is more

explicit by referring to insights into the existence and operation of universal laws and the golden ratio. It is a remarkable analysis bringing together science and the sacred in a very detailed fashion. I came across the second book by reading the first and finding it not only frequently quoted, but that it provided the chapter framework for Marja de Vries. Like other editions from the same publisher, very little information is given about the book and its origins in hermetic philosophy. The main structure explains the seven hermetic principles, namely the principles of mentalism, correspondence, vibration, polarity, rhythm, cause and effect, and gender.

The reader becomes acquainted with the traditional meaning of substantial reality as underlying outward appearances and manifestations, which are in a constant state of flux. Everything exists within the All, which has to be infinite, absolute, eternal and unchangeable by definition. This is Infinite Living Mind or Spirit in which we live, move and have our being. The essential teaching is that All is in THE ALL, but it is equally true that THE ALL is in All. The Many are in the One and the One is (immanent) in the Many. This is a statement well worth pondering, especially as there are different stages of understanding: first recognition, as Thomas Troward pointed out, then realisation, and finally manifestation of

the Spirit within us. It is one thing to recognise, but quite another to realise and manifest this Spirit. It is also interesting to find that Thomas Jay Hudson in his *Law of Psychic Phenomena* did not fully understand the hermetic teaching of the duality of mind, which he himself expressed in the distinction between the objective conscious and the subjective subconscious mind. The writing is pretty dense, but repays close study.

Moving on now to the first book, this is a study that will appeal widely to readers of this Review as we all have an interest in science, consciousness and spirituality. We are equally aware that science as currently constituted has a limited scope and a reductionist epistemology that illuminates some aspects of reality but obscures others. It has long been a claim of esoteric philosophy that it provides a compatible underlying framework within which modern science can be harmonised, and this book is no exception. It invites readers to give equal weight to intuitive knowing and feelings alongside the analytical rational mind. It cites Walter Russell as an example of a person who united these two minds within himself and produced some very remarkable work, much of which is still ahead of its time.

A fundamental proposition is that the universe is multi-dimensional, hence physical reality is one level rather than the whole of reality. Universal Consciousness is in fact an organising principle of the various levels of reality in a similar way to the Greek term Kosmos. If universal laws specify the operational and energetic procedures, then sacred geometry represents the feminine, the form taken by the operation of these laws. Indeed, the relationship between universal laws and sacred geometry is one of the most interesting aspects of this book. The principles of sacred geometry underlie the dynamic architecture of the universe that is also reflected in Sacred Art, especially in the law of harmonic division implying that the universe is a harmonic whole of ratios and specifically that the golden ratio specifies the relationship between the Whole and the part. The work of Lawrence LeShan about perspectives in science (and also reviewed in this issue) is consistent with the book's thesis that the differing perspectives of science and mysticism are due to different ways of perceiving reality.

Each of the main chapters has a brilliant propositional summary at the beginning, which is then unfolded in the course of the narrative. In addition, the reader gradually builds up a more coherent understanding of the relationship between these fundamental principles, beginning with the Law of Oneness. In this way, the author goes through the seven laws already referred to above, explaining how they are expressed in philosophy

and also in science. For instance, the Law of Oneness includes the proposition that everything is interconnected, which will also see in quantum entanglement (e.g. in Dean Radin) and in the philosophy of David Bohm, with his implicate and explicate orders. Fractals and holographic images represent an example of correspondence, while the chapter on vibration brings in morphic resonance and the work of Hans Jenny and Valerie Hunt. There is also a chapter on laws derived from the Law of Vibration, which includes an interesting discussion on the Law of Attraction as related to the Laws of Attention, Intention, Surrender and the Path of Least Resistance. The highest vibration, as experienced by mystics, is a fusion of Light, Love and Life - and we experience bliss if we are aligned with this energy.

Remarkably, the author shows how Nature also operates via the Golden Ratio along the Path of Least Resistance (just like water in the Tao). This discussion takes place in the chapter on the Law of Dynamic Balance and builds on polarity and gender also represented as a pattern of expansion and contraction. We find this same principle in the yin and yang symbols and in the relationship between energy and form. Specifically, the Golden Mean Spiral is found to be the natural movement of energy as also expressed in the Fibonacci sequence expressed in growth. It turns out that self-similarity is the most common growth form in Nature, which will also find in ferns - D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson was aware of this connection 100 years ago. The merging of opposing Golden Mean Spirals representing the creative and destructive forces leads to new life; sometimes these are in different proportions such as 8 to 13 in a pinecone. It also represents the relationship between the finite and infinite, and perhaps the transition between different levels of existence as found in the tunnel during the NDE. We are also working on achieving dynamic balance or an integration of opposites within ourselves, and indeed within our culture, which has become seriously unbalanced.

The final chapter is devoted to examples of the Law of Dynamic Balance within Western science, with the work of pioneers like Victor Schauburger on vortices and Ilya Prigogine on self-organised criticality in dissipative structures. This leads to consideration of the relationship between force and structure as one begins to realise that neither can be fully understood without taking the other into account in the light of the Principle of Least Action: 'every form generating vibrational frequency appears to be a harmonic vibration' and perhaps even an oscillating rhythm between chaos and order, the whole and the part, the universal and the

individual. Even the way that the heart pumps blood is underpinned by a special relationship between flow and form. The book ends with a plea for the integration of the intelligence of the heart - representing the soul - with the analytical capacity of the mind. At this point, one might have expected a conclusion bringing the key ideas together, but the author adds only a short epilogue and a note that she is in the process of writing a further volume applying the same principles to society. This leaves the reader somewhat in the air - it would have been good to re-cap the themes and draw the threads together. However, as a whole, the book provides a key reference point it was lovely to see you will appear. for a synthesis science and spirituality underpinned by universal laws and sacred geometry.

A Very Contemporary Take on Ancient Philosophy

Oliver Robinson

PHILOSOPHY FOR LIFE (AND OTHER DANGEROUS SITUATIONS)

Jules Evans

Rider, 2012, 304 pp., £8.39, p/b - ISBN-10: 1-846-043-20-4

Jules Evans is a renaissance man - journalist, academic researcher, blogger, and popular philosopher. His new book, *Philosophy for Life (and Other Dangerous Situations)*, weaves together ancient philosophy with personal stories, modern political controversies and psychological research to convey how the philosophies of ancient Athens are still influencing everyday life, communities, therapies and self-help movements in modern society.

The book is structured as a day-long philosophy class. Following a brief introduction to Socrates as the father of Western philosophy, the themes in the book that link ancient philosophy with contemporary concerns are outlined: (1) the debt that modern therapy traditions owe to ancient philosophy, (2) the ever-growing interest in wellbeing and philosophy in the field of politics, and (3) current

communities that have an explicit or implicit basis in ancient Greek ideas.

The 'morning session' introduces us to the Stoics - Epictetus, Musonius Rufus and Seneca, for whom the solution to life's ills was to understand and control the process of thinking itself. Stories of individuals who live by Stoic values are introduced, including a soldier, a paralympian, a firefighter and a policeman. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), we learn, has resurrected many Stoic techniques for the modern distressed soul.

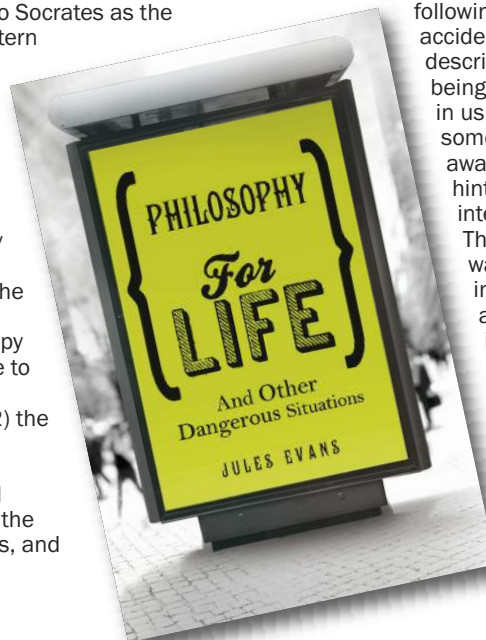
The 'lunch session' leaves the austerity of Stoicism for the indulgence of Epicureanism. Epicurus was the first philosopher of happiness; for him the goal of life was to maximise pleasure and happiness. Given that the 'pursuit of happiness' is in the American declaration of independence, one of the founding documents of the modern world, it is fair to say that Epicurus was on to something that had enduring appeal. Epicurus's ideas are also linked in the book to the contemporary fascination with how to cultivate happiness and live in the 'present moment'.

The 'early afternoon session' is a reminder that many of the ancient philosophers were also mystics. The rational and bookish philosopher of the modern age seems juxtaposed to the whimsical and seemingly irrational mystic, but in ancient Greece reason and mysticism were two sides of a larger whole. For example, Pythagoras founded a religious movement, lived a monastic lifestyle, chanted daily incantations and used music as a form of spiritual inspiration, while being a leading mathematician. Heraclitus believed the whole cosmos is conscious, and Evans flips the narrative at this point to discuss contemporary arguments surrounding the problem of consciousness. The author covers this famously difficult territory with enviably simple prose. He also, later in the book, describes a near death experience that he

personally experienced following a terrible ski accident, during which he describes reports a feeling of being 'sure that is something in us that can never die, something that is pure awareness and love', which hints towards his own interest in the mystical.

This mystical illumination was described as influential to the author's worldview, and illustrates how the spiritual and the philosophical are mutually supportive.

The Sceptics come next in the book - they were an ancient school of philosophy whose maxims of



doubting everything became integral to the questioning of the modern worldview. The contemporary sceptic movement is described as being rather dogmatic relative to its ancient cousin. Its purported scepticism is in fact a cover for a very committed belief in materialism and science. The belief that *all* forms of knowledge including science are limited and that certainty is a fool's paradise is rarely expressed by those who wear the badge of sceptic these days. Evans' account of a huge Sceptics' Convention in Las Vegas conveys the way that modern Scepticism, as professional debunking of all things non-scientific, would not sit well with the sceptics of yesteryear.

The 'late afternoon session' discusses the Cynics, an ancient philosophy that promoted the importance of the simple life and living in accordance with nature, and was famously encapsulated by Diogenes, who lived in a barrel. The Occupy movement and other back-to-nature and back-to-basics movements and communities in the modern world are described as modern expressions of this Cynic impulse.

Plato is then described as the 'last shaman', due to his beliefs in an eternal reality that is more real than everyday reality, to which a person could ascend through spiritual practice. Plato's dreamy philosophy of eternal forms and moral values has been extraordinarily influential in the West and modern incarnations of Platonic philosophy are easy to find, including the *School of Economic Science*, which was explicitly founded on Platonic philosophy allied to Vedantic mysticism. Platonic communities are prone to rigidity in Evans' view, due to their idealistic desire for an inevitably very particular kind of perfection.

We are then reminded of Aristotle's extraordinary breadth of knowledge and wisdom. His vision of cultivating 'eudaimonia' in society is the springboard for a discussion of whether the relativism of modern politics is being replaced by a more directive form of eudaimonic Aristotelian politics whose goal is not just to 'live and let live' but to proactively enhance a particular version of the good life. This challenge is one that is at the heart of modern political debates, for example the 'Big Society' was influenced by the philosopher Phillip Blond, who in turn was influenced by...you guessed it... Aristotle.

In summary, this is an eminently accessible introduction to the roots of the Western philosophical tradition and its many real-world tendrils in contemporary society. If ever a book could convince a non-philosopher that philosophy is supposed to be fun, politically engaged and physical, this is it.

Oliver Robinson is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of

Greenwich, author of *Development through Adulthood*, published by Palgrave Macmillan, and co-editor of *A New Renaissance*, published by Floris Books.

Vision over the Boundaries

Kevin Tingay

BLUE SKY GOD – THE EVOLUTION OF SCIENCE AND CHRISTIANITY

Don MacGregor (SMN)

Circle Books, 2012. 270 pp. £14.99, p/b. ISBN 078-1-84694-937-1

Don MacGregor introduces his book with an account of his own journey which has led him from teaching science in a Midlands secondary school to serving as a parish priest in the Church in Wales, from an agnostic position, through a traditional evangelical Christian conversion experience, and reaching a liberal standpoint where he seeks to make connections between emerging insights in both science and Christian thought. His template in both fields of endeavour is an evolutionary one.

He adopts four viewpoints from which to address his overview. Firstly, the emergence of evolving patterns in scientific theory. Secondly, he challenges the continuing viability of essentially anthropomorphic views of God. Thirdly, he responds to the new range of questions that he discerns in the concerns of younger people. Fourthly, he has an interest in healing and the growth of interest in new therapeutic endeavours. In his introduction he asks why Christianity might need to evolve, and suggests that it is the perceived strength of a scientific worldview that the institutional churches face a major challenge. Your reviewer would agree in part, but would point out that the histories of most religious traditions are marked with continuous signs of internal pressure for change and development, though it is never easy to divide internal and external influences in the complexity of the social expressions of faith.

MacGregor, writing from his own experience and scientist and now a pastor, wisely addresses what he knows. In the first part of the text he pursues what he observes as the emergence of themes which in the past have been seen as matters of spiritual concern but now are attracting the interest of at least some in the scientific community. He examines developments on consciousness research, epigenetics, the relationship of prayer and healing, morphic resonance, and aspects of quantum theory. This takes up the first half of the book. The second part addresses some traditional themes of Christian concern – the person and work of

Christ, the concepts of Kingdom and Salvation in Christian experience, - and explores their meaning and relevance in the light of the emergence of new patterns of thought (and the rediscovery of old ones) in contemporary religious life. It is sometimes said that the institutional churches are generally addressing questions that a past generation has asked, and failing to hear those being asked today. This is not wholly true, but is the experience of many.

So who might benefit from this book? Many Christians today seem to cope with modernity by keeping their faith and spiritual practice in one compartment and their engagement, such as it is, with science and technology in another. They might benefit from this bridge building endeavour, and feel encouraged to raise these issues within church communities. Those outside the Christian tradition, especially those who might be influenced by popular journalism on Church affairs, might gain some small encouragement from the knowledge that there at least some Christian thinkers and practitioners (MacGregor is not alone) who are addressing these topics in an accessible way.

The Revd Kevin Tingay is a retired Anglican Parish Priest.

Spirituality and the Limbic System

Oliver Robinson

SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION: A SCIENTIFIC DEFENSE OF FAITH

George Vaillant

Random House Inc, 2008, 238 pp., £12.50, h/b - ISBN: 978-0767926577

George Vaillant is a Harvard Professor who is a passionate advocate for spirituality as a domain that is distinct from religion. In the book, he describes religion as a group-based activity that involves doctrines, values, traditions, and social identity. By contrast, spirituality refers to the psychological experiences that relate to an individual's sense of connection with something transcendent (be it a defined deity, truth, beauty, or anything else considered to be greater than self) and to the emotions of awe, gratitude, love, compassion, and forgiveness. In *Spiritual Evolution*, Vaillant sets forth an argument for spirituality as a domain whose concern is the cultivation of positive emotions. He suggests that the modern world, in its pursuit of hard facts and rational thinking, has neglected feelings and emotions. Neurologically speaking, these emotions are underpinned by the limbic system – a set of brain structures lying beneath the cerebral

cortex that is possessed by all mammals, and is linked to the experience of love, hope, joy and gratitude, but also with paranoia and fear.

This system has been left uncared for by the modern worldview, and spirituality, says Vaillant, is a set of rituals and practices for inducing, maintaining and developing our mammalian limbic positive emotions, which in turn connect us with other people and to the world around us. Because these limbic-based emotions are fundamental to all human beings, their pursuit unites us, while religions based around language and text have a habit of dividing.

The book provides a survey of faith/trust, love, hope, joy, awe, gratitude, forgiveness and compassion, interweaving information on brain circuitry with examples from Vaillant's study of adult development and quotes from mystical writers and philosophers. It is an interesting and wide-ranging read, but I felt there were several things missing in Vaillant's picture. Firstly, in Vaillant's scheme, spirituality is a feeding trough for the emotional brain – it is a collection of ideas and practices for how to nurture good feelings, and thus has no claim on what is or is not true. Indeed, the idea of 'spiritual truth' would probably be a contradiction in terms for Vaillant. However meditators, mystics and worshippers of many kinds talk of their practices as allowing accessing to some form of truth that transcends words and waking-consciousness reality. The second missing piece is the fact that spirituality and mysticism have an ancient relationship with suffering and negative emotion, encapsulated by the Sufi tradition that describes a feeling of 'longing' – a kind of cosmic sadness – at the heart of spiritual feeling. But for Vaillant, spirituality is about positive emotions, and has little interest in pain, other than in how to minimise it.

Vaillant's theory of spirituality is materialistic – it is based on the needs and structures of the material brain. There is no greater reality than the physical within his scheme, so it will appeal to those with a physicalist ontology, and it is arguably a neat way of getting spirituality into such a worldview. For those whose are interested in spirituality as a path to truth as well as a path to feeling good, and/or for those who consider material reality to be a subset of a greater reality, the book will be a bit of a cul-de-sac. But as an engaging survey of the positive emotions and their role in spiritual practice, it's worth a read.

psychology-consciousness studies

Beyond a Single Vision

David Lorimer

LANDSCAPES OF THE MIND

Lawrence LeShan (SMN)

Eirini Press, 2012, 213 pp., \$15, p/b – ISBN 978-0-9799989-8-0

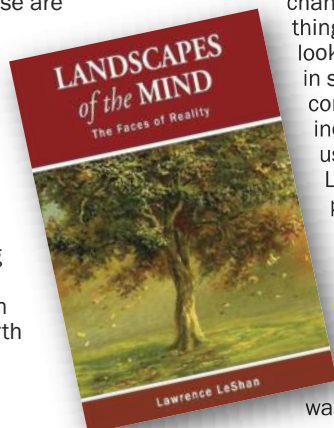
Larry LeShan, now 92, wrote his first paper 70 years ago and this is his 20th book. He has been at the forefront of consciousness studies all that time, and this book follows up on some of the work he began in the 1970s comparing the outlooks of mediums, mystics and physicists and then producing in 1976 in his book entitled *Alternate Realities*. In the meantime, he has also written about meditation, psychosomatic disease, the paranormal, the psychology of war, ethics and evil. In this book he breaks new ground by proposing a taxonomy of consciousness inspired by Vico, who was one of the first thinkers to realise that different disciplines required different epistemological approaches. At the beginning of the book, he gives a hypothetical example to show that we all live in multiple realities depending on what we are doing and thinking. In fact he gets the reader into the gist of his argument by comparing mentalities in peace and war, showing that we undergo a shift in our world picture or perception of reality, moving into the realm of fairytale and myth. We are constituted not only by our senses but also by the way in which we use symbolism to organise and interpret the world. Larry argues that the structure of the world picture and the structure of consciousness are isomorphic and inseparable. He quotes Bacon as saying that perceptions are according to the measure of the individual and not according to the measure of the universe. As another example, the worlds of the child and the adult are very different.

Max Planck was aware of this issue when he said that 'when you change the way you look at things, the things you're looking at change.' Larry fills in some of the history of consciousness studies, including the first modern use of the word by John Locke in 1690 'the perception of what passes in a man's mind'. By the 1920s, it seemed impossible to identify and classify the elements of consciousness, and behaviourism was on the rise. The problem was that the classifications

were based on the idea that science must directly observe its phenomena, but in the case of consciousness, as GG Stokes observed, 'the instrument of research is itself the object of investigation; the mind which we study is the mind by which we study.' This almost sounds like a sentence out of Meister Eckhart. Mystics realise the paradoxical nature of consciousness as the divine is reflected in the human and the human in the divine. It is clear that Larry is a regular reader of the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, and he also draws on the work of Mary Midgley.

He identifies the special problems inherent in studying consciousness under three headings: first, as already mentioned, consciousness can see anything but itself, even if we can study the correlations between physiological and conscious events. The next issue is the nature of observables, since there are no separate entities and the observables are by definition non-quantitative. The third obstacle is the lack of a classification system of aspects or types of consciousness. This leads Larry to conclude that a science of consciousness must be constructed on the basis of questions that can be answered. He goes on, 'since we cannot, in principle, separate "consciousness" from "external reality", we must study the synthesis produced by the two.' This is a point of which William James was already aware when he asks if hearing a rustle of leaves is a mental or physical event. We can ask what kind of world pictures are formed by the interactions of consciousness and external reality. The roots of this approach go back to Vico, as already mentioned. In his earlier books, Larry already identified the drawback that we have a basic commitment to the idea of one true, valid concept of reality that can explain the whole range of human experience; this is the quest for a unified theory of everything. By contrast, Larry insists that consciousness has no permanent structure or stable form: 'consciousness takes on and has the same structure and dynamics as the world picture which is being perceived and reacted to at that moment.' Hence we cannot specify the structure of consciousness per se or in itself (some theorists of pure consciousness might dispute this, but then pure consciousness has no structure).

Larry proposes a taxonomy of world pictures, in which each Kingdom 'has its own definition of space, time, identity, causation, geometry and logic.' Within each Kingdom there are a number of realms and domains that share the same definitions of basic factors, for instance in the case of fundamentalism. He comes up with four realms: the first is the quantitative/discrete, which is the world picture of the human senses; secondly we have the quantitative/



continuous relating to field theory and relativity theory. The third realm is non-quantitative/discrete, relating to myth, fairytale and dream; and the fourth – non-quantitative/continuous – is the order of cosmic consciousness and bliss. These are powerful ideas once they are analysed and elaborated.

Realms are defined by the characteristics of their observables, and Larry suggests the following pattern: the definition of real, the kind of entities dealt with, the kind of prevalent algorithms or general processes, the questions that can and cannot be answered, definitions of space, time and energy, and finally geometry. This gives each realm a set of distinctive features, which are then explained in more detail. For instance, moral questions cannot be answered in the sensory realm. David Bohm's implicate order would be found in the second, quantitatively continuous realm. The third realm is inhabited by stories and myths while in the fourth, everything in the universe is connected to everything else. This is an insight often reported by near death experiencers, which physiologists are inclined to try to understand in terms of sensory brain processes. This may yield correlations but as an attempt at a complete explanation, it is a category error.

Larry gives a number of practical examples, including the change in mentality occasioned by war. Planners of a bombing raid will be in the first realm, while the victims will be firmly in the third. Repeated bombings reinforce the projection of evil on the other, and the enemy is unreliable by definition and cannot be trusted to follow through on a genuine negotiation. One can see this pattern in any long-standing conflict. Terrorists and fundamentalists tend to agree that there is one way of arriving at the truth and that the world is divided into good and bad people – they of course are the good, or the ones who will be saved. Larry provides an interesting table contrasting specific attitudes, which also have implications for how we see and relate to other people as well as providing a set of rules for action. A similar classification can be applied to medicine: molecular biology is firmly in realm one, while Chinese medicine with its concept of Qi is clearly in realm three, and Western science seeks to apply its own standards to a system of thought that has a totally different basis.

The idea that there is only one way of properly understanding the universe, that it is causally closed and that the only valid to truth is true objective observation is a powerful legacy of the Enlightenment. Many scientists are still trying to explain everything in mechanistic terms that are really only applicable to realm one. This is obvious as soon as one tries to understand a painting only in terms of the chemistry of its paint. A very basic question is

that of death: our bodies are clearly in realm one, while our minds exist in realms three and four; and when we find ourselves in realm four we have the overwhelming experience that it is more real than the sensory world, which of course sounds nonsensical to those using exclusively this framework. As Larry himself suggests, his taxonomy enables us to 'think more clearly about the different ways we organise and live in reality and about consciousness itself. We can learn about our world constructions and their interactions' and how using the wrong world picture can make it impossible to find a solution. In some ways this is a modest proposal, but it is nevertheless fundamental and deserves to be widely known and discussed, especially as it sheds light not only on science and consciousness, but also on medicine and sociology. This is a fitting culmination to 70 years of research.

Spiritual Implications of the NDE

David Lorimer

PROOF OF HEAVEN

Eben Alexander

Piatkus, 2012, 194 pp., £12.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-7499-5879-4

DYING TO BE ME

Anita Moorjani

Hay House, 2012, 189 pp., £10.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-84850-783-8

I have no doubt that the title of Eben Alexander's book was chosen by his publisher's marketing department. If so, it had the desired effect of bringing the book to public attention and raising the hackles of distinguished neuroscientists like Colin Blakemore. Strictly speaking, there can be no proof of heaven; indeed, Swedenborg might have used such a title to describe his experiences 200 years ago. The fact that Alexander is a neurosurgeon and that his experience completely changed his orthodox view gives the book a certain professional authority, even if one might disagree with some of the detail. However, scientists like Blakemore are not willing to modify their philosophical assumptions on the basis of a single book; nor should they be, except that this book is the tip of the iceberg of a whole set of collateral literature that points in the same direction: namely that there is very good evidence for mind transcending brain function. Alexander makes it very clear that he had paid no attention to the NDE literature before his experience, and shared the orthodox neuroscientific view that there was nothing that

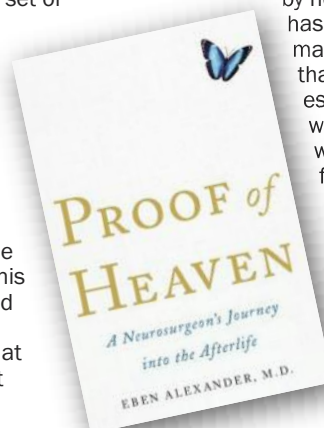
could not be explained by the existing theory.

All this changed when he suffered a life-threatening bacterial infection that left him comatose for a week. He explains the narrative both from his own inner point of view and the perspective of family and nurses caring for him. To all intents and purposes, his brain was non-operational, so the fact that he could report a series of profound experiences should give one pause for thought, even if in his case these experiences were transcendent rather than veridical OBEs. They are consistent with other similar reports, including those by Moorjani in the second book under consideration. Alexander observes that he was encountering a reality of the world of consciousness that existed completely free from the limitations of his physical brain. Of course, it is easy for critics to say that what he describes as real was in fact an illusion, as he himself would have thought before his experience. He highlights a number of features of this other reality: a radical interconnectedness, an infusion of love and direct telepathic communication, which is also reported by Moorjani.

Interestingly, both experiencers write of encountering deceased friends and relatives. For Alexander, it turned out to be a sister he had never met but whom he subsequently recognised on seeing a photo. For Moorjani it was her father and a friend who had died of cancer a few years before. More profoundly, they both experience a universal infused with love where separation from the divine is an illusion. In Alexander's case, this insight was particularly important as his background as an adopted child meant that he did not feel loved and lovable at the deepest level; the book also recounts how he meets his other family and healing that ensues.

Moorjani's story tells of her traditional Hindu upbringing and the attempts by her parents to arrange a marriage, when she herself wanted to pursue an independent professional career. This situation leads her into a state of fear and inadequacy, which is somatically translated into lymphatic cancer. She sees two friends die and begins to die herself. She actually gets to the stage of multiple organ failure in hospital and is given up by her doctors. In her NDE, she has the realisation that she is a magnificent spark of the divine, that we are all pure love in our essence. Her message is that when we know the truth of who we really are, we can live life fearlessly and actualise our full potential.

In her case, return to the physical world coincided with an immediate and rapid regression of her cancer, so much so that her tumours had visibly shrunk within three days. Within two



weeks, scans showed no sign of cancer in her system, but specialists still insisted on biopsy as they could not believe that the cancer had really disappeared. She knows she is healed, but her doctors cannot believe it: 'just because we cannot find the cancer doesn't mean it's not there.' This sequence of events is documented by a doctor, and there can be no doubt that a miracle occurred. On returning to normal life, she feels that we are all One, so her understanding of life and death is radically altered. It turns out that we are in fact already what we desire to be.

Both books suggest that heaven is a state rather than a place, and encourage readers to think of their lives as a gift to the universe, daring us to express fearlessly who we really are. On the basis of Alexander's subsequent reading, he comes to the conclusion that there are three camps so far as the NDE is concerned: believers who have undergone an NDE or found such experiences easy to accept, staunch unbelievers who know that the brain generates consciousness, and then the middle group who know about these things and are interested in knowing more. If you find yourself in this middle group, then both of these books will repay study. For the more technically minded, Alexander considers a series of neuroscientific hypotheses that might in principle explain his experience, but he concludes that none of them is satisfactory and that we need a new approach to a science of consciousness. Few Network readers would disagree.

Mindful Attention

David Lorimer

BREAKING THE HABIT OF BEING YOURSELF

Joe Dispenza

Hay House, 2012, 329 pp., £12.99, p/b
- ISBN 978-1-84850-856-9

Joe Dispenza has a background in biochemistry and neuroscience as well as chiropractic and is the author of *Evolve your Brain*. Here he takes his analysis further with many practical explanations, implications and applications. As the title suggests, we evolved through our thoughts, feelings and actions into the person we currently are, and much of our behaviour is habitual, including emotional and

intellectual reactions. These embodied neural patterns can hold us in the past and lead to the re-creation of situations based on reactions rather than creative responses. The three parts discuss the scientific background of consciousness, meditation and the brain, and how to take steps towards a new destiny based on conscious choices.

The starting point is that our subjective minds have an impact on our objective worlds. If we want to change, we have to change our beliefs about the nature of reality on the basis that energy responds to mindful attention. We ourselves are emitting signals that represent specific patterns of energy or information - that is thoughts and feelings. Unless we change that signal, our lives will remain the same. This is where breaking the habit of being oneself comes in. Using a quantum analogy, the author suggests that we can collapse a particular reality out of the probabilities inherent in the quantum field. At the highest level, we can enact an aspect of universal consciousness. The author gives an interesting example of his daughter holding in mind the possibility of a trip to Italy, and how this actually came about, which had a lot to do with the grateful feelings she projected as if she were already having the experience.

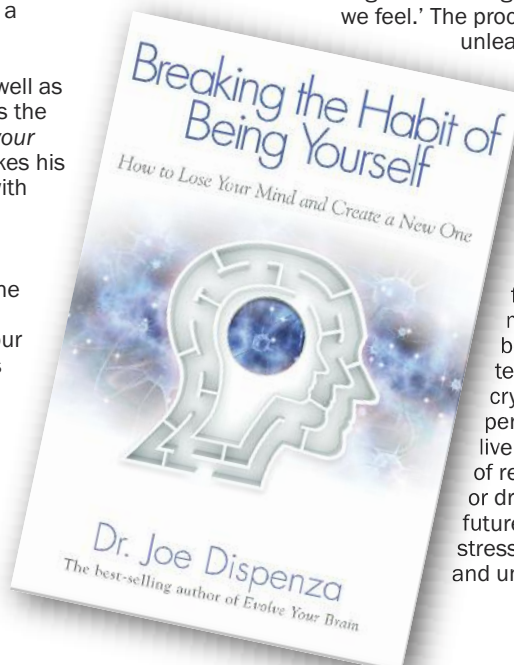
The next three chapters discuss how to overcome the limitations of the environment, the body and time. In order to change, we have to be greater than these. Indeed, greatness is defined as holding fast to a dream or vision independently of the environment. Gandhi and Edison had possibilities alive in their inner worlds before they eventually manifested in time; nor did they listen to the naysayers who said that such things were not possible. They focused unrelentingly on bringing these possibilities into existence; in principle, we can do the same. And when everything works together, individuals can exert immense power. Inwardly, this means transforming habitual thoughts and feelings, which form a loop; hence 'to change is to think greater than how we feel.' The process is one of

unlearning and relearning, especially as the body and the subconscious are living in the past through memorised thoughts and feelings. Passing moods can become temperament that crystallises into personality. If we live mostly in a state of regretting the past or dreading the future, we will be in stress survival mode and unable to create

anything radically new. The first key step is self-awareness, becoming the witness to our own states. In this way, we can free up energy trapped in negative emotional patterns by focusing on how we want to think, feel and act in the future.

The author goes on to discuss the role of the three brains - the neocortex or frontal lobe, the limbic system and the cerebellum. Recent neuroscience has established the reality of neuroplasticity. New thoughts can produce new feelings and therefore new behaviour, as in the example of a man generating compassion for his challenging mother-in-law (from thinking to feeling to being). Ideally, knowledge and experience can lead to wisdom and the evolution of our being. Here is where meditation can play a critical role in changing our brains, bodies and state of being, for instance in cultivating a state of unconditional gratitude. This new state of being creates a new personality and therefore the new personal reality. We are all aware of the gap between how we appear and who we really are. Real change only comes about when we create a new identity from the inside rather than with outside trappings. We can choose to change by unmemorising negative emotions such as guilt, fear or anxiety rather than waiting for an intolerable situation to give us a prompt. Meditation can help us peel away some emotional layers so that we become more transparent and unblock the flow of universal intelligence.

After an explanation of various brain states and the relationship between the conscious and subconscious mind, the last part of the book is taken up with detailed instructions for meditative practice over a period of four weeks. A more centred state brings greater coherence. Detailed instructions are given on the author's website. As one goes through the process, there is a series of exercises enabling one to review one's patterns and make adjustments, such as identifying limiting states of mind, limiting automatic thoughts and limiting forms of behaviour. Through awareness, these states can be redirected and one can notice when one is becoming unconscious or going back onto autopilot. New patterns need rehearsing, so one needs to ask oneself how one wants to think, feel and act based on an idealised self. This kind of work takes real commitment, but the book gives readers the essential tools. It is an unusually clear synthesis of theory and practice that can make a real difference to those prepared to do the necessary work.

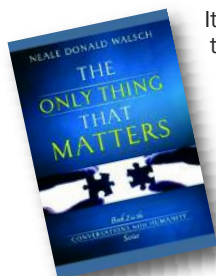


Divine Desire

David Lorimer

THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS

Neale Donald Walsch

Hay House, 2012, 231 pp., £10.99, p/b
– ISBN 978-1-78180-5

It would be interesting to know how many readers have kept up with the work of Neale Donald Walsch since the appearance of *Conversations with God* some 15 years ago. I reviewed these

books at the time, and we

even organised a day conference to discuss the philosophy in the books. About 35 people attended. This is the first book I have read for a while, and it reminded me of the power of many of the ideas expressed in the series of books. The fundamental purpose of this book is to remind the reader of their essential soul identity and to suggest ways of linking the soul with the mind. The premise is that we are all the Same Thing, individuated and differentiated, so that we tend to forget the underlying Oneness of Being (we need to bring this to Mind) and act as if we are really separate from each other, as our bodies indeed are. This is of course not a new philosophy, but a new expression of an ancient truth in the kind of informal yet precise language that modern people can understand.

There are many telling aphorisms throughout the book, for instance 'Awareness rests in the Soul and Attention rests in the Mind' - so the trick is for the Mind to pay more attention to Soul Awareness. Hence 'it is your Consciousness that is expanding as the Awareness of your Soul comes to the Attention of your Mind.' The mind therefore has to intend and attend. We all encounter obstacles along the way, and as an aside Neale quotes Mary O'Malley as saying that 'what is in the way is the way.'

The Divine expressed in all forms of life is in a state of continuous transformation, as Ramana Maharshi also states. We are one with the fundamental essence of life, which is always being reshaped and re-expressed. The Soul knows that the journey leads to Completion, which represents the greatest joy: 'the bliss of knowing Divinity, flowing through you, as you' as an expression of the fullness of life. This, says Neale, is the Kingdom of Heaven as a State of Being 'Completely Remembered, Recreated, Reintegrated, and Reunited with Divinity.' In this way we can feel literally re-membered. And since this is a cyclical process, it can be undertaken and completed at ever expanding levels of manifestation. Hence the bliss of

evolving to higher levels of Divinity is the ultimate attraction and the one thing that matters referred to in the title - aligning one's desire with this. God is immanently expressed in each of us, becoming more of Life, which is itself the process - dividing, separating, recreating. This is a long way from traditional views of God, but resonates strongly with various mystical traditions.

The second half of the book contains some powerful practical advice about our relationship between events and experience. Neale encourages us to realise that even if nothing changes, everything can be different, depending on our interpretation. The same event can be very differently viewed, and it is our choice either to respond or to react on the basis of old programmes. He proposes five powerful tools for transforming our lives: gratitude, re-contextualisation, compassion, forgiveness and the means of uniting Soul with Mind through meditation. Since what the mind thinks and the heart feels about something are crucial to our experience of it, gratitude can literally change one's mind, even in the most challenging of normal circumstances.

Each time we encounter the same experience, we have the chance of responding differently. This is where re-contextualisation or reframing can help us to see things differently so that the past does not have to be recreated in the present. It is also important how we see ourselves - whether as chance accidents or spiritual beings on a human journey. Compassion is another form of giving, both to others and oneself; those with little compassion for themselves often have little for others. Like the other tools, forgiveness is designed to produce freedom: gratitude frees from struggle and suffering, re-contextualisation from anger and resentment, compassion from self-blame and frustration, and forgiveness from hurt and injury. Ultimately, forgiveness is resolved in understanding - as the old French proverb has it, to understand all is to forgive all.

Finally, we come to meditation as a means of sustaining the connection between Mind and Soul. It is a way of asking and practising how we can best serve the agenda of the Soul by being willing to do so. This practice will give us more of an experience of being centred and help elevate our thoughts and vision. In this way, a new world can begin to emerge from a new mind as more people realise the truth of the Oneness of life and humanity with all its attendant implications for justice, peace, sustainability and prejudice. In an afterword, Neale summarises how we would act from that perspective - living fully, loving fully, forgiving and expressing our highest knowing. It is an inspiring prospect that reflects the

wisdom of these writings. This is not a book to be read through and never consulted again, but rather one to absorb and integrate.

Leaps in Time

Max Payne

THE EFFECT

Linda Hoy (SMN)

John Hunt, 2012, 271 pp., £9.99, ISBN 978-1-84694-906-7

This book claims to use 21st century science to validate what mystics and spiritual leaders have always been telling us. If "validate" is used in the strict scientific sense, and if this book actually did that, then it would be worth at least a double Nobel Prize in physics and literature. What it actually is, is a vivid and compelling autobiographical account of one person's evolution in mind and spirit. This is accompanied by arguments that the modern physical concepts of parallel universes, dark matter, entanglement, and quantum uncertainty are compatible with paranormal experiences such as telepathy, precognition, and near death experiences. Whereas 21st century physics does not, strictly speaking, validate these phenomena, there is no conflict between them, as there is with the mechanistic Newtonian world view in which much of scientific thought is still locked.

Linda Hoy's exploration of the paranormal is centred on what she terms "the Effect". This she interprets in terms of Wheeler's branching multiple universes, and Dunne's *Experiment with Time* in which Dunne claims that it is possible to "go up", as it were, into a higher time, and so overtake ordinary time, and therefore see what is about to happen. Many examples are given of her awareness of this possibility.

By far the best example of this known to the reviewer was given by Air Marshal Sir Victor Goddard. As an air cadet in 1930 he was flying a biplane over airfield which he knew was derelict after the 1st World War. To his amazement he saw that it was restored to activity, and on the ground he saw yellow painted monoplanes. At that time, 1930, the RAF has no monoplanes. On landing he reported what he had seen, and if he had not been best cadet of the year, he would have been thrown out as being mentally unbalanced. The report, however, remained on the records.



Ten years later, in 1940, he was flying over the same airfield, which had been restored for use in the 2nd World War and had Miles Magister monoplanes on the ground painted the training yellow.

She equates this possibility of moving around normal linear time with the "dream time" of aboriginal peoples, and their acceptance of the reality of group telepathy.

Yet perhaps the most memorable incident in this powerfully written book is where she points out the limits of the paranormal and of her understanding of it. Her awareness of parallel streams of time enabled her to avoid an accident that would have otherwise occurred. She then thought of the trainloads of victims herded into extermination camps. Surely there were lots of spiritually aware rabbis and priests who must have prayed to alter the interweaving threads of time, so at least some of the children might be saved. None were. She is left with a deep sense of mystery. The dogmatic formulae of orthodox religion cease to have meaning. All that is left is that human life can have purpose in an upward striving towards greater fulfilment.

Max Payne is a Vice-President of the Network.

ecology-futures studies

Breakdown or Breakthrough?

David Lorimer

AFTERMATH edited by Manuel Castells, Joao Caraca and Gustavo Cardoso

Oxford, 2012, 315 pp., £20, h/b – ISBN 978-0-19-965841-1

FUTURE MONEY

James Robertson

Green Books, 2012, 192 pp., £14.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-90322-98-0

SACRED ECONOMICS

Charles Eisenstein

Evolver Editions, 2011, 469 pp., \$22.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-58394-397-7

Many commentators have tried to understand the immediate causes of the 2008 financial and economic crisis without radically questioning the

evolution of our current monetary system and thinking about a possible replacement. These important books all go further in their own way and give readers a much more profound understanding of the history of the crisis while proposing real alternatives for the future. Manuel Castells is best known for his work on the culture of the information age and the power of communication. James Robertson has been an independent thinker on economic, ecological and social matters for nearly 40 years; prior to this he worked in the Cabinet Office and was initially responsible for the famous phrase 'the wind of change' used by Macmillan in his tour of Africa. He is also author of other highly original books including *The Sane Alternative*, *Future Wealth* and *Future Work*. He has been closely associated with the work of the New Economics Foundation. Charles Eisenstein is also an independent thinker and author of the seminal book *The Ascent of Humanity*, which I reviewed in the last issue.

One overarching theme identified in all three books is the rise of debt, especially in the last 20 years (it is also interesting to note that we are also currently indebted to Nature, drawing down 140% of renewable biomass every year - the credit crunch is paralleled by the eco-crunch). Deficit financing as originally envisaged by Keynes in the 1930s was meant to balance out at the end of the cycle. However, this did not prove sufficient to pull the world, and especially the US, out of recession until the Second World War when the arms industry came to the rescue. This has been a principal driver of the US economy ever since, which has its own political ramifications quite apart from the economic ones. So long as there is sufficient confidence in the market, levels of indebtedness can be maintained, and one can buy more time by rescheduling loans, some of which will pay interest on existing loans. However, we are now learning that this accumulation of debt cannot be displaced indefinitely.

Since the 1980s, we have lived in an economic and financial culture of deregulation, privatisation and liberalisation corresponding to an individualism represented by *homo economicus* maximising his own short-term gain. At the same time, computer-modelling capacity has enabled the invention of all kinds of sophisticated financial instruments that were initially designed to lower and spread risk, but the bundles created having many cases turned out to be worthless. Since in the current situation the largest banks are too big to fail, governments have bailed them out, with the result that there is a colossal transfer of private to public debt. Credit agencies then reassess the status of the sovereign debt, and governments are obliged to bring in austerity measures - raising taxes and

cutting expenditure. In this way, the financial crisis becomes a sovereign debt crisis, which in turn becomes an economic crisis and social crisis - Greece is perhaps the most visible example of this painful process. It is becoming clear that self-regulation has failed, but this in turn opens up the question of whether we need more and better regulation or a different system altogether, based on a new set of values and beliefs beyond crude consumerism. Quantitative Easing has largely maintained the financial status quo by pouring money into banks and thence into the stock market - banks have rebuilt their reserves, and the money has not reached the consumers who might have increased overall demand and brought about more of a recovery, admittedly at a higher level of debt.

In a piece entitled *The Rolling Apocalypse of Contemporary History*, Rosalind Williams gives an instructive example of the fallout as it affected the University of California at Berkeley. In two years from 2008, state support for the University of California system dropped from \$3.25 billion to \$1.8 billion. Berkeley was meant to receive \$600 million in 2011, and in the event received only \$235 million. The administration was forced to make severe expenditure cuts and to raise fees by 8% in Spring 2009, 30% in the next round and a further 10% in autumn 2010. This amounted to a 50% increase in fees in under two years, and it is not surprising that these cuts and fee hikes led to organised protests at the University. The administration was put in an impossible situation by factors totally outside its control. The reader may well think of other parallel examples including the strike by civil servants in the UK. There has also been a shift in the perception for the rationale of university education away from a collective good towards a degree as a consumer commodity ensuring a more prosperous future. Williams observes that history as progress is still present, but the pattern of history as crisis is now at the forefront.

Joao Caraca argues that modernity has been fashioned by a culture of separation, a fundamental theme for Charles Eisenstein, to which we will return below. His explanation of key values is instructive in highlighting nature as a resource to be transformed by a knowledge of its laws, science as the only legitimate way of discovering truth, universality of values imposed by the European and American culture, and state sovereignty corresponding to individualism: the priority of the part over the whole. Events and technology are now driving us towards a culture of integration reflecting connection and complexity where the rules and values of individualism can no longer operate. The values outlined above are in crisis and need to be replaced, but not by a globalisation that makes people into



mere producers and consumers. As Caraca points out and Eisenstein reinforces, we need to construct a new narrative to include beauty and abundance and a re-enchanted Nature as well as a restored sense of trust. We will also need to forge multiple identities, taking into account not only the global network society, but also more local identities. As these become a focus of resistance, they become nationalism as a political level (many individual parties of this nature have reached 15% in European electorates) and fundamentalism at a religious level. The evolving network identity of belonging is based on openness and exchange.

James Robertson's brilliant analysis has been rightfully endorsed in emphatic terms by leading thinkers in the field such as Hazel Henderson, Ed Mayo, Caroline Lucas and Jonathon Porritt. In it he incorporates the insights of his previous work into a narrative that not only explains how we have arrived at this critical point, but also advances constructive ways forward based on an entirely new monetary and financial system. The book is exceptionally well laid out, with an overall summary at the beginning of the book and other summaries throughout. This gives the reader a very clear grasp of his argument and proposals. It also reinforces my growing conviction that a radical reform of the financial and monetary systems is essential if we are going to create a truly sustainable and just global society. As he points out, there is both a conceptual and practical aspect to the necessary revolution. The first creates a 'pre-political' climate of thought and generates some intellectual pressure for change, while the second puts the actual policies in place. It is easy to forget that Adam Smith was primarily a moral philosopher, and that values of a certain kind underpin economics.

The structure of Robertson's book is divided into an understanding of the money system and the consideration of the relationship between money and ethics. The second part discusses the management of the national money supply, collecting and spending public revenue, reform of the international money system and the role of local currencies. In his chapter on the history of money, the unspoken purposes of the money system are seen to consist of the transfer of wealth from poorer and weaker people to richer and more powerful people and countries - a good example of this is the indebtedness of developing countries to the US by borrowing money for large infrastructure projects carried out by US companies. This results in a net transfer of assets from less developed to more developed countries (the same is true of Monsanto's cotton operations in India). In addition, a great deal has been invested in the acquisition of

economic and military power and the maximisation of extracting resources from Nature. It is important to remember that the money system is in fact a human invention, and that it can therefore be reformed to reflect new values and purposes. Robertson quotes Sir Mervyn King as saying that 'of all the many ways of organising banking, the worst is the one we have today.'

Among the interconnected effects of the current arrangement is a hidden subsidy to banks who create the money supply as debt. The fact that money supply and indebtedness are forced to grow means the concentration of wealth and a concomitant growth in poverty, and increased ecological damage through economic growth that seeks to monetise the commons by turning it into goods and services that can be measured and consumed. Robertson observes that the present situation of banks providing the national money supply means that bankers can and do hold countries to ransom. He therefore recommends transferring to nationalised central banks the responsibility for creating the money supply and giving it to government to spend it into circulation; this could be achieved by means of a Citizen's Income that could replace the many complicated elements of the benefit system in a far more efficient manner. A separate chapter is devoted to the role and rationale of local currencies.

As for the purposes of the money system in the 21st-century, Robertson suggests that it should enable the free and fair exchange of goods and services and it should also 'motivate us all to live and organise our lives in ways that maintain the planet's resources conditions supportive to the survival and well-being of our species and life on Earth.' This creates a cooperative ethos, and it is further suggested that the basis of taxation should be charged on the value of what is taken from common resources (including land and the internalisation of environmental costs). In this way, new institutions and systems will address the challenges we face as a result of anthropogenic impact on our ecological resource base, which constitutes the real wealth underlying our economic systems.

Needless to say, many powerful players are invested in the existing system, so there will be active opposition to Robertson's proposals, along with the inevitable inertia to put the necessary reforms in place in time. He notes Gramsci's balancing of a pessimism of the intellect with an optimism of the will that encourages us to do what we can even if the odds seem overwhelmingly against. In this respect he identifies a special role for women and young people, who are disadvantaged by existing arrangements - especially young people, many of whom have little

prospect of stable work. I would also add the power of the Internet and petition sites that can help raise awareness. I regard this book as essential reading for anyone seriously concerned with monetary reform.

Moving on now to Charles Eisenstein, his book is subtitled 'money, gifts and society in an age of transition.' Readers of my previous review may remember that his underlying cultural thesis is that we are moving from an age of separation to an age of reunion and that this argument can be specifically applied to the economic sphere as well. Like Robertson, the book proposes a theoretical as well as a practical revolution and draws on a vast range of sources. The first part is devoted to economics of separation, which is followed by an expression of the economics of reunion and a final part on living the new economy. There is far too much detail to be incorporated in a relatively short review, so readers and courage to consult the original if they find the following ideas of interest.

We cannot separate economics from values or our ideas about the purpose of life. For Eisenstein, life is fundamentally a gift and sacred in the sense of being both unique and related. He sees the sacred as the gateway to the underlying unity of all things and the giving of gifts as a way of recognising this reciprocity. This theme runs throughout the book, as the title suggests. He advocates flow or circulation rather than accumulation, so that generosity and sharing encourage this circulation, and wealth is redefined in the process. We both give and receive, creating a culture of abundance beyond the existing culture of separation typified by scarcity, selfishness and greed. Indeed, economic growth creates scarcity by monetising the commons and depleting our resource base in the process. In this way, money becomes both the universal means and the universal end. Not only do we monetise natural capital, but we also apply the same process to social capital, which in turn undermines the sense of community that we all crave. Many low-income societies have the strongest communities, as I remember Brother Roger of Taizé observing in the 1980s. People look after each other and are not paid to do so. Economic growth also multiplies needs that we did not know we had, and our demand for new products drives economic growth and maintains existing patterns of employment.

The trouble is that the system itself is set up to increase debt and encourage us to choose more work over leisure - the leisure is displaced into unemployment instead of work being shared so that people can have time off. As Eisenstein explains in a chapter on the economics of usury, 'the more of life we convert into money, the

The New Geopolitics of Food Security

David Lorimer

FULL PLANET, EMPTY PLATES

Lester Brown

Norton, 2012, 144 pp., \$16.95, p/b - ISBN 978-0-393-34415-8

more we need money to live.' At any given time, the amount of debt exceeds the amount of money in existence, and new money will be lent to those producing new goods and services. This inexorably leads to the concentration of wealth and, if defaults are avoided in short-term, we finish up with the existing situation of an enormous debt overhang with mounting amounts of government expenditure required to service sovereign debt, which has more than doubled in many countries over the last four years. As we have seen, the real crunch comes when growth stops and we are unable to grow our way out of debt. Financial strictures are then reflected in social tension and the result can be revolution. Eisenstein argues that we are currently maxed out in our unprecedented drawdown of natural resources, not to mention the accompanying pollution and indeed the immune pressure on our bodies to remain viable in a depleted and toxic environment.

Having diagnosed our predicament, Eisenstein moves on to his radical proposals to create a sacred economy where profit is aligned with commonwealth and we design our economic systems to support our ecosystems. Like Robertson, Eisenstein proposes a shift of the tax burden towards consumption of natural commons and the creation of pollution. Perhaps his most radical proposal, also mentioned but not elaborated by Robertson, is to set up the monetary system on the basis of negative interest. This would make money like a commodity that decays over time and would discourage people from holding it - better to have it in circulation. A key pioneering thinker in this area was Silvio Gesell with his 1906 book, *The Natural Economic Order*. He advocated decoupling the function of money as a medium of exchange from its role as a store of value. Gesell's ideas were influential in the 1920s and 1930s, even with Keynes, who described his work as profoundly original and regarded him as an unduly neglected prophet.

Eisenstein views the current debt crisis as an opportunity for transition to a new system. Under the existing policy measures, the bailout money goes to creditors rather than debtors, and creditors do not as a result become any more willing to lend; nor is any of the underlying debt forgiven, so wealth is effectively further concentrated. We have not yet grasped the nettle since the solution adopted is more debt, which kicks the problem into the future. Negative interest and debt forgiveness will help to restructure things. There is ultimately no way of avoiding the pain, so we may as well think creatively about our predicament.

In the new dynamics of the gift economy proposed by Eisenstein, our security comes from sharing rather

than hoarding. He has little sympathy with what he calls collapsist views involving widespread suffering, but sees this pattern of thinking as a sign of unsustainability leading to phase transition. A preferable path is one involving gradual degrowth while at the same time increasing real wealth in terms of quality-of-life and well-being. He points out that the Internet is already in some respects a participatory gift economy - Wikipedia for instance - foreshadowing new economic relationships based on 'the connected self living in co-creative partnership with Earth.' He lays out a summary and roadmap, explaining motivation, transition and policy, and the effect on economic life. His proposals include negative interest currency, elimination of economic rents, internalisation of social and environmental costs, economic and monetary localisation, the social dividend, economic de-growth, and gift culture involving P2P economics. The result is an economy that is 'egalitarian, inclusive, personal, bond-creating, sustainable and non-accumulative.'

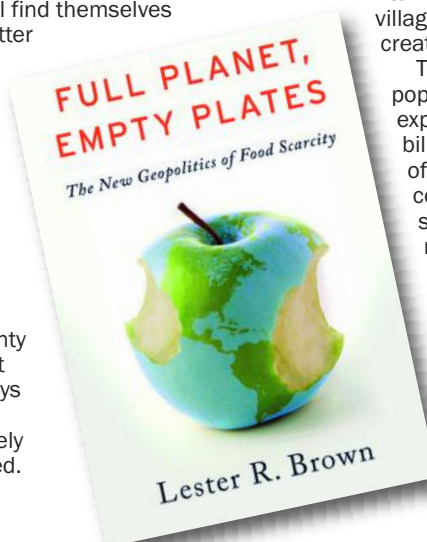
Even within the current system, individuals can live their own form of the gift economy and base their lives on service, what they can give to others. In a very real sense, we take with us at death only what we have given. Eisenstein himself charges only for room and board and out-of-pocket expenses when he leads retreats, and invites gifts over and above on the basis of balance and appropriateness reflecting gratitude back. The book is dedicated to 'the more beautiful world our hearts tell us is possible' and therefore includes aesthetics as an essential element. This resonates with the work of Christopher Alexander in marrying form and function with beauty. This is a path back to a sense of abundance beyond scarcity, which will include new energy technologies as the Thrive Movement suggests.

There is a famous story about a FE Smith when the judge asked him to clarify some of his points, at the end of which he told Smith that he was none the wiser. 'Well', said Smith 'then at least you're better informed.' Readers of these books will find themselves both wiser and better informed, although the issues they raise and discuss are among the most intractable. However, doing nothing is not an option in the long run, and these books provide plenty of food for thought about possible ways forward. They all deserve to be widely read and discussed.

The work of Lester Brown will be well-known to many readers, as I have reviewed most of his books on these pages since the mid-1990s. This is a short book that brings the reader up to date with the current world food situation and prospects for the future at a time of increasing climate instability involving both droughts and floods. The key equation involves a meeting of demand and supply sides, with increasing demand and environmental pressures being exerted on supply. The demand is not simply in terms of numbers - there are 219,000 more people on the planet every day - but the Chinese and Indian middle classes in particular are moving up the food chain and consuming more protein. Food supply scarcity easily translates into political instability, so it is high time that politicians paid more attention to the geopolitics of food. Food prices have doubled in the last 10 years, which is particularly serious for poorer nations spend a larger proportion of their income on food. 1 billion people are still malnourished, and at the same time more than 1 billion are overweight.

There is also a very real sense in which the poor are competing against biofuels - in 2011 127 million tons out of a total harvest of 400 million tons went into ethanol. Prospective food insecurity is also driving land grabs as rich countries try to acquire land to expand their own consumption. This can have devastating effects on local populations, who often lose their land, food supply and livelihood in the process. There is considerable controversy about the import of capital-intensive agriculture into these countries, when they really need international support for local village level farming that also creates and sustains jobs.

The current global population is expected to expand by a further 2.3 billion by 2050, and most of this growth will be in countries least able to support an increase in numbers. It is mind-boggling to think that Nigeria, which now has a population 167 million, is expected to reach 390 million by 2050 when already some 25% of families experience foodless



days. Ethiopia is another case in point where the increase is expected to be from 87 million to 145 million; they will need to draw more from the Nile, which is almost bound to lead to conflicts downstream, especially in Egypt, which is expected to experience a similar population increase. By contrast, we know that many Western European populations are in decline, so the composition of population will change significantly over the next 50 years.

Brown provides a wealth of detail on biofuels, eroding soils, peak water, flat grain yields and rising temperatures. The interested reader can consult further information on the website. A good example of a systemic effect is the huge increase in Chinese demand for soya beans. In 1995, China produced and consumed 14 million tons of soya beans, while by 2011 it was still producing the same amount but consuming 70 million tons, mainly to feed pigs and farmed fish. If it had chosen to produce all this in itself, it would have had to have shifted one third of its grain land to soya beans - it would have been obliged to import 160 million tons of grain. Overall, the world demand for soya beans is increasing by 7 million tons a year as people move up the food chain and consume more intensively reared livestock products. Furthermore, in the US, the only way to expand soya bean acreage would be to shift land from other crops, while in Brazil the main area is the Amazon basin, which has to be cleared for agriculture. This makes a direct link between deforestation and the worldwide growth in demand for meat, milk and eggs.

Avoiding food breakdown involves tackling both the demand and supply sides. On the demand side, we need to stabilise population, eradicate poverty, curb excessive meat consumption and reverse our biofuel policies. On the supply side, we need to stabilise climate, raise water productivity, conserve soil and cut carbon emissions by restructuring the energy economy. Brown does not elaborate in this book, as in others, on his Plan B, which costs the necessary actions required to implement his plan. It is only a fraction of the current US military expenditure and would be enhanced by the extraordinary resilience of Nature. He advocates mobilisation by citizens, but the situation for most people is not yet critical enough to drive the necessary action. I agree, however, with his recommendation that we should all select an issue and go to work on it with others, as we all have a stake in the future of civilisation.

Dreamer of the Earth

David Lorimer

THOMAS BERRY

edited by Ervin Laszlo (SMN)
and Allan Combs

Inner Traditions, 2012, 144 pp.,
£12.99, p/b - ISBN 978-159477395-2

Thomas Berry will be known to many readers as one of the fathers of environmentalism and spiritual ecology. Throughout his long life, he was concerned with the deeper and underlying causes of the disjunction between humanity and Nature based on all forms of perception and understanding. At the beginning of the book, there is a powerful statement from the Worldshift 2012 Declaration, which is about both emergency and emergence: 'there is no doubt that we are now in a state of global emergency. This unprecedented worldwide crisis is a symptom of a much deeper problem: the current state of our consciousness; how we think about ourselves and our world. We have the urgent need, and now the opportunity, for a complete rethink: to reconsider our values and priorities, to understand our interconnectedness and to shift to a new direction, living in harmony with nature and each other.' I have no doubt that this analysis and sentiment is shared by many readers. This book helps us consider the nature and effects of the human presence on the Earth and challenges us to create a new language and a new sense of what it is to be human. This is also the work of the dreamer and prophet: to imagine a new world and to take steps towards co-creating it.

The 10 chapters cover a variety of philosophical themes. There is an essay by Berry himself on the emerging ecozoic period leading to what he calls the integral life community, which means going beyond human imposition of mechanistic processes on the biology of natural life systems. Crucially, we have lost our capacity to communicate with the inner world of nature and in the process have become a death-dealing presence; we have also forgotten that Nature is the primary economic reality. Berry goes further by saying that it is also the primary educator, governance, healer, presence of the sacred and moral value.

A number of contributors, like Matthew Fox, write about Berry's contributions to the Western spiritual tradition. Teilhard was a strong influence, but the call to shamanhood was even more important - Berry once told Matthew that he considered him more of a shaman than a priest. Other interesting influences include Hildegard and Rabbi Heschel, who regarded the primary work of the prophet as interference; also Bachelard who talks about the holy trinity of Immensity,

Intensity and Intimacy in the presence of cosmic awareness. Participation is another important theme. A new word for me was Inscendence, by which Berry meant the descent into our pre-rational, instinctive resources, which allows revelatory - even numinous - vision to come to us in a dream arising out of our own inner shaping tendencies. Allan Combs quotes someone for lines from Rilke in this context:

*If we surrendered
to Earth's intelligence
we could rise up rooted, like trees.*

Traditional cultures have many avenues to access this kind of consciousness shift- fasting, dancing, entheogens, sweats, breath work, yoga and extreme physical exertion. We have lost this framework even if we use some of these means. The inner side of Gaia may embody the Earth's psychic structure, which can then inform us; our imagination from nature coding can be activated by soaring birds, blossoming flowers and the sight of the vast ocean. Sacred sites also have an important role to play, representing the unity of human beings with the environment.

Duane Elgin contributes an interesting essay on emergence and evolution, weaving together scientific and spiritual narratives. Our wisdom traditions are means of penetrating into 'the experiential depths of existence' enabling us to realise that we represent the psyche of the universe as ecological interiority. This is the community of subjects about which he wrote so often in which every being is a presence to every other. This can lead to a correspondence between interior ecocommunities and exterior ecosystems. Joanna Macy goes one step further in her discussion of moving from what we know and feel to the discovery of what we are and, most importantly, what can happen through us through grace. The final chapter comes back to the shift mentioned at the beginning - from anthropocentrism to ecological integrity. The experience of connection with each other and the universe could lead to an increased sense of solidarity and empathy. This is the important message of Thomas Berry, the self-styled geologist.



general

Sweet Business Ethics

Martin Lockley

CHOCOLATE WARS
Deborah Cadbury, Public Affairs

Perseus, 2010, 348pp., US\$ 27.95, h/b - ISBN 978-1-58648-820-8



I ran across Deborah Cadbury's *Chocolate Wars* in the Birmingham University alumni magazine, and learned that all first year Birmingham undergraduates got a free copy in their welcome packages, as part of the Great Read at Birmingham (GRAB) programme. Many in the U.K. know that Birmingham has a long association with the confectionery business and that Quaker families have played a leading role in this history. As a graduate of Birmingham University and a Quaker school, attended by members of the Cadbury and Fry families, I was intrigued to read this illuminating book. While ostensibly being about the history of the confectionary business, the book explores many deeper issues centred on business ethics and historical Quaker values. Although dealing in considerable detail with the history of the Quaker and Quaker-influenced Fry, Rowntree and Hershey family businesses, and a few non-Quaker businesses (Nestle, Lindt, Mars), the greatest attention is focused on the Cadbury family business. While the commercial history of these businesses is covered conscientiously, the more important theme of the book is the exposition on business ethics and philanthropy. Like many Quaker families, the Cadburys were, for many generations, and at various times, involved in social and labour reform and employee welfare, adult education, antislavery movements, temperance movements and of course pacifism.

Following the shining example of non-conformist pioneer George Fox (b. 1642), who was guided by his conscience and the "spirit of Christ within," subsequent generations of Quakers developed specific guidelines for high business values. Paper Credit was considered a "most pernicious practice" leading to "utter ruin." Part of this strict trading ethic was a reaction to 17th century persecution, making Quaker communities, tightly-knit, family units that forged strong bonds of apprenticeship and business. This discipline served them well as the industrial revolution gathered speed. The Darby family, from Shropshire, pioneered iron smelting, and soon attracted the Lloyds, a Welsh Quaker family, who opened an iron making business in Birmingham. Quakers

families had a hand in the development of the railways, including the so called "Quaker line" between Stockton and Darlington. The Wedgwoods developed the famous Staffordshire pottery business, the Clarks developed shoes, Huntley and Palmer biscuits, and so on. "The roll call of

Quaker entrepreneurs

resounds through the centuries." Success was built on a reputation for sobriety, integrity and skilled book-keeping which included early banking services, which blossomed, by the early 19th century, into well known banks including Barclays and Lloyds.

The "Christian and Brotherly Advices of 1738" included a section on "Trading" that marks the foundation of business ethics based on truth, honesty, and justice." Quakers were enjoined to "keep their word with all Men" and never break promises, run into debt or incur scandal "occasioning Strife and Contention and Reproach to Truth and Friends." Quakers shared a strong "vision of social justice and reform" and seriously considered it immoral to accumulate wealth, for scripture informs us that the love of money is the root of all evil. It was against this backdrop that the chocolate factory emerged as "much more than a commercial enterprise." The "wider purpose", even before Charles Dickens highlighted the plight of children, included deep concern for the "savage indifference to the Child" all too many of whom had alcoholic parents seduced by the gin house promise "Drunk for a penny. Dead drunk for two pence. Clean straw for nothing." Cocoa was introduced in large part as a nutritious drink aimed at promoting healthy habits.

Famously, the Cadburys, appalled by frankly unhealthy factory conditions, sought to improve the lot of the working class by building a "model chocolate factory" in Bourn Brook, later named Bournville. Situated in the fields and fresh air outside the city, this model community provided workers' housing, with gardens, orchards and recreational facilities. The factory was laid out to maximise efficiency and minimise hard physical labour. This progressive, historic venture had widespread influence, especially on one Milton Snavely Hershey who grew up in Pennsylvania's Quaker country and had a pious Reform Mennonite mother who espoused Quaker-like values. (Admiral Penn was given 45,000 square miles to pay off a £15,000 debt owed him by the British Government, which undoubtedly got the Quaker community off to a good start!) Hershey, who founded the Lancaster Caramel Company and after various setbacks and a dogged

determination to research recipes and production machinery, had, by the 1890s, a growing business. By the time he visited Bournville and found the project "a revelation - a model for the perfect business empire" he was a millionaire. And so it was he built, in his childhood home of Derry Church, Pennsylvania, his "Chocolate Man's Utopia." His model town, began with a factory, and research facility, housing a herd of milk cows and every convenience, located on several thousand acres in the middle of nowhere. "His staff would be among America's working elite." The scale of his operation dwarfed the Europeans. The model town soon had boulevards, shops, gardens, a zoo, miniature railroad and band. As Hershey bought up more and more dairy farmland, the whole region prospered. Millions flocked to see the "Hershey's miracle" and his "palatial home High Point" and his mother's home on "Chocolate Avenue." Unlike Mother Hersey, his Irish wife Kitty loved the opulent high life, but died young, without children, and in her decline she and Milton founded a school for deprived orphans, so becoming parents to a large family. In 1923, as an elderly widower, he gave much (\$60 million) of his fortune to "the orphan boys of the United States" in the form of a trust to benefit the boys of the Hersey Industrial School.

Cocoa only grows on trees in the tropics. Thus, the chocolate manufacturers had to obtain the raw product of this "inestimable plant" (*Theobroma cacao* - literally "food of the Gods") from mysterious, faraway lands. The Aztecs had first used the drink as a sacred stimulant. So from the earliest days of European colonisation Cocoa was a part of international trading ventures. Early generations of Cadburys had romantic notions of this magnificent plant with flaming flowers, like "thousands of golden lamps," providing the finishing touch on the proverbial tropical paradise. Could "anything more lovely ...be imagined?" The reality, in eras when slavery was still rife, was much different. Even in the early 20th century evidence reached Europe that the underground slave trade, from the interior to the coastal plantations, was still flourishing in Angola and elsewhere. This besmirched the Cadbury family reputation, forcing them to launch their own investigations and use their buying power to force the Portuguese to institute labour reform in Africa. While this pressure was not fully effective in eradicating overt and unseen abuse, one report claims that "14,000 slave-workers we repatriated."

As confectionery and food businesses have grown into giant multinational corporations, so business practices have changed, and it has been difficult to continue promulgating the pure business ethics instituted in

simpler times by the founders of the original, family businesses. The book ends, therefore, in 2010 when Kraft obtained Cadburys in a hostile takeover, unsuccessfully resisted by the family. The process is not simply explained as it involved the insidious role of bankers and hedge funds becoming temporary, shareholders (part-owners) as shares rapidly changed hands in the scramble to position financial interest for short term gain. As Sir Dominic Cadbury noted "the motivation [of hedge funds] is to see that the company disappears... By definition they have no sense of obligation to the company whatsoever." So it is "Gone. One hundred and eighty years of history down the tube, and ... 180 years of being a beacon of good practice." He was referring among other things to Cadbury's commitment to Fairtrade certified products. The hostile takeover which soon led to the loss of Cadbury jobs, despite Kraft's assurances to the contrary, led some MPs to call for a "Cadbury Law" to protect important strategic companies from takeover without a two thirds shareholder approval. Much against original Quaker values, "wealth and power is concentrated into fewer and less accountable hands." Irene Rosenfeld, Kraft chief executive who launched the takeover received \$26.3 million in compensation. Ironically, at almost the same time as this corporate grab, Deborah Cadbury was ready to give away her book in the Birmingham GRAB programme! *Chocolate Wars* gives much food for thought and makes us ponder the sweet and not-so-sweet side of business practice.

Expressions of the Soul

Martin Lockley

THE ROMANTIC REVOLUTION: A HISTORY

Tim Blanning

A Modern Library Chronicles Book, 2012, 224 pp., US\$15, p/b ISBN 978-0-8129-8014-1

I've always been one to believe in the cycles and dialectic spirals of history. It seems almost self-evident that any hegemonic movement, however revolutionary and beneficial, is going to create hubris, arrogance, and in some measure, abuse, corruption and the seeds of its own destruction. So it seems inevitable that almost any movement will stir resistance and counter-revolution. Tim Blanning demonstrates this well in this concise account of *The Romantic Revolution* (p/b edition of a 2010 title, now in the Modern Library Chronicles series). Introduced with a quote from Ernst Troeltsch, "romanticism [is considered] a thorough and genuine revolution... against the respectability of the bourgeois temper [and] above all against ... the mathematic-mechanical

spirit of science in western Europe..". This sentiment is embodied in the title of the first of the book's three sections "The Crisis of the Age of Reason."

The crisis affected the poetic sensibilities of those like Rousseau, Blake, Goethe, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron and others who, as Lytton Strachey said of Rousseau, "belonged to another world...of self consciousness, and doubt, and hesitation, of mysterious melancholy, and quiet intimate delights, of long reflexions amid the solitudes of nature." In short the true romantic seeks the authentic expression of the soul. [Try reading Anthony Scaduto's commendable 1971 biography of Bob Dylan for a near-contemporary insight into a tormented but steadfast poetic soul]. Like Dylan, Coleridge spoke out against the mechanical spirit of his time, declaring Newton a "mere materialist.. a lazy Looker-on on an external world." He regarded Locke as a "Little-ist" who dismantled the universe into a meaningless heap of little bits and pieces. In short we can thank the romantics for reminding us that all nature constitutes a single living organism, a "Universal Nature or World Soul" or as Schelling famously put it "Nature is invisible Spirit; Spirit is invisible Nature" where the "holy ever-creative, original energy of the world ... generates and busily evolves things out of itself." [Incidentally, in terms of evolutionary theory, not addressed by Blanning, this view epitomises the classic and still-much-neglected, active, dynamic, intrinsic, metamorphosing, ever-changing nature, understood by the Goethe and Schelling generation two generations before it was pushed aside by Darwin's more mechanical dogma of selective, extrinsic forces, selecting more-passive organisms that rattle around as loose bits in a fragmented, hostile and soulless world].

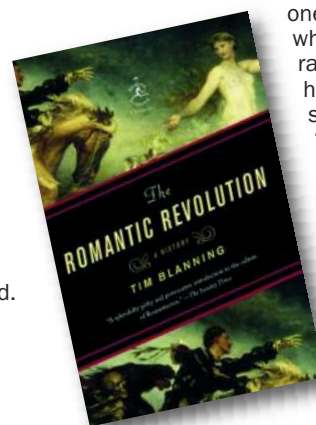
The great contribution of the romantics, in their resistance to too-cold reason was the elevation and sacralisation of art. The word 'art' had previously taken on much more the applied, practical meaning of "skill" – something not taught or inspired by nature. In an argument somewhat reminiscent of modern debates about cutting art and music in schools, Liszt argued that the degeneration of civilisation was due to the separation of religion, politics, art, and sciences into separate activities. The romantics could be snobbish and are responsible, at this time, for commandeering the word "philistine" to describe the uneducated masses who lacked refined artistic sensibilities and the capacity to appreciate culture. But as we shall see they too could be reached.

As part two of the book "the Dark Side of the Moon" shows us, the romantics were an interesting lot, reviving the medieval concept of the soul, without its theological trappings,

while representing their age by opposing it to so called "reason." Some complained that "light became [the philosophers'] favourite subject on account of its mathematical obedience ..." (precise refraction of its rays etc..). So the philosophers named the Enlightenment, for their brightly lit but sterile environment, forgetting how much imagination involves "the wonder-world of night" and dreams. The play of colours includes shadow, the play of life, death, darkness - even madness. For the romantics, dark fantasies, sexual or otherwise, could be a legitimate source of inspiration and psychological understanding. Aristotle had held that "Poetry demands a man with a special gift...or a touch of madness." Cried Cowper, "O that I were insane always," and Charles Lamb told Coleridge "dream not... of having tasted the grandeur and wildness of fancy, till you have gone mad." Gerard de Nerval was amusingly succinct. "I do not know why they call it illness – I never felt better."

Caspar David Friedrich's injunction to the artist was to "bring to the light of day what you have seen in the darkness, so it can work on others, from the outside inwards." Schumann suggested that "access to mystical insights into higher forms of truth awaited those who could let their spirits range uninhibited by social constraints." In Nick Dears fictional play *Erotica*, Haydn says of Beethoven "He's given us a glimpse of his soul... quite, quite new... Everything is different from today." According to Blanning "Beethoven was the first musician to become the centre of a cult, a legend in his own time." Coming of age during the French Revolution, like Napoleon, he tore up the rulebook. He was charismatic, in the original sense of having a "gift from God" that could create space where genius could flourish as never before. Rossini became a superstar. As Byron noted they crowned him, and cut off his hair for souvenirs. Paganini also achieved rock-star and lady-killer status as he "blazed across the musical sky. Thus, Byron also wrote that "to amaze the world [nature] created two men Bonaparte and Paganini." Unconcerned with their

musical talents, one countless, when asked to rank pianists who had played in her salon, noted that "Hiller would make the best friend, Chopin the best husband, and Liszt the best lover." The comparison between the military and cultural



hero was obvious, one made possible by the French Revolution the other by the Romantic Revolution.

Part three "Language, History and Myth" reminds us that "without language there can be no knowledge, no self-consciousness, no awareness of others, no social existence, no history." In short "we cannot think without words" and the historical prominence of different languages has been a measure of the ascendancy of different cultures. The triumphalism of French speakers was particularly marked during the long reign of Louis XIV (1643-1715), and the cultural achievement and rise of German is marked in the late eighteenth century by Bach, Goethe, Haydn, Kant, Mozart and Schiller to name but a few. With his folk songs, and folk poetry, and their deep roots in populist tradition, Goethe drew the common people and common sentiments in the Romantic movement. Wordsworth and Coleridge did much the same in England, choosing "incidents and situations from common... humble and rustic life." Sir Walter Scott's historical romances were so popular by 1818, that his royalties reached "the colossal sum of £10,000 a year." Carlyle wrote that "History...is...the first distinct product of man's spiritual nature; the earliest expression of what can be called Thought." Rustic, natural landscapes, ruined castles and gothic cathedrals held a new fascination and as early as the mid eighteenth century some 10,000 English visitors had travelled to Italy as the "Grand Tour" became fashionable. The Swiss scientist Saussure only the third man to climb Mont Blanc in 1786 wrote that as "the soul ascends, the vision of the spirit tends to expand," and Byron described Switzerland as "the most Romantic region in the world."

In 1873 Wagner wrote "if only we could reach the point of no longer looking to [the French] for our ideas! ... As if anything ever comes of reason! Only religion and art can educate a nation - what use is science, which analyses everything and explains nothing." As Blanning says, surely the 18th and 19th century romantics would agree if they were alive today. Does this mean that reason is triumphant and the romantic revolution a thing of the past? Hardly! As the dialectical spirals of history inform us, postmodernism, for all its intellectual strands, squarely belongs "with the culture of feeling, in a line that stretches back to fin de siècle and romanticism (and indeed to the baroque). It is not just another spin of the cycle's wheel, but a dialectical progression. That the central axiom of romanticism - "absolute inwardness" - will have a role to play is certain. The romantic revolution is not yet over."

Fantasia on the theme of Anna O

Jennifer Barraclough

GUISES OF DESIRE

Hilda Reilly (SMN)

Dicatur Press 2012. ebook available from Amazon £3.21

This intriguing novel is based on the life of a real historical figure, Bertha Pappenheim (1859-1936), who has two separate entries in Wikipedia. One entry, under her real name, describes her work as a feminist and social reformer in Austria and Germany. The other is concerned with her status as the 'founding patient of psychoanalysis' under the pseudonym of Anna O.

The novel opens in 1880 when Bertha, the unmarried daughter of a wealthy orthodox Jewish family, is living with her parents and brother in a luxurious apartment in Vienna. As a serious-minded young woman of high intelligence, she yearns for further education and a purposeful occupation and is not fully satisfied by her privileged life of dances, concerts, theatre, fine dresses, coffee-houses, horse-riding, country holidays and religious observance.

The comfortable and ordered life of the Pappenheim household is suddenly disrupted when Bertha's father falls ill, probably from tuberculosis. The shock of this event appears to be the precipitant for Bertha's own illness, characterised by a diversity of episodic symptoms including cough, right-sided paralysis, visual hallucinations, 'absences', and talking like a baby or in foreign tongues. Hardly able to eat, and increasingly weak, she is soon confined to bed under the care of a nurse. Dr Josef Breuer, the same physician who has been treating her father, can find no physical cause for Bertha's symptoms and makes a diagnosis of hysteria although he also continues to keep in mind the possibility of organic neurological disease. He initiates treatment with massage, and with hypnosis which is just coming into vogue, and later on by talking at length with Bertha about the past events which may have a bearing on her symptoms. She rapidly develops a dependent attachment upon Breuer, and this intensifies following her father's death. Her symptoms become even more bizarre. She regresses to a child-like state and after attempting to jump out of a window is admitted to a sanatorium for treatments including hydrotherapy and chloral hydrate. Eventually she shows some improvement and is able to do voluntary work in orphanages and slums, but relapses again after her mother forbids such activities. Back at home, it seems that as soon as one symptom recovers another takes its place, and the development of facial neuralgia leads to a tooth extraction,

regular injections of morphine and consequent drug dependence.

An erotic element in the doctor-patient relationship, though never openly expressed, has been evident from the start. At the climax of the novel, Bertha's sexual fantasies about Breuer reach a delusional intensity, causing him to abruptly terminate the therapy.

The remarkable achievements of Bertha's later life are briefly mentioned in the last chapter. She remained ill for several years after the break with Breuer, so it is doubtful whether her eventual recovery can be credited to the fledgling psychoanalytic techniques which he employed. Recover she did, however, and from about the age of 30 up until her death at age 77 she pursued a career as a writer, practical social worker and political activist, founding both the League of Jewish Women and a home for unwed mothers and their children. She was apparently appalled when she discovered that Breuer had discussed her case with Sigmund Freud and that the two men had published a thinly-disguised account of it in their book *Studies on Hysteria* (1895).

Whether 'hysteria' (a term which goes in and out of fashion in systems of classification for psychiatric disorders) was the correct label for her illness has since been questioned, and several writers have suggested that she was actually suffering from temporal lobe epilepsy. Neurological disease is quite often complicated by what used to be called 'hysterical overlay', so maybe she had both. Whatever the correct diagnosis, her case continues to be quoted to illustrate psychoanalytic concepts such as free association, transference and counter-transference.

Hilda Reilly has written a vivid, powerful and highly readable version of Bertha's story. The emotional turmoil of her experiences is empathetically portrayed against a carefully researched period setting and medical background. An absorbing and thought-provoking book.

Jennifer Barraclough, formerly a consultant in psychological medicine in Oxford, is now a writer and Bach flower practitioner living in New Zealand.

