

book reviews

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science-philosophy of science

A Fundamental Challenge

Claudia Nielsen

SCIENCE'S FIRST MISTAKE: DELUSIONS IN PURSUIT OF THEORY

Ian Angell and Dionysios Demetris

Bloomsbury, 2011, 280 pp., £50, h/b - ISBN 973-1-84966-066-8

Paperback due in the Autumn

Free PDF available at

<http://www.sciencesfirstmistake.com/>.

Because I am myself sceptical about our ability as human beings - at least at this stage of evolution - to apprehend and understand the ultimate nature of Reality by means of our intellect, I am interested in books which explore this theme such as *The Science Delusion* by Rupert Sheldrake and this particular one. This is not to deny the importance of science - the advances and general improvement in quality of life and well being achieved through technology are patent evidence. The authors of *Science's First Mistake* are also clear on this point; their aim is to show that Science is pervaded by paradox beyond the rational thought and logic on which it depends.

Both authors are academics of the London School of Economics: **Prof Ian Angell** is Emeritus Professor with a first degree in Pure Mathematics and a Doctorate in Algebraic Number Theory and **Dr Dionysios Demetris** is a former associate staff member of the London School of Economics and currently a Research Fellow and member of the Scientific Board of the Geolab Institute of the Ionian University in Corfu. He has a background in Physics - his first academic love. They have however both become uncomfortable with scientific orthodoxy and developed doubts about the universal validity of the scientific method.

Although the process of substantiating their position is complex, the message of this book is ultimately simple: science, although useful, can only describe, not explain

beyond any doubt. Reality can only be known in chunks, and extrapolation or generalisation is a mistake. Science is awash with paradox; consequently it cannot help us explore the path to truth. As in Rupert Sheldrake's book, the word 'delusion' - *a belief held with strong conviction despite superior evidence to the contrary* - is frequently used throughout. Delusions however are explained as intrinsically part of life in the sense that we can never have the full picture or as in the quote above, the '*superior evidence to the contrary*'. The erudition of the book on the one hand and the provocative language on the other are meant to shake the reader into taking seriously the arguments put forward.

The title is a play on Nietzsche's words 'woman was God's second mistake' (in *The Gay Science*) as the authors points out, 'a quotation which is guaranteed to raise the hackles of any reader who is politically correct or religiously minded' (p. 217). Nietzsche is their inspiration both philosophically and in the provocative stance taken. He is abundantly quoted throughout the book, starting with one which includes this snippet presented even before the Preface and which offers a taste of what is to come:

O sancta simplicitas! In what strange simplification and falsification man lives! One can never cease wondering once one has acquired eyes for this marvel! How we made everything around us clear and free and easy and simple! How we have been able to give our senses a passport to everything superficial, our thoughts a divine desire for wanton leaps and wrong inferences! ...
(*Beyond Good and Evil*, Part Two: *The Free Spirit*, Section 24)

In our belief system we have built up science as an attempt to replace God by perpetuating the message of domination from Genesis. The authors remind us that when Nietzsche's Zarathustra said 'God is dead', he added '.... and we killed Him'. We have arrogantly persuaded ourselves that

with our intelligence and the scientific method we have developed, we can discover the truth of things and become 'the indisputable masters of all we survey' (p. 217). Although the message of this book is in perfect resonance with the teachings of the Mystical Traditions, the authors do not engage with those perspectives at all. Their arguments are all elegantly validated from within science with the help of the work and observations from well-known ground breaking scientists. At no point do they call upon a spiritual perspective for support, but the mystically aware reader will find much that is familiar!

Scientific understanding coupled with technology will not and cannot place humanity in control of its destiny neither will it ever be able to explain the ultimate nature of Reality. From philosopher of science Paul Feyerabend we hear:

Science gives us theories of great beauty and sophistication. Modern Science has developed mathematical structures, which exceed anything that has existed so far in coherence generality and empirical success. But in order to achieve this miracle, all the existing troubles had to be pushed into the relation between theory and fact, and had to be concealed, by ad hoc hypotheses, ad hoc approximations and other procedures. (*Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*, 1975)

There are many paradoxes and insights featured for which this space is too limited. For example, observation is defined by the limits of what can be observed, and leaves out what cannot be observed. The unobserved however may have an effect of the observed phenomenon, but of this we are forever ignorant. Observation is therefore necessarily partial. Reality, being an effect of the structured combination of observation and cognition, is therefore partial itself, an important epistemological consideration.

Then there is the fundamental non-linearity and complexity of the world.



We, however, need to infer linearity of cause and effect in order to make sense of our observations. Causality, which we take for granted, is paradoxically a necessity as well as a delusion of observation. Alongside this need to infer causality is our need to categorise objects and events. The worldview that we develop from birth and use as radar to navigate life is built on a set of categories of cognitive building blocks which we develop over time in an ongoing recursive self-referential process. This we call understanding. Every new element we come across in life needs to find a place within a familiar framework of reference. The categories we have constructed over our lifetime, on which we base our framework of reference, are therefore abstractions, ideals, part of a map. They are not the territory. Overconfidence in them is absurd! There is no judgment on the way we construct meaning in the world; the absurdity comes from jumping to the conclusion that this is the Truth.

The book is replete with interesting perspectives seen from the vantage point of both within Science and outside the Fish-Bowl. Each point made is meticulously analysed and judiciously referenced, evidencing a creative perspective on the mystery of Nature including that of Human Beings. Although humbling, I found this perspective inspiring and exciting.

So what is science? The authors' provocative answer, borrowed from Nietzsche, is 'refined ignorance'! Science is an umbrella term to denote a *search for truth* within a world considered objective using a particular methodology. Both those concepts, however, are shown to be fallacious as they operate with a set of socially constructed self-referential linear abstractions for describing what is in fact a non-linear world.

Science's first mistake is the failure or inability to recognise that the world which can be observed must necessarily exclude that which cannot be observed but which nevertheless exerts unknown influence over what can be observed – which is what the authors point out, the paradox and delusion of observation. The way we deal with this inability to know, really know, is to interpret, which we do with our gift of cognition and observation. This makes our world a magical world in which imagination dances with chance and necessity, to create a network of possibilities in which the improbable can and often does happen. This framework allows us to make sense of things and events in a way that gives us the degree of certainty we need to function. It is important however to recognise that the world we perceive and recognise cannot be equated with the world as it really is. The wisdom of Socrates as they point out, is revelatory – All that I know, is that I know nothing!

Claudia Nielsen is a Vice-President of the Network.

A Universe with Purpose

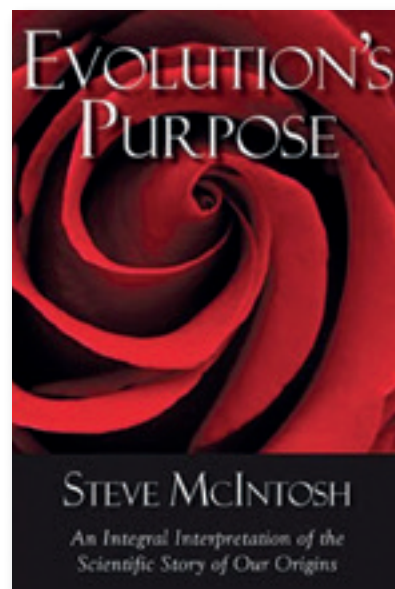
Martin Lockley

EVOLUTION'S PURPOSE: AN INTEGRAL INTERPRETATION OF THE SCIENTIFIC STORY OF OUR ORIGINS

Steve McIntosh

Select Books Inc., New York, 304 pp.,
\$24.95, h/b - ISBN 978-1-59079-220-9

It is ironic that materialist science prides itself on being "objective" when this much used word also has the alternate meaning of goal, aim, destiny



or purpose! A similar irony appears in A. N. Whitehead's wry observation that "scientists who spend their life with the purpose of proving that it is purposeless constitute an interesting subject of study." In *Evolution's Purpose*, Steve McIntosh, author of *Integral Consciousness* (Network 97), proves he is a man with a purpose, and a purpose worth exploring.

As a friend and near neighbour of Steve's, enjoying the rarefied Colorado air that has sustained, among others, the likes of Ken Wilber and Richard Keck, I am delighted to see Steve's second book appear, and I agree with much of what he has to say, although I will mention shortly, as icing on the cake, that I might have "wished" a few additional points inserted. In his first book McIntosh defined integral philosophy rather explicitly naming its leading proponents: Hegel, Bergson, Teilhard de Chardin, Whitehead, Wilber and others. In *Evolution's Purpose* McIntosh again develops the theme of integral philosophy, and the increasingly well-established notion that evolution has passed through cosmological, biological and psychosocial phases, as the physiosphere, biosphere and noosphere became established. Integral to this holistic "worldview" is the notion that novelty, complexity, value, significance and "depth" are introduced "progressively" with each phase shift, as the new organisational structure, say biosphere arising from physiosphere, transcends and includes the previous organisational structure. These new levels of organisation emerge, rather mysteriously, thereby giving rise to the concept of "emergent properties," which are again much touted in the literature of recent decades. Several times McIntosh cites Harold Morowitz's book *The Emergence of Everything*. (Network 81) which is surely a representative, if not fully authoritative source that raises the specter of purpose deemed so problematic to most Darwinists.

A major theme of the book is Plato's triad of Beauty, Truth and Goodness, and credit goes to McIntosh for attempting to integrate these intangible fundamental values into an evolutionary framework or philosophy otherwise stuck in the materialistic paradigm. He does this by pointing out that while philosophy is not "science," *per se*, it nevertheless makes important contributions to knowledge, not least by being aware of the metaphysical assumptions that science uses but so often chooses to ignore in favour of a materialist-behaviourist view of the cosmos. McIntosh also gets considerable mileage out of another triad, Hegel's dialectic spiral: thesis, antithesis and synthesis, which was a significant theme in his previous book.

In this new iteration he again makes a cogent case for the dynamic of transcendence and inclusion whereby one can, hopefully, integrate the progressive and positive elements of a previous or established tradition or culture while transcending its worst negative or pathological elements. He gives many examples that pertain to the evolution from traditional to modernist and post modernist cultures.

While McIntosh is positive, confident and proactive in forwarding his views and promulgating his progressive evolutionary philosophy, I sensed an understandable deference to certain themes in mainstream science (note his subtitle). I say "understandable" because I think McIntosh is right to be cautious in not jettisoning some of sciences imperfect tenets simply because they have been branded materialistic. As he would likely argue, postmodernist deconstructionism can be just as dogmatic as any other ideology, and has, especially in academia, often created a kind of "cultural relativism" which, taken to the extreme falls into a "value paralysis...blind to comparative excellence." New Age excesses may be equally blind.

Many of McIntosh's arguments will likely have a familiar ring for SMN readers, who are, for example, familiar with the teleological implications of the Anthropic Principle, and would likely agree with Simon Conway Morris about the "uncanny ability of evolution to navigate to the appropriate solution." Likewise, we should consider our own uncanny abilities to sense when something is beautiful, true or good, and realise that in striving for such values we are purposefully imparting them to the evolutionary process, and also evolving or improving them. In Jonathan Stedall's beautiful new film *The Challenge of Rudolf Steiner*, one interviewee answers the question "what is spirituality?" most beautifully by saying simply that it is this human awareness and striving for what is good (true and beautiful).

While I'm not an Anthroposophist, or able to fully understand Rudolf Steiner's more esoteric interpretations of the cosmos, Steiner was a truly innovative integral philosopher, arising from the same Germanic tradition as Goethe and Hegel. Thus, when McIntosh refers to new explanations emerging to account for "formative patterns" that help us understand previously mysterious dynamics in biological evolution, I would turn to literature on formative patterns in the anthroposophically-influenced, and scientifically-sophisticated biological literature. For example, the hierarchy of physical (material), etheric (growth), astral (sentient-animal) and spiritual (thinking-cognitive) dynamics, cogently

and rather precisely parallels the more-simplified notions of mysterious, emergent properties manifesting progressively in the physiosphere, biosphere and noosphere. For example, while inorganic matter (rocks, minerals, atmospheric gases) are subject to external, material, entropic forces (gravity, magnetism etc.), plants (and animals) are subjected, in addition, to internal or etheric (growth forces), demonstrating negentropy, and increased emancipation from the environment. Such developmental dynamics, (see Verhulst, Suchantke in Network 82 & 102) have been quite well understood, if under-appreciated, for many generations.

More than once McIntosh converges on Steiner's philosophy alluding to humans as spiritual beings with qualities distinct from animals. This said, McIntosh's thesis, promulgates a similar message in principle: i.e., mainstream modernist science is stuck in the materialist paradigm that seeks to explain both biological and psychosocial phenomena only through the action of physical, or physically-measurable forces. Thus, while the tide of paradigm shift may be turning, much mainstream science still gives little credence to the manifest reality of intangible dynamics whether labeled, etheric, astral, spiritual, or under the umbrella of other immaterial yet fundamental values such as beauty, truth or goodness.

Let us give McIntosh the last words. Grandly he puts forward 10 tenets pertaining to Evolution's Purpose which distil down to a sort of hero's journey that begins with cosmic unity and participation, followed by separation and re-unification or final participation: strong shades of Owen Barfield. McIntosh is thoughtful and certainly philosophical, if not for some provocative, in his discussion of the theological implications of how this journey involves a necessary departure from "initial" platonic perfection into the experience of world existence (spiritual beings having a human experience) and subsequently striving to reconnect: *re-ligere*.

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

Experiencing Cosmic Oneness

Rolf-Ulrich Kramer

QIGONG MEETS QUANTUM PHYSICS

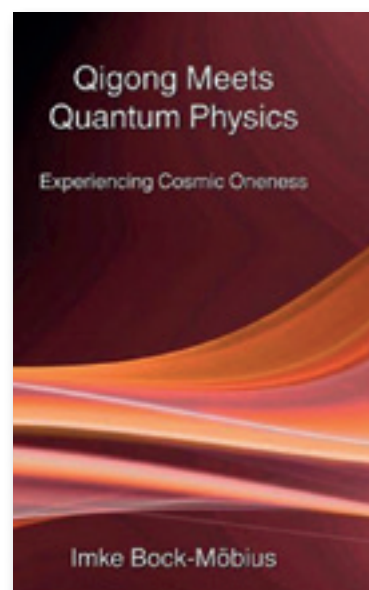
Imke Bock-Moebius

Three Pines Press, 2012, 127 pp., \$27.95, p/b - ISBN 978-1-931483-21-6

In this short and extremely erudite book of only 127 pages an astounding amount is being said. The author, a German lady who not only holds a PhD in physics but has also visited China to study Qigong, proposes the following thesis: "To understand the connections in the universe it is essential to create a new level of integration of the natural sciences and mysticism whilst avoiding the perception of these two as opposites." As a practising Qigong teacher she encourages experiencing rather than theorising, and this is expressed in the subtitle of her book: "Experiencing Cosmic Oneness".

In order to prove her point Bock-Moebius takes the reader on a journey which begins with an introduction to the practice of Qigong, is followed by a contemplation on "Wholeness in Qigong", goes on to reflect on the nature of "Mystical Union" as it appears in various religions, and finally invites one into the realm of quantum physics. The author's language is simple, she loves giving examples, and so even the uninitiated to quantum physics (like this reader) can follow without too much of a headache.

With reference to her chapters on Qigong it might be of particular interest to the SMN reader what traditional Chinese philosophy has to say about the genesis of the cosmos: "Chinese thought does not distinguish between matter and energy", and: "As Qi assembles into grosser density, things arise, just like water condenses to ice."



There is more of this to come. As in all traditions going back thousands of years one is likely to find divergences in thought and statement which can be confusing and contradictory. The author, quite aware of this, helpfully summarises the general trend of Chinese thought with regard to the creation of universes, as a sequence of five steps: to begin with there is non-being (*wúji*). From this follows *Dao* as the original ground from which all things arise. Now enters *Qi*, the universal power of change, and divides *Dao* into the two forces *yin* and *yang*. Yin and yang transform in mutual interchange, and the five elements develop: earth, water, fire, metal, wood. Out of these arise “the 10,000 things”.

In a word, the universe is seen to be condensed thought which in its final phase appears in the form of matter – which in a way gives an answer to the philosophical puzzle connected with the Primal Bang of Western physics where matter seems to have appeared out of nowhere. Chinese tradition, being mystical, always looked inward in order to investigate thought, whereas physics always looked outward to study matter. And so both statements seem to point to the same process: one from the cause end, the other from the effect end.

The complementary characteristics of Chinese thought and quantum theory are widely and cleverly explored throughout the book. We hear about the development of physics from Newton to Schrödinger and Heisenberg, and about Niels Bohr's concept of complementarity which joined the apparently irreconcilable opposites between wave and particle, between object and subject. “Quantum mechanics shows that there is only one reality: integrated oneness. It reunites subject and object, observer and measurement, separated radically by René Descartes 300 years ago in his division of the world into *res cogitans* (mental) and *res extensa* (extended).” Niels Bohr, interestingly enough, incorporated the yin-yang symbol in his family coat of arms.

The author's personal conclusion is worth quoting: “Modern life has a tendency to remove us far from nature. Through Qigong, art, and other methods of cultivation we recover nature and return to Dao. (...) I think that we as human beings begin to suffer as soon as we no longer feel connected to this oneness. There is no such thing as an isolated particle. Can there be a completely isolated human being? (...) Is, then, our true social community not just our immediate environment, but possibly the entire universe? The truly astonishing fact is that it is not only a few isolated, weird mystics who speak of experiences of union (...). Also normal and natural

sciences show conclusively just how tightly even the most distant phenomena are interconnected. This means that we all carry cosmic, universal responsibility in our lives.”

So be it. The book ends with numerous photos of the author demonstrating basic Qigong exercises which stand in context with some philosophical points made throughout the book.

medicine-health

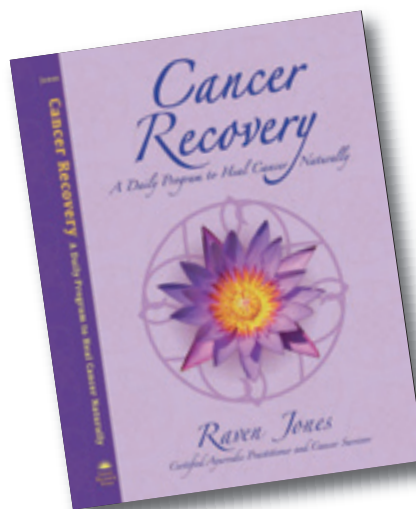
Cancer and CAM

Beata Bishop

CANCER RECOVERY – A DAILY PROGRAM TO HEAL CANCER NATURALLY

Raven Jones

Cancer Recovery Press, P.O. Box 1752,
Sebastopol, CA 2011 Available for
\$19.95 from www.myayurvedalife.com



Last year in a book review for this journal I bemoaned the fact that complementary and alternative practitioners in the cancer field seem unable to work holistically. Of the two authors whose books I was reviewing, one concentrated solely on some psychological means of self-healing, to the extent of dismissing all nutritional approaches (while admitting that he knew nothing about them); the other one, with the same single-mindedness, presented excellent dietary and biochemical methods to cure the disease, with not even a passing reference to the mind-soul-spirit being attached to the tumour-ridden body. Where is the book, I wondered that would get the two halves together?

Well, here it is. At a first glance “Cancer Recovery” doesn't look promising. Self-published, with no index or references and rich in mistakes and repetitions, despite the author's

grateful reference to his “eagle-eyed” editors, the book has an air of well-meaning amateurism. But a second glance shows that English-born American Raven Jones has put together an amazing compendium of CAM information for healing cancer, in a truly holistic fashion. With no medical background, he is a Certified Ayurvedic Practitioner and a self-cured cancer survivor, which is an unofficial qualification in itself. He also has a profound understanding of emotional healing and the value of meditation. Having cured myself thirty years ago from metastasized malignant melanoma on the nutrition-based Gerson therapy combined with transpersonal psychology, I've been studying the CAM field ever since and can vouchsafe for the prodigious amount and high quality of the author's research.

His quest began when in his late fifties a large malignant tumour appeared on his knee. After several operations and recurrences the specialist's verdict was amputation from above the knee. Jones refused this and after a period of dark despair began to search for another way to save his life and limb. Some years later, after repeated visits to an Ayurvedic clinic in Kerala and in possession of both his legs, he trained as an Ayurvedic practitioner himself, but hasn't limited his interest to that ancient healing method. The four principles of his recovery programme are 1) an Ayurvedic lifestyle, including diet and nutritional supplementation, 2) Detoxification, cleansing the body of accumulated toxins, 3) Metabolic Enzymes, a daily program of specific supplements, and 4) Healing the emotional conflicts underlying all disease.

These principles, except for the fourth, are pretty standard in many schools of naturopathic medicine, and in fact Jones pays tribute to the pioneers of alternative cancer medicine, such as Wilhelm Reich, Dr Max Gerson, Dr Royal Rife and Dr Johanna Budwig. His special addition to the naturopathic mix is the reiterated reminder of how the mind and the psyche contribute to the development of serious disease, and how even cancer can be a gift to those who choose a holistic path of hoped-for recovery, by giving them a sense of empowerment and self-control, instead of turning them into passive victims with no autonomy and precious little hope.

Raven Jones's daily program, lasting from 6 a.m. to lights out at 10 p.m. includes food, juices, mild exercise, enema, meditation and breathing exercises, and huge amounts of pancreatic enzymes, beside other supplements. This recalls the work of

the Scottish physician, Dr John Beard, who discovered in the early years of the twentieth century that the uncontrolled cell division in the foetus becomes regulated when its pancreas begins to function, hence the use of pancreatic enzymes against the unruly, wild growth and multiplication of cancer cells.

The all-embracing effort to build up the organism so that it can heal itself is a world away from the limited, essentially symptomatic treatments of official oncology which concentrate on the removal or destruction of the tumour but ignore the process that had produced it. The author refrains from criticism, but once or twice he refers to the too close link between medicine and the profit-centred pharmaceutical and medical equipment industry. What he doesn't mention is official oncology's angry knee-jerk reaction and hostility to any suggestion of there being another, truly alternative way to deal with cancer. Recently these reactions have grown even more venomous, dismissing any alternative approach without knowing the first thing about it – similar to the violent attacks a few years ago by a conference-load of oncologist on Prince Charles who had mildly suggested that a successful alternative treatment, which he happened to know about, might be usefully examined. Since the essence of good science is curiosity and a willingness to explore unknown areas and possibilities, at present medicine's credentials as a science seem questionable.

"Cancer Recovery" is an important book. It's also flawed and needs a really good editor to give it more shape and weed out repetitions. But it contains a great deal of solid information, combined with a profound understanding of spiritual needs in sickness and health, and all this without a hint of proselytising. To quote from Raven Jones's Epilogue, "I eventually found my way to health again after searching many avenues. Some were dead ends, but most offered a way out of my predicament. I had to find *my* own way. Now you must find yours."

Beata Bishop is author of *A Time to Heal*. Her new free self-help e-book, *CANCER AND AFTER, How to Avoid a Recurrence* has just been published. It is primarily for cancer patients who have completed their orthodox, not Gerson, treatment. However, the material is equally suitable for prevention and - even without any illness or disease - as a guide to a healthy inner and outer way of life. You can find it on <http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/208846>

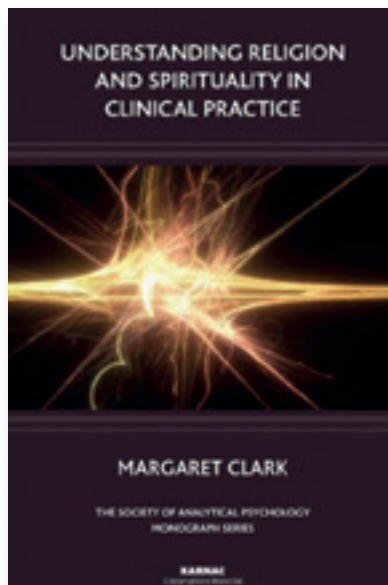
Soul Therapy: A Valuable Primer

Larry Culliford

UNDERSTANDING RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

Margaret Clark

Karnac Books, 2012, 99 pp., £15.99, p/b – ISBN 978 1 85575 870 4



In this, the latest in a collection of monographs from the Society of Analytical Psychology, series editor Hazel Robinson writes that the books are, '*Primarily for the benefit of trainees on psychotherapy and psychodynamic counselling courses*'. The authors are all Jungian analysts with extensive experience of teaching both theory and practice.

The rationale for this volume is explained in three statements: "Most therapists will have received no training in thinking about these matters psychodynamically"; "It is rare for any trainee to be asked to examine, or understand, their own spiritual standpoint"; and, "With religion also, the training deficiency goes back for generations".

Margaret Clark writes that her book, "Discusses different clinical manifestations of spiritual and religious experience". The focus throughout is on the clinical application and usefulness of the theoretical positions presented, which are helpfully illustrated with fifteen clinical vignettes. An Introduction and a Conclusion bookend the seven principal chapters of just ten or twelve pages each. There is a useful section of 'References', suggesting avenues for further reading, and a helpful 'Index'.

Introduction

At the start, there is a deliberately wide definition of *spirituality*: "To include our longing to find meaning and significance in our daily lives, to grasp a purpose beyond the physical for being alive at all". *Religion* is understood as, "A particular formulation of a spiritual quest"; one which includes a focus on "God", each religion with its own doctrines and dogmas, statements of belief, rules and rituals, institutions and structures.

Chapter One:

'The legacy of Freud on religion'

Although Freud appears hostile to religion, Clark reminds us he retained the idea of an external, personal, transcendent God; even though he thought people should not believe in him. This 'super-father' of people's projections results in excessive fear, of failure and consequent punishment. Unfortunately, Freud ignored the possibility of belief in a gentler, more compassionate God.

Chapter Two:

'Jung: the symbolic and the arcane'

Unlike Freud, Jung was comfortable with the breadth and intangibility of spirituality. According to Clark, "For Jung, the myth he lived by was the myth of individuation... His spiritual aim was a fullness of life, a wholeness of personality, the integration of psychic opposites... and a sense of belonging to a collective process".

Jung acknowledged the Christian story as containing emotionally intense, numinous 'archetypal' symbols, engaging with which could contribute to psychological healing and growth. This chapter's clinical vignettes are also helpfully drawn from Buddhist, Ancient Egyptian and Hindu religious cultures.

Chapter Three:

'The creation of our internal image of God: influences personal, developmental, and cultural'

Here, Clark invites therapists to consider carefully their own images of God, asserting, "Any image of God is... very limited and specific to that particular person at that particular time". Helping patients to avoid getting stuck on their developmental trajectory towards spiritual maturity, says Clark, requires self-awareness and a psychodynamic attitude. "It requires a capacity to respond appropriately to talk of 'God' and 'religion'."

Chapter Four:*'Spirituality, and God as a transitional object'*

Donald Winnicott's ideas, examined here, include his grasp that the goal of the spiritual seeker is often abstract: the meaning of life, love, creativity, virtue, goodness, self-fulfilment, enlightenment... "What life itself is about". His focus is on the 'transitional space' between the subjective, inner world of the patient and their objective, outer experience. God, he says, is an object in this space. For Winnicott, this is an example of a 'non-pathological' illusion.

Regarding 'pathological' illusions, Clark gives the example of religious cults, in which the needs of authority figures dominate. The falsehood becomes pathological when it is imposed on others, either in delusional certainty of its correctness, or by way of conscious exploitation.

Chapter Five:*'Evaluating spiritual and mystical experiences: From inspiration to addiction'*

Using vignettes, this concentrates on patients' 'spiritual' or 'mystical' experiences. Clinicians need a theoretical context in which to consider and evaluate the significance of these, although Clark admits there are many different approaches, and the terminology is confused.

Chapter Six:*'Evaluating spiritual and mystical experiences: The importance of the ego in seeing visions or hearing voices'*

This focuses on 'neurotic' and 'psychotic' experiences, the former originating from *within* the patient with a sufficiently strong 'ego' to cope, in vivid contrast to less-well integrated patients who experience visions and voices from *outside*, resulting in confusion between reality, memory, fantasy, dreams and hallucinations. Working with such patients is often 'very demanding', requiring repeated, painstaking attempts at clarification. Regular, experienced supervision is clearly advisable.

Chapter Seven:*'Evaluating spiritual and mystical experiences: From identification to possession – myths of the hero/saviour and of the Devil'*

Chapter Seven also relies on clinical vignettes, leading to the conclusion that, "The myth of the hero is very attractive, very useful, and very dangerous". The danger involves over-identification, resulting in a depletion of the self outside the myth.

Chapter Eight:*'Conclusion'*

This contains an interesting passage on 'fundamentalism', illustrated by another case study. Clark, noting, "Sometimes, it is the therapist who is fundamentalist", thinks this is only a problem, "If she regards it as part of her therapeutic task to convert her patients to her point of view"; whether 'religious', or reflecting belief in any particular school or 'church' of psychotherapy.

This book has reminded me and sent me back to Jung's collection of essays, 'Modern Man in Search of a Soul', first published in English in 1933. In 'Problems of Modern Psychotherapy', for example, Jung lists four stages through which patients travel towards health and wholeness: confession, explanation, education and *transformation*. Of the latter, he wrote that *both patient and therapist must be transformed for treatment to be effective*. "It is futile for the doctor", he wrote, "To shield himself from the influence of the patient and surround himself with the smoke-screen of fatherly and professional authority". These challenging ideas impressed me enormously during my training years. It meant knowing that engaging with patients would help me also to grow.

Jung also made clear that becoming a psychotherapist carries risks. For its offer of guidance, Margaret Clark's brief, intelligent book is therefore all the more valuable. She succeeds in providing not only an introductory text for trainees, but also a useful resource for their teachers and supervisors; who, obviously, must also explore and grow comfortable with the territory.

It could prove a bit of a stretch for general readers, yet there are many people reasonably familiar with psychodynamic concepts and terminology, including other mental health care professionals, who will find this book highly worthwhile.

Larry Culliford is a retired psychiatrist and the author of *'The Psychology of Spirituality'* (JKP, 2011).

The Hottest Topics in Psychotherapy

Gunnel Minett

THE SCIENCE OF THE ART OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

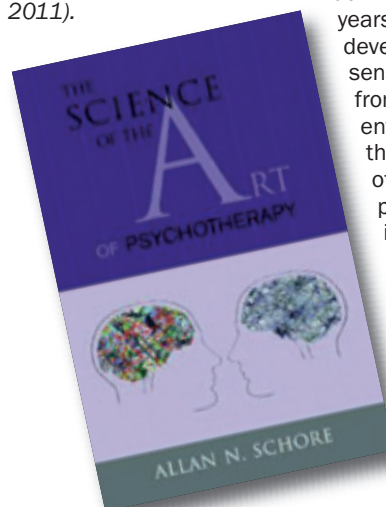
Allan N. Schore

W.W. Norton, 2012, www.wwnorton.com
458 pp., £30.80, h/b – ISBN 978-0-393-70664-2

The research presented in this book has the potential to cause a paradigm shift in psychotherapy. Allan Schore, a leader in the field of neuropsychology based psychotherapy, presents a number of ground-breaking ideas; Affect Regulation Therapy (ART), attachment, developmental neuroscience, trauma and the developing brain. It represents a wide and representative overview of regulation therapy and its clinical models of development and psychopathogenesis. In particular he points to the wide-ranging applications for the theory of an interpersonal neurobiological model of emotional and social development.

This new approach, which draws on a combination of (evolutionary) psychology and neurobiology, offers clear evidence that for psychotherapy to have a lasting impact it needs to include 'right brain to right brain' contact between therapist and client. As Schore points out, with new technology and unobtrusive brain scanning methods it has been possible to probe much further into how problems occur and consequently the effects of various forms of psychotherapy. In particular it has been possible to explore and understand the role of the right brain phase in a child's early development. Schore explains the role of the developing right brain in attachment and trauma, infant attachment and psychotherapeutic change.

The right brain is so important in psychotherapy because it plays a dominant role during the first two years of life, in forming the brain's development. It is particularly sensitive to difficulties arising from interaction with carers and environment. Problems during this period are often the cause of deeply rooted physical and psychological difficulties later in life. To assist the client in a healing process, the therapist will need to find ways to access and work with these non-verbal right brain issues. Trust and honesty are essential concepts in this process. Contrary to previous belief, this form of deep involvement



means that the therapist too will be experiencing brain, mind and body changes.

This requires a change in the approach of many forms of therapy, not least cognitive therapies. According to Schore, the verbal approach is no longer sufficient in itself. From being the core of many techniques, it is now seen as merely a 'way into' the core of the therapeutic process. This opens up new exiting possibilities for body oriented therapies such as, for instance, Breathwork. This already has abundant anecdotal evidence that simply altering the breathing pattern may create deep changes in the client's mind. At the same time it confirms the need for a more structured professional approach to such powerful techniques to avoid replacing one problem with another.

Another and even more important aspect of this book is its emphasis on giving children the best possible start in life. Schore quotes himself from his previous book "Relational trauma in infancy" (Routledge, 2001) to summarize his views on this topic: "[T]he earliest stages of humanhood are critical because they contain within them the representation of our possible futures – they model the potential developmental extension of our individual and collective social identities... When and where shall we place our current resources so as to optimize the future of human societies... How much should we value the very beginnings of human life, in tangible social program dollars?" (p 4)

Given that many problems children are experiencing in today's Western societies are reaching epidemic proportions, the issue of where to focus resources is a really hot topic. It is not just that psychological problems, including eating disorders, addiction, and aggression (often leading to criminal behaviour), are spiralling out of control in children and teenagers. A poor start in life often makes people more prone to having medical problems later in life. Just how deeply our lives are affected by early childhood experience is still not known. But the more that this area is researched, the more connections are made between childhood and adult problems. Exactly how much this is costing societies is also unknown but judging by the huge amounts of tax payers' money spent on healthcare, this should be top priority for politicians everywhere.

But more important than the money, is the fact that many adults' problems could have been avoided if their parents had had help and assistance to give them a better start in life. It is all well and positive that psychotherapists learn how to help their clients towards a better life. But that will always be a second best to prevention, and we now

know a lot about how to apply this prevention.

A frightening aspect is that parenting is a learned behaviour. Children growing up without proper parenting will struggle to offer their own children a good start in life. If we add to this the fact that children with ADHD and other learning difficulties (often treated with mind altering drugs rather than appropriate parenting) may struggle to get a basic education, we can see a downward spiral which is intensifying rapidly.

There is only one negative aspect of this very important book. It is clearly addressed to academics when it really needs to be made available to all – from politicians to parents and all other adults who can help children to a better life. We really owe it to our future generations to at least try our best and with men like Allan Schore we can no longer blame ignorance for not doing more.

Gunnel Minett is author of *Breath and Spirit*.

philosophy-religion

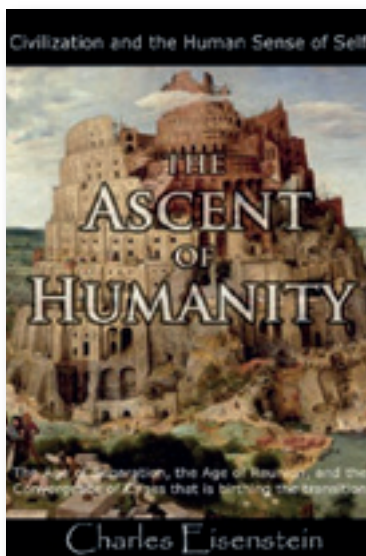
Revolution in Being

David Lorimer

THE ASCENT OF HUMANITY

Charles Eisenstein

Panentheia, 2007, 595 pp., \$25, p/b – ISBN 978-0-977622-0-7



In this brilliant and erudite book, Charles Eisenstein goes to the root of the converging crises now facing humanity by identifying our separate sense of self as the key factor. This separation defines both our culture

and our technology and is deeply woven into our thinking, affecting our relationship with life, Nature, self, others, and spirit. Individualism and the sense of ourselves as discrete and separate beings lead us to manipulate and try to control others and Nature to our best advantage, an inclination reinforced by technology. Our science reflects the same understanding of isolated beings gazing out on an objective and mechanical universe of impersonal forces. We tacitly assume that the answer to our problems lies in new technology, that progress consists of increasing our control over nature and that someday this control will be complete. Eisenstein exposes this reasoning as fundamentally flawed, depending as it does on assumptions of determinism and objectivity. He shows how these have already been overturned by science itself. Complex systems are unpredictable and the non-linear can never be fully mastered.

The triumph of technology has continually postponed Utopia. Most professional people are working harder than ever before. We have no time to loaf, and if we look at the lives of animals and less developed societies, they have a much more relaxed rhythm of life. And then we have to deal with the unintended consequences of our attempts to exert total control, for instance the emergence of iatrogenic conditions that are now the second cause of death in the US due to new pharmaceutical drugs simply controlling symptoms and having severe side-effects. In addition, many of our emerging medical conditions are in fact malfunctions of the immune system. Systemic toxicity and disruptions of ecosystems apply equally to the body and to forests and the oceans. The chapter on the origins of separation brings in language as a means of standardising, generalising and abstracting, and mathematics as a way of digitising. The measurement of time through clocks makes time scarce and life short, so we hurry to fit more in, stressing ourselves in the process. By contrast, the Piraha language and understanding of reality is totally at variance with ours, and creates a completely different world. This gives pause for thought.

Science is our means of trying to achieve total understanding and control, but as a system of knowledge it is in fact self-referential and leaves out areas such as parapsychology that do not fit in with its assumptions. If the aim of science is total understanding, then technology is correspondingly total control. In addition, Galileo's distinction between primary and secondary qualities effectively devalues everything worthwhile about human life and reduces it to the measurable; economics goes through a similar

process of monetising life and experience. Eisenstein puts this point forcefully when he says that mechanistic science denies the very fabric of human experience by quantifying qualities. By contrast, the new sciences of holism and interconnectedness mean that purpose, meaning, order, beauty and the sacred emerge as a function of relatedness. Individuals are defined in terms of a web of relationships with people, Earth, animals and plants, which means that any harm done to the other is also imposed on oneself. The next chapter applies this understanding to money and property, showing how videogames are a substitute for play and how experience of Nature is packaged into something to be consumed.

Eisenstein sees the ascent of humanity as the history of ever-greater control over Nature but also over human nature tainted by original sin. Technology is to control nature and culture controls human nature. Life itself is not about control, but rather about growth, change and transformation. This means that death is part of life, and fear of death translates into fear of life. Yet we have wars all around - the war against cancer, the war against terror, without realising that the war on the Other is in fact a civil war - anything we do to the world, we do to ourselves as well. The final diagnostic chapter is about crumbling of certainty and the impossibility of perfection. If we see the universe as blind and purposeless, then there is no perception of natural order; on the other hand, an understanding of the operating system of Nature leads us to want to work with the grain in harmony and balance with natural principles. All this is implicit in holistic science, organic agriculture and positive health, as exemplified in the work of Viktor Schauberger.

The Age of Reunion charts a path towards interdependence, new money systems (the currency of cooperation), a restorative economy and different forms of technology based on cycles, abundance and connection. Eisenstein also proposes a medicine of interbeing, an ecological approach beyond strategies of control. This evolves into a gift mentality and creates a new story and understanding. The last chapter is devoted to healing the split between self and cosmos, going beyond the struggle of good against evil and instilling a sense of self-acceptance, self-love and self-trust. The author restates the neo-Platonic idea of the Fall as separation as a prelude to reunion, drawing on the perinatal work of Stan Grof. It is easy to see that the fetus must eventually outgrow the finite womb, so one can say that 'the limits of growth trigger a birth crisis'

and apply this to the human situation. He adds that 'if the status quo did not become intolerable, there would be nothing to impel change - birth into a new state of being.' In the Age of Reunion, we will see everything as extensions of ourselves, experiencing a world that is 'wholly sacred, pregnant with creativity, immanent with purpose, alive with spirit.'

Here Eisenstein parallels the participatory vision of Richard Tarnas in *The Passion of the Western Mind* and the final participation of Owen Barfield. Leading thinkers represented in the creative minority are already making this transition from separation to wholeness, from independence to interdependence. The sweep and depth of this book enables readers to understand this process at a whole new level and to realise that it is already underway.

Perennial Wisdom for the Contemporary World

Samuel Bendeck Sotillos

TOUCHSTONES OF THE SPIRIT: ESSAYS ON RELIGION, TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Harry Oldmeadow

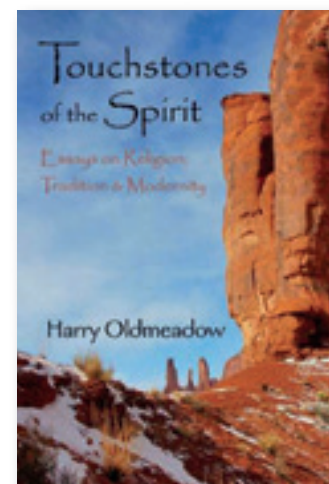
World Wisdom, 2012, 298 pp., \$22.95, p/b - ISBN 978-1-936597-03-1

"The sense of the sacred is fundamental for every civilization because fundamental for man; the sacred—that which is immutable, inviolable, and thus infinitely majestic—is in the very substance of our spirit and of our existence." – Frithjof Schuon

We live in a rather extraordinary time; we have access to the great wisdom traditions of the world, which has never before been possible. Now regardless of inner qualification or formal commitment to a traditional form, anyone can acquire texts that were previously inaccessible to outsiders, and it goes without saying that what is sacred was never taken frivolously. An important question, seldom posed, is: what is the cost of this accessibility? For example, as highly regarded as Tibetan Buddhism is today, rarely is it reflected upon that in order for not only the West, but the world at large to have access to its spiritual heritage, its civilisation was essentially decimated and is until today, some sixty years later, still occupied. The same could be said for all the traditional societies, especially those of the indigenous and shamanic societies. Many of their teachings would be inaccessible to outsiders if it were not for their elders deciding that it is better to share their wisdom in the

face of genocide than to lose their wisdom forever. The crisis of our times is coupled with a perplexing phenomenon of extremes—on one hand there is the mass disintegration of traditional societies and on the other hand there is the mass dissemination of its illumined wisdom. While there are tremendous spiritual benefits for those living in today's world, this remarkable opportunity comes with great responsibility. From the outset we are mindful of Professor Oldmeadow's striking assertion that sets the precedent for *Touchstones of the Spirit*: "Let us start with a recognition that there is indeed a fundamental crisis in the modern world and that its root causes are spiritual." This work is divided into three parts: I. Echoes of Tradition, II. The Wastelands of Modernity and III. East and West. Oldmeadow elaborates on these themes: "This compilation of essays is structured around three themes: the timeless messages of Tradition; the obscuration of this perennial wisdom in the modern world; and the spiritual intercourse between East and West which holds out some hope that we may yet recover something of what we have lost."

The first part contains an interesting collection of essays on a wide spectrum of subjects offering a unique look at the integral spirituality of the Australian Aborigines and its relationship to the other religious and wisdom traditions of the world. While it is quite fashionable to claim that all of the religions are one, Oldmeadow delves deeper into the inherent limitations of modern Western philosophy as well as comparative religion when they are not contextualised within the principal knowledge of the perennial philosophy. Although all religions are one in their essence their forms are multiple. The explanation for the existence of multiple religions is precisely because they are all different—for this reason it has been said that the Divine never



speaks the “same” language twice. The author takes the reader into the heart of Shankara’s metaphysics in order to elaborate on the Advaita Vedanta and the doctrine of *maya*. He explores the profundity of the Bodhisattva ideal and expands upon Western interpretations. He also provides an original essay on the modern notion of biography, which has many detrimental ramifications. The last piece in this section is devoted to a book by Joseph Epes Brown, a remarkable scholar of Native American traditions.

The second part of the book “Wastelands of Modernity” is superbly and profoundly encapsulated in the essay “The False Prophets of Modernity”:

Some of the symptoms: ecological catastrophe, a material sign of the rupture between Heaven and Earth; a rampant materialism and consumerism, signifying a surrender to the illusion that man can live by bread alone; the genocidal extirpation of traditional cultures by “modernization”; political barbarities on an almost unimaginable scale; social discord, endemic violence, and dislocations of unprecedented proportions; widespread alienation, ennui, and a sense of spiritual sterility amidst the frenetic confusion and din of modern life; a religious landscape dominated by internecine and inter-religious and by the emergence of xenophobic fundamentalisms in both East and West; the loss of any sense of the sacred, even among those who remain committed to religious forms, many of whom have retreated into a simplistic and credulous religious literalism or into a vacuous liberalism where “anything goes.”

Another insightful essay contained in this section is “Frankenstein’s Children: Science, Scientism, and Self-Destruction”, which further elaborates on the inherent flaws of modern science by its attempt to make an absolute of itself and usurp all of Reality into its fold that is juxtaposed by sacred science: “By its very nature modern science is thus unable to apprehend or accommodate any realities of a supra-sensorial order. Science (a method of inquiry) becomes scientism (an ideology) when it refuses to acknowledge the limits of its own competence”. There are many insights

to ponder in the essay “Computers: An Academic Cargo Cult?”, including an inquiry into the true meaning of intelligence and its relationship to what has been termed culturism. “The Past Disowned” explores the postmodern outlook and its hazardous implications for education. This section concludes with a review of Eckhart Tolle’s *The Power of Now*, an overnight New Age best seller whose shortcomings Professor Oldmeadow exposes in the light of the *sophia perennis*.

Part three presents an overview of the work of two seminal representatives of the perennial philosophy, Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy and Frithjof Schuon. In the third part there is also an essay on Western scholarship and its attempts to articulate the wisdom of the East; another contains homage to the doyen of the study of the world’s religions, Professor Huston Smith. Additionally, there is an essay offering a rare look at Swami Abhishiktananda (Henri Le Saux), a relatively unknown French Benedictine who immersed himself for numerous years in Advaita Vedanta and contributed to an integral understanding of the Hindu *dharma*. This section ends with an insightful essay on inter-religious understanding and lays out valuable pointers as to how to make it more complete.

Never before have there been so many counterfeit spiritualities, nor has spirituality previously been turned into a business as it has today and in no other time have we witnessed the massive destruction of traditional societies, something that has become a global pandemic. Paradoxically there are more tangible points of contact with the sacred than ever before. How is one to make sense of this? According to the unanimous teaching of all the spiritual traditions of the world, we are living at the end of a temporal cycle. Professor Oldmeadow takes no prisoners in critiquing the errors of the modern and postmodern mindset, yet he also supplies the principles that permit us to move beyond the current impasse. For all those seeking to reclaim the sacred in the midst of the ambiguity and confusion in the present age *Touchstones of the Spirit* offers an impressive spectrum of pointers to assist in this search.

Samuel Bendeck Sotillos, who has received graduate degrees in Education and in Psychology, has travelled throughout the world to visit sacred sites, and had contact with noted spiritual authorities. He is a Board Affiliate of the Association for Humanistic Psychology (AHP) and has published in numerous journals including *Sacred Web* and *Sophia*.

He is currently editing an issue of *Studies in Comparative Religion* dedicated to “Psychology and the Perennial Philosophy”. He lives in California.

The TV Within Mary Midgley

SOUL DUST: THE MAGIC OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Nicholas Humphrey

Quercus, 2012, 237 pp., £25, h/b – ISBN 978-1-84916-237-1



Nicholas Humphrey is more human and more entertaining than many psychologists. He also deserves thanks because, in the seventies, he helped dispel the behaviourist convention which

kept discussions of consciousness out of scientific talk altogether. His suggestion was that conscious thought mainly evolved, not to solve practical problems but to develop social tact among animals living together. This evolutionary talk reassured scientists that the topic was a decent one, so controversies about it have raged merrily ever since.

Humphrey’s approach to this topic was, however, always slightly odd. He used these social needs to explain, not just why consciousness has gone on developing but why it arose originally. Yet how could social needs – which don’t seem to bother plants – ever have troubled creatures which were not conscious already? Humphrey’s strange assumption that they could still haunts this book, in which he claims to have finally solved the ‘hard problem of consciousness’ – the question how our subjective life can exist at all in a world of matter which is supposedly fully described by the physical sciences. (He now uses the word consciousness to mean only an extra intensity of feeling characteristic of human beings. But as he still claims to have solved the whole ‘hard problem’ this makes little difference).

He does not undertake the complete rethinking of mind-body questions which would actually be needed to solve that problem. This rethinking would need to centre on the concept of matter itself. Matter is still often imagined, in seventeenth-century style, as an inert, passive stuff moved only by impact from outside. Since this view was deliberately designed by devout scientists to leave space for God as the source of all activity, it rather naturally becomes unworkable

once that somewhat assertive God has been removed. Inert stuff could never have produced the crystals, the galaxies, the volcanoes and above all the living things which have evolved out of our original dollop of physical matter. And after those amazing achievements, why should it seem surprising for matter to have topped things up by adding consciousness?

We need somehow to admit that matter has proved creative enough to do all these things. And since physicists no longer rule that matter is inert that ought not now to be too difficult. Till this point is clear, the 'hard' problem remains insoluble. Many people today still evade it or say that subjectivity is illusory, as the Behaviourists did. Others, however, want their immediate experience taken seriously. They find the effort of believing in a world of objects-without-subjects too unhelpful to be worth continuing, so they readily admit that they have a Problem of Consciousness. Humphrey, however, still rules that this everyday consciousness is indeed an illusion. He seems not to notice that illusions are impossible unless somebody conscious is there to be deluded. He sees his problem as simply one of fitting the unreal entities that we think we see and hear into the only real world, which is, of course, the world as science reports it..

Experience is, he says, actually all a pretence, a 'magical mystery show' laid on by that well-known theatrical producer, the brain. Consciousness has evolved in order to make our lives more exciting, thus giving us a Soul which stirs us to extra efforts that improve our survival prospects. 'Soul-land is a territory of the spirit... a place where the magical interiority of human minds makes itself felt on every side...where the claims of the spirit begin to rank as highly as the claims of the flesh.' Once established, this deluded but enjoyable condition diffuses Soul-dust over the unreal entities that we think we see, which accounts for the pleasure that we think we take in thinking that we perceive them. (Much of the book is occupied by long quotations to show how highly humans have always valued sense-perception).

If all this sounds unconvincing that's because it is. The core error here is a common but shockingly obvious one - the suggestion that nothing is real except what the physical sciences tell us. Actually, as serious scientists know, those sciences owe their success to their gimlet-eyed concentration on certain narrow, clearly defined ranges of questions, so they never aim to report the whole of reality. They therefore seldom compete with our direct perceptions. When we look at a tomato we are not, as Humphrey and others insist, looking at an unreal entity, a 'representation' faked up by our

faculties. We see the tomato itself - incompletely, of course, in the faulty ways that our organs and our culture allow, but still directly. Certainly its redness is not what chemists would detect if they tested its surface. But then chemists would be asking quite different questions about it.

In fact, we know this rich and complex world in many ways, among which physical science is indeed important but our immediate experience is much more so. Humphrey argues that we must just put up with the falsity of our perceptions, and perhaps with some religious illusions too, because a wise evolutionary Providence has clearly decided that it is good for us to be deceived. But this evolutionary Providence never forces us to follow a single train of thought that comes naturally to us without trying to make sense of the whole pattern. A bit more effort that way would, I suspect, do much to dissolve the Hard Problem without invoking Humphrey's shadow-show.

From Electron to God: a quantum jump too far?

Max Payne

Starting Science from God

Ian J Thompson (SMN)

Eagle Pearl Press 2011, 306 pp., ISBN 974-0-984822-A-0-2

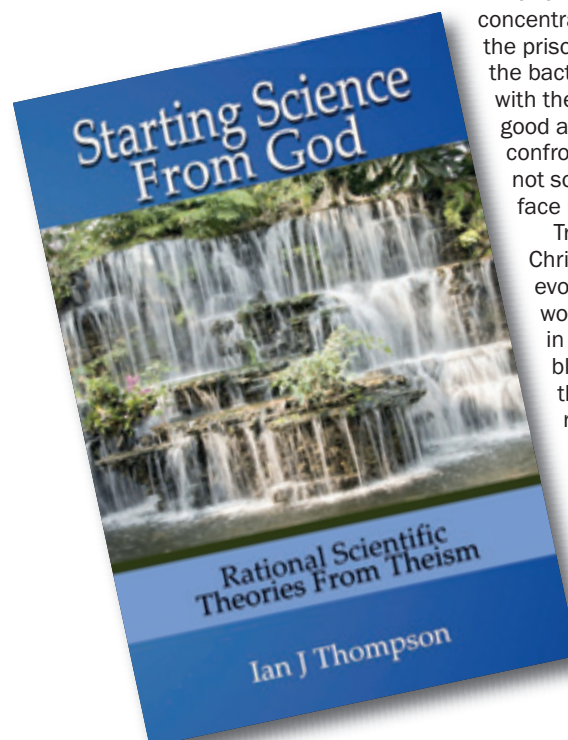
GODHEAD – THE BRAIN'S BIG BANG

J Griffin & I Tyrrell

HG Publishing 2011, £25. 445 pp., ISBN 978-1-899398-27-0

Probably the most serious of these books is that by Ian Thompson. He starts from a resolutely theistic position in which a personal God pours out unconditional love to all His creation. By a series of highly complex logical arguments this descends, level by level, all the way down to the quantum mechanical uncertainty of the electron. Thompson's God is totally transcendent, but also totally immanent. God's love is active within all things right down to the sub-atomic particle. It is insisted that this absolutely different from the non-dualism of neo-Platonism, the Christian Origen, and the Hindu Vedanta, but it is difficult to tell the difference. The question arises over the problem of evil. Thompson gives a standard theistic answer that evil and suffering are the inevitable consequence of God's gift of human freewill. Critics have always queried whether this answers the problem of the unmerited suffering of the innocent, the very young, or of all animal creation during the whole of evolutionary history. The question gets worse with the total immanence of God. God energises the concentration camp guard as well as the prisoner. Divine energy ensouls the bacteria as well as the patient with the disease. Whence then are good and evil? The *Bhagavad Gita* confronts this problem, if it does not solve it. Theism does not even face it.

Traditional theism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam was evolved within a geocentric world view. A personal God was in heaven just above the bright blue sky, and could listen to the prayers of the faithful, and respond with a fatherly concern. Thompson takes the modern scientific world down to the innards of the atom, but he does not take it up to the total universe and beyond. Present day cosmology tells us that our sun is but a star amongst many billions



in our particular galaxy, and that our galaxy is but of many billions of other galaxies. Statistically across the universe there must be very many earth-like planets capable of evolving intelligent life, and that is discounting the probable existence of a multiverse with many universes. If we insist that there is a spiritual principle beyond the material, then it is a something beyond and above all *that*! It is difficult to imagine what a personal relationship could mean between *that* and a human mind. Mahayana Buddhism and its Westernised offshoot, Theosophy, have an answer in the form of spiritual beings that mankind can contact personally, who are, nevertheless, a long way down the scale from ultimate reality. Interestingly the elaborate descent Thompson traces from God to the atom provides for this possibility.

Griffin and Tyrrell have discovered the secret of God, the universe, and everything. Reality is a quantum state which oscillates between the subjective nothingness which is the Godhead, and objective existence which is matter. This quantum state can be collapsed by the REM state of consciousness in deep sleep. There are levels of this quantum state: the whole universe cannot be collapsed by the beginner, and there is a hierarchy of REM states. These take Griffin and Tyrrell from the physiology of the brain, through various psychiatric states, on through mystical experience on to the ultimate realities. A great deal of ancient religion and shamanism is explained on the way. They give courses at the "Human Givens College" on how to use this knowledge in practice.

Though neither of these books may convince, they are important in indicating the way any attempt to reconcile science and spirituality must go in the 21st century. It must embrace material dimensions of space and time from the quark to the total universe, and then visualise a spiritual something beyond. The problem is that while scientific knowledge has gone that far, the inner experience of the most enlightened sages and mystics has not, and the rest is uncertain metaphysical speculation.

Max Payne is a Vice-President of the Network.

Creative Evolution

David Lorimer

LIVING CONSCIOUSNESS THE METAPHYSICAL VISION OF HENRI BERGSON

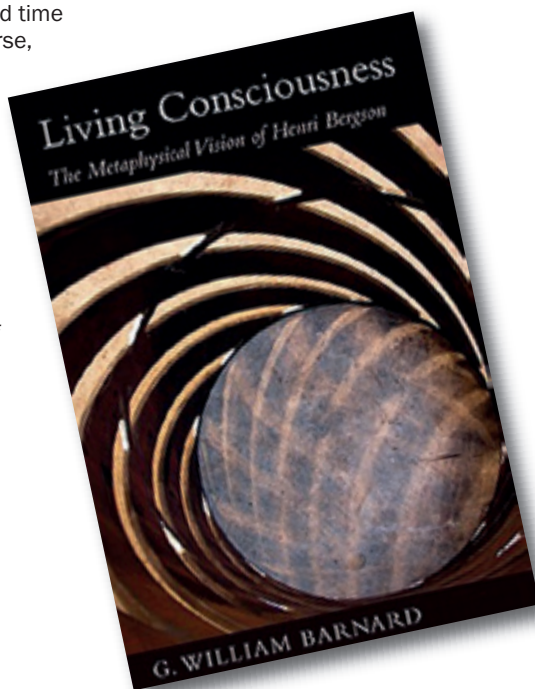
G. William Barnard

SUNY Press, 2011, 342 pp., \$27.95,
p/b - ISBN 978-1-4384-3957-0

A hundred years ago, Henri Bergson was one of the best-known philosophers in the world. He was teaching at the Collège de France, and one clue to his relative neglect in our time is the continued dominance of the mechanistic, materialistic and positivist understanding that he himself argued against. Even then, most of the other professors 'were scornful of religious experience and human freedom', and were attempting to replace psychology with physiology. However, Bergson's 1907 book *Creative Evolution* had a huge impact and established his international reputation. William James described him as a magician and his book as a marvel, saying that it marked the emergence of a new era. As the author puts it, 'it affirmed the reality of spiritual forces working in harmony with the unfolding of the physical universe; it emphasised the inherent freedom and dignity of human beings; and its articulation of the doctrine of intuition seemed to imply that divine levels of knowledge were available to all.' This resulted in a spate of international invitations, and it is astonishing to learn that 200 articles on Bergson appeared in the British press between 1909 and 1911. His work was compared with that of Plato, Aquinas, Kant, Descartes and Emerson. Ironically, his major works were placed on the index of prohibited books by the Holy Office.

This book is a timely study, which in my view achieves its object of explaining the significance and continuing importance of Bergson's philosophy. It also shows how the findings of modern science can be interpreted from a different angle. Barnard discusses his major works and themes, with a special emphasis on the nature of consciousness, time and memory. He also opens up the importance of Bergson's perspective, shared with William James and F.C.S. Schiller, for the interpretation of paranormal phenomena that are normally ignored or dismissed by conventional neuroscience. A central concept is his term *durée* for consciousness/time, allied to the primacy of consciousness and its nonlocal features over matter, although Bergson does not distinguish so sharply between mind and matter as many philosophers. Like James, he pays close attention to the new and inherently creative flux of consciousness that we all experience within. It is this that gives us our intuition of freedom and development. This places an emphasis on dynamism, flow and continuity, hence on movement and change associated with the unfolding of time. The physical world comes to resemble a melody rather than a mechanism, and our own experience is one of participation and co-creation. Interestingly, the brain is seen as the organ of attention to life, implying that this function is as much to limit as to perceive, enabling us to tune into a narrow band of frequencies that we then label physical reality. As we discussed in a dialogue in 2009, the work of Rupert Sheldrake was greatly influenced by Bergson, particularly his book *Matter and Memory*, which he read as a graduate student in Cambridge.

Barnard puts Bergson's theory of consciousness within a modern interpretative context, highlighting the issues of the unity and evolution of consciousness and identifying panpsychism as a promising approach, along with David Griffin. He reminds us that the universe consists of dynamic patterns of energy in various forms of expression and interrelation. He also draws some interesting parallels with the work of David Bohm. Bergson makes an important distinction between habit and recollection memory in the form of images. He then goes on to explain how they are interwoven. Throughout the book, Barnard provides his own ruminations, reflecting on his experience of Bergson's philosophy in a modern context. In a section on brain injury and memory, he notes that Bergson's way of understanding memory has not in fact been superseded, as Rupert Sheldrake has also pointed out.



Perhaps the most interesting chapters for Network readers are the final ones on non-ordinary experiences and the afterlife. This was a domain also investigated by his older contemporaries William James and Frederic Myers. Bergson observes that our minds overlap and interpenetrate each other, as one sees explicitly in telepathy. We are also capable of tuning into different channels all levels of reality, as mystics demonstrate very clearly in terms of unity and 'their intuitive connection to the cosmic currents of life.' He developed these thoughts in his last work, but he was also interested in psychical research, serving as the president of the SPR in 1913. In one of his lectures, he argues against the sceptical interpretation of coincidental deathbed visions by saying that one needs to take into account not only the specificity of the vision, but also its timing. Barnard has an interesting experience of his own about parallels between dreams and afterlife states of consciousness, a theme also investigated by H.H. Price (*Survival and the Idea of Another World*). The book as a whole reinforces the current emergence of worldviews based on the idea that the universe is some sense alive, and much more interconnected than we normally realise.

The Great Unmingling David Lorimer

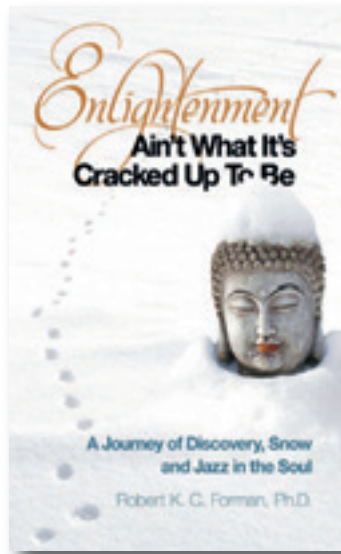
ENLIGHTENMENT AIN'T WHAT IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE

Robert Forman

O Books, 2011, 214 pp., £9.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-84694-674-5

Robert Forman is the author of many books on consciousness and the spiritual path, and has been meditating for 40 years. In this searching autobiographical account, he describes his own spiritual development while tackling broader issues of the relationship between spirituality and everyday life. He was one of the early teachers of TM with Maharishi and spent a prolonged period training in Mallorca. This involved meditating for between 6 and 8 hours a day. He describes the way in which his internal sense of self is transformed, with evocative phrases such as spacious emptiness, silent bottomless and steady vastness. Gradually, the background thought processes fall away and the witness emerges. There are many ways of describing this - being awake in the world and awake in oneself.

However, this shift does not suddenly transform life into a steady



stream of peace and joy. Far from it. Everyday challenges still remain, hence the sense of disappointment and disillusion that Forman describes. He can experience the silence while still being incompetent in his father's business or having a turbulent relationship with his wife. Expectation has a lot to do this, and I wonder how many readers have a clear idea of what they mean by Enlightenment. One way of defining it is as a shift in the relationship between consciousness and its objects; or as the unmingling of a commingled reality. This means becoming conscious of a process that was previously unconscious. As Forman puts it: 'consciousness now perceives itself in itself, and as *distinct from and witness to* everything one sees and does.' Looking for parallels in the literature, he finds some in Ruysbroeck and Bernadette Roberts; he also receives personal confirmation from Ram Dass.

This state is what he calls in a different context 'pure consciousness', which has been the subject of a long-running academic debate with Steven Katz. Katz takes the post-modernist position that there can be no such thing, since for him consciousness is always contextual. Forman not only disagrees with this intellectually, but his experience and that of many others suggests otherwise. He does, though, describe the uncomfortable and liberating effect of discovering that his TM philosophy was one of many systems of meaning or webs of thought and action, which we all have by definition. This makes us aware of how these frameworks are self-referential. The encounter also made him realise that some of Maharishi's assertions about the age of the Vedas were off by a factor of ten. No one is infallible.

Yet we yearn for and project perfection on our spiritual teachers. These people, however, are rarely able

to exemplify the perfection we seek. Forman cites many examples of gurus who have slept with their female disciples or engaged in dubious business practices. Many of these people are not involved in any long-term intimate relationships. This is another area where Forman has some revealing insights. We can so easily become fixated on our own spiritual development that we fail to realise the unintended consequences on our partners. How do they feel about this? Do they feel undervalued or unnoticed? We can so easily miss each other on each other's terms. As he points out, spiritual progress can be defence as well as salvation: and 'if we cannot bring grace into our everyday, flawed, stinky old mutuality, it is not yet complete enough.' This illustrates the honesty pervading the book, which few authors would have the courage to set out. He suggests that we all have one or two core life problems - 'being seen, gaining love, finding a life passion or focus in and over-busy life, gaining respect.'

It is so easy not to find the time to stand back and gain some perspective on life, making a deeper connection with oneself and others. This requires some immersion in silence, as recommended by all spiritual traditions. Forman suggests that the real value of great spiritual teachers consists in their degree of openness and level of consciousness, which can be sensed by those around. He sums up his idea of the truly spiritual person as one who can access 'the deepest silence, the most critical intellect, the most painful psychic memory and the sexiest kiss, each equally and each without hesitation.' So his goal is to be effortlessly open, 'to live jazz in the soul, and under any circumstance, on the settled ground of spiritual spaciousness.' This is emphatically not to split off the spiritual from the material, but rather to accept and experience life in its fullness. As Jung put it, the human journey is about wholeness rather than perfection. This humorous, engaging and authentic book provides some reassurance that we don't have to be perfect - just honest and persistent.

psychology- consciousness studies

Nobel Laureate of the New Paradigm?

Tony Edwards

The Reality of ESP: a physicist's proof of psychic abilities

Russell Targ

Quest Books, Illinois, 2012, 306 pp.,
\$17.95, p/b - ISBN 978-0-8356-0864-8

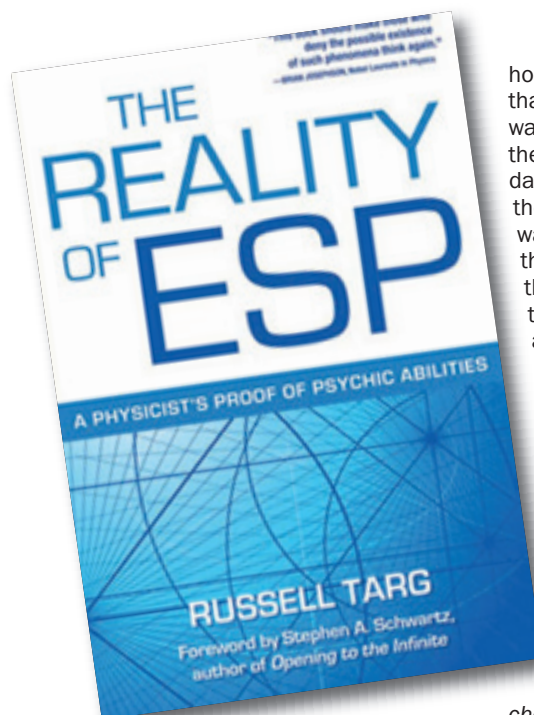
DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE? MEMOIRS OF A BLIND BIKER

Russell Targ

Hampton Roads, 2008, 261 pp.,
\$18.95, p/b - ISBN 978-1-57174-630-6

The name of Russ Targ should already be familiar to SMN members, and shame on you if it isn't. For he's the man who almost single-handedly rescued what used to be dismissed as "parapsychology" from its ignominious position skulking in the corners of science, financed by the odd philanthropic eccentric. Those were the days when experimenters in telepathy, psychokinesis and clairvoyance counted themselves lucky if they scraped statistically significant results from endless successions of identical trivial experimentsand then bleated when their "subjects'" performances predictably tailed off. Targ, a top laser physicist, swept that all aside in the 1970s. In the process, he changed the nomenclature from parapsychology to "psychic functioning", and clairvoyance to "remote viewing".

Within a few short years, he had become a giant, publishing a landmark paper (describing telepathy experiments with Uri Geller) in *Nature* - a first for the whole field and a PR coup. Typically, he had succeeded in persuading the big guns of NASA to fund the research, and the equally prestigious Stanford Research Institute (SRI) to house it. The *Nature* publicity led him to meet Ingo Swann, a "master psychic" New York artist whose prickliness had not previously endeared him to parapsychologists, but who was won over by Targ's charm and high intelligence. Swann and Targ joined forces, and, together with Hal Puthoff, another laser physicist, the trio embarked on scientifically establishing remote viewing as a "robust human perceptual ability". The rest is history. SRI obtained funding from the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and US Army and Air Force Intelligence, and a



small team of super-psychics was recruited to spy on the Soviet Union. Although (or indeed perhaps because) it was extraordinarily successful, the \$20 million programme was closed down with the ending of the Cold War.

Targ's autobiography reads like the transcript of a relaxed conversation with him - fluent, fascinating, surprising, and with a dry wit.....like the man himself. It's a roughly chronological account of a life lived to the full by a man with healthy human passions and a huge eclectic intellect, and of how his research into the far reaches of human consciousness led him from a godless existentialist world-view (only revealed two-thirds of the way through the book) to a profoundly spiritual one. The book's mischievous subtitle "Memoirs of a Blind Biker" is an exaggeration, of course - although his thick glasses are his most striking attribute on first meeting. He did indeed ride a motorbike (albeit low-powered), but only for the short daily journey to and from SRI, "principally using psychic awareness to warn me of any dangers ahead", he once told me. So as not to spoil the autobiography for you, I won't purloin any of his anecdotes. Instead, I'll relate one astounding story that he omitted.... about the Targ family cat, Mushroom.

Because psychic functioning was such an everyday occurrence at his SRI office, Targ had a very open, encouraging attitude to it at home. This extended to his super-intelligent daughter Elizabeth, who by the age of twelve was already very psychic, and indeed a top performer on his NASA-funded ESP Teaching Machine. But Mushroom must have picked up on the psychic vibes too. When about 8 years old, the cat started peeing around the

house. The problem became so chronic that at a family pow-wow one Sunday, it was agreed the cat should be taken to the vet to be euthenised the very next day. However, on the Monday morning, they were astonished to see the cat walk into the bathroom, jump up onto the WC, spread its legs and pee into the bowl. "Mushroom did the only thing he could to save his life, an action he had never performed before", Targ told me. "If he had peed outside, we'd probably not have noticed, and would have taken him to the vet to be put down." Having exhibited such amazing psychic ability, Mushroom was justly rewarded with a lifelong pardon. [He soon relinquished chronic carpet-peeing....only to replace it with sneezing. You can hear Mushroom's nasal explosions on the sound-track of a remote viewing I filmed

chez Targ with one of his top psychics, Hella Hammid. An anonymous fan has uploaded the footage to YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGtT8CVwNoM].

Sadly, I have less enthusiasm for Russ's more recent book "The Reality of ESP" - mainly because I fear it will fail "to convince a sceptical investigator of the reality of ESP", its stated goal. Part of the problem is that Targ so clearly enjoys ebullient story-telling that over half of the book is written in the first person, and thus much of his evidence is literally anecdotal. His formal controlled trials on remote viewing are of course described, but they are somewhat buried in the free-wheeling narrative. I would have preferred the book to have included reprints of his ground-breaking papers in *Nature* and the *IEEE* - not least for presentational sceptic-convincing reasons. The other problem, for a book which claims to "use all the best available data", is that it tends to concentrate on Targ's own research, with too few forays into others'. He offers a good account of Daryl Bem's precognition experiments, but his other choices and omissions are a little odd. He describes some of the US and Soviet remote influencing experiments, but gives only a passing mention of the far more statistically significant Ganzfeld database on telepathy. He devotes a couple of pages to anecdotes about Uri Geller and spoon-bending parties, but omits the very well-controlled and hugely successful psychokinesis experiments of Helmut Schmidt and Robert Jahn. And, despite his own cat's dramatic demonstration, he totally ignores animal psychic functioning, such as Rupert Sheldrake's pioneering studies with dogs and parrots. A final criticism, given the book's stated aim, is that it's probably counter-productive to include

chapters on Buddhism & ESP and "Learning Remote Viewing" - both being likely to stick in the craw of a die-hard sceptic.

"A physicist's proof of psychic abilities" is the book's subtitle, and Targ doesn't duck the implied challenge to explain the mechanism by which psychic functioning is able to breach conventional concepts of space and time. He invokes the famous EPR Paradox, and cogently outlines the experimental evidence showing that twin atomic particles remain connected - even over vast distances. Most lay writers tend to leave the explanation at that, but Targ rightly points out that the EPR Paradox doesn't explain psychic communication, simply that reality may be inherently "non-local". However, it offers him an evidential framework on which to hang his "Eight-Space Geometrical Model", based on the formulations of Hermann Minkowski, the 19th c. mathematician, whose work underpinned Einstein's theory of relativity. Targ develops Minkowski's 4-space model into 8, thus opening up "a path of zero distance connecting any two points" in space and time. Targ admits it's only a geometrical model, but invokes Wheeler's view that reality is more likely to be grounded in geometry than in fields. This chimes in with Targ's own gut feeling that psychic functioning does not involve information transfer, but "an interaction of our awareness with a non-local hyper-dimensional space-time in which we live."

For me, the best part of the book is the Introduction, where Targ summarises some of the most compelling evidence for ESP, and then delivers an almost Socratic oration on why he thinks it's so important. "The exploration of psychic abilities is the essential next step in the greatest opportunity we have as a species - the evolution of consciousness", he says. "We have completed our physical growth; our brains are big enough... transcending our own species is the next evolutionary step for us to take. We started first as animals looking for food; then we advanced to moderately self-aware humans trying to understand nature; and now we are finally ready to meet our destiny as beings aware of our spacious and non-local consciousness, transcending space and time and accepting the gift of psychic abilities....our hardware is fine; it's our awareness of our psychic software that must be upgraded - and quickly, given the critical state of [world] affairs." To which I would add that, in the event of computers achieving quasi-consciousness, psychic abilities will be one of the few things we will have over them.

This is a book by a genius, but unfortunately as a whole it is not itself

a work of genius. Nevertheless, it contains, as Russ says with his eye on posterity, "the soundest and most thorough summary" of the SRI remote viewing programme - research that historians of science will surely judge as the first incontrovertible evidence of the 'reality' of ESP. Such ground-breaking, high quality scientific research, conducted with integrity, creativity and fortitude, is the stuff of Nobel Prizes, which in any other field would have long since been awarded. But, as Targ ruefully observes, he is now in his 80th decade, so I doubt that Kuhn's paradigm will shift rapidly enough to afford us the pleasure of seeing him mount the Stockholm stage. But maybe, just maybe, by the end of this century the Nobel Prize Rules will have changed.... to permit a new category of posthumous medals: the Shameful Omissions Caused By Dogmatic Scientism Awards. After all, there'll be plenty of candidates!

In 1983, BBC producer Tony Edwards made the Corporation's first (and to date only) major science programme on ESP research.

Undue Risk?

Natalie Tobert

MEDICINE FOR THE SOUL: THE COMPLETE BOOK OF SHAMANIC HEALING

Ross Heaven

Moon Books, 2011, 211 pp., £11.99, p/b- ISBN 978-1-78099-419-2

Perhaps I am the wrong person to review this publication. I find it hard to be benevolent about a book which suggests readers undertake shamanic journeying unsupervised for a few weeks and then submit essays to the author to gain a diploma in healing, as evidence of their skills.

Shamanic journeying is a strategy that opens the doors of perception. Some practitioners may become over sensitive, receive too much data, and experience poor mental health. Psychiatrists acknowledge the problem of always discerning differences between religious experience and mental ill health¹. Years ago I interviewed people who had 'spiritual experiences' but did not return straight away to mundane reality², and later I conducted research into the relationship between 'religious experience' and mental health³.

Asking me to read a book on 'The Heaven Method™', a distance learning strategy for shamanic journeying and healing, meant I was negatively biased as soon as I read the introduction.

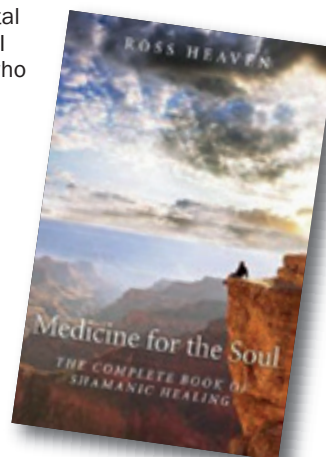
I believe altered states of consciousness achieved by shamans, psychics, sensitives or mediums can be a useful tool to throw light on an illness event, and with intention, effect a healing. I believe medical doctors who listen mindfully to their patients can create a response shift towards healing. Those are my beliefs.

Ross Heaven has written a book that offers a relaxed style of learning, which is sometimes directional and prescriptive. There are exercises for the reader to practice, and quick tests at the end of chapters, which can be written up and sent to the author for feedback. The shaman is always mentioned as 'he', while the client is 'she' (no comment)... There is some interesting advice in this structured book, and a fusion of cultures and foreign words are mentioned. The final chapter on ethics of working with clients, codes of conduct, and insurance could be useful.

Topics covered include 'Spirit Extraction and Soul Retrieval' and 'Working with the Souls of the Dead' and 'Plant Spirit Medicine'. I must be of the Old School: I shudder at the thought of readers doing spirit extraction, being psychopomp to souls of the dead, or engaging with ayahuasca independently on their own, as a novice. While I do believe in the efficacy of remote intervention and support, I struggle with the thought of unsupervised learning of shamanic skills set out here.

In my opinion, there is still a place in this world for face to face learning, and for those who are interested in shamanic practice, surely direct teaching is the safest way to learn with reduced risk to mental ill health? Those who want can search the Internet, to find local practitioners. If readers desire an academic understanding about shamanism, I found the best volume was Graham Harvey's Reader, which presented articles from widely differing perspectives, and was reviewed in an earlier issue of Network⁴. Ross Heaven's book might be useful as a handbook for those doing face to face training courses with him. However,

I am the wrong person to be positive about his strategy of distant learning shamanic practice, and my beliefs have coloured this review.



(1) Littlewood & Dein 2000
(2) Tobert 2000, MSc Thesis
(3) Tobert 2007, RERC paper
(4) Harvey 2003: Shamanism: a reader, (reviewed in 2005).

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exploration of relationship
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and mental health*.
Dissertation submitted for
MSc in Medical Anthropology,
Department of Human
Sciences, Brunel University

Multidimensional Consciousness

David Lorimer

LESS INCOMPLETE A GUIDE TO EXPERIENCING THE HUMAN CONDITION BEYOND THE PHYSICAL BODY Sandie Gustus

O Books, 2011, 321 pp., £15.99, p/b –
ISBN 978-1-84694-351-5

I first began researching out of body experiences over 30 years ago when writing my book *Survival*. Many first-hand accounts already existed, including from Robert Monroe and the correlated compilations assembled by Robert Crookall, who also formulated his own model of consciousness and subtle bodies. Then there was Susan Blackmore, who insisted that nothing actually left the body, upholding a materialistic explanation of consciousness. The most interesting OBEs are veridical, that is to say they correctly correspond to reports from other witnesses. Still more interesting are corresponding reciprocal cases of apparitions and OBEs. There are many accounts of veridical OBEs in the near



death experience literature - these pose a fundamental challenge to the Blackmore interpretation that nothing leaves the body.

This book is a popular account of the Brazilian consciousness researcher Dr Waldo Vieira, who has been researching the nature of consciousness for over 50 years. He has developed his own approach to what he calls conscientology, with its subdiscipline of projectiology dealing with OBEs. He has also developed his own terminology, which is explained in a glossary and used in this book. Like any new language, this is at first unfamiliar but does add precision to the field. Sandie Gustus makes it clear that the capacity to leave the physical body is a natural one that has been reported down the ages. Vieira's own research is very extensive, and he has a library of some 63,000 volumes, with nearly 2,000 references cited in his major 1,200-page work on projectiology. He has also documented over 1,100 of his own lucid projections.

Sandie's book is in four parts: an explanation of multi-dimensionality, the series of successive lives, the evolution of consciousness and technical guidance on the out of body experience. This makes its scope far wider than the OBE, since it elaborates the details of a new science of consciousness beyond our current materialistic understanding. This includes aspects of energy, healing, recollection of past lives, identification of purpose, maximising potential and becoming more responsible. Hence the title that the book to help us become less incomplete. Sandie's schematic explanations of the various bodies are consistent with other sources, although with new technical vocabulary such as 'extraphysical body.' Her understanding of what happens at death corresponds with accounts from Swedenborg onwards. Vieira coins a new term 'paratroposphere' for the zone in which most people find themselves after death - often without realising they are

dead. Lack of preparation for and understanding of death can mean that one's lucidity actually diminishes rather than expands at that point. The mental sphere is both formless and timeless, and was also described by Elleke van Kraalingen in her recent book *Love Beyond Death*.

Reincarnation or seriality is assumed in Vieira's scheme, and finds plenty of correspondences in the work of Ian Stevenson and clinical regression. Here other useful terms are introduced, such as holokarma including both individual and group aspects, and holomemory as a function of the parabrains and giving access to multi-existential existence. This also implies paragenetics as an additional factor to biological genetics - thus providing a framework for the transmission of birthmarks corresponding to experiences in a previous existence sometimes accessible through retrocognition.

The next section on the evolution of consciousness is an important one in its own right. I have come to think that the elaboration of one's mental body during physical existence is an essential task for maximising one's lucidity in the next phase of evolution. When we change the way we think, we also alter the nature of our energetic field and therefore our influence on others. There are separate chapters on the life plan and means of identifying one's purpose. Holomaturity is multidimensional and also implies the development of what is called cosmoethics applied not only to one's actions are also to one's thoughts and intentions that can exert subtle influences or create subtle connections. We need to apply what we know to our everyday lives, which in turn makes it more likely that we will complete our life plan.

The final part explains techniques for inducing an OBE as a means of verifying the ideas presented in the book. This includes an account of some of the benefits of OBEs, preparations, specific techniques and issues connected with recall. This is also interesting in relation to memories of NDEs, and Sandie explains some of the difficulties as being due to the fact that the physical brain is asleep and the consciousness is focused in the parabrains. The most important factor seems to be lucidity in the OBE state. This chapter also contains a glossary of altered states of consciousness. I found myself in broad agreement with the model presented in the book, including as it does a good and accessible account of exceptional human capacities, serial existence and the evolution of consciousness. For those who are open, it provides a non-materialist framework within which to address the major questions of human life.

Lessons for Life

David Lorimer

THE TOP FIVE REGRETS OF THE DYING

Bronnie Ware

Hay House, 2012, 244 pp., £10.99, p/b
– ISBN 978-1-84850-999-3

This book has its origins as a blog post, which reached 3 million readers worldwide in its first year. Being familiar with the after-effects of the near death experience, it is fascinating to see the same patterns emerging from the dying. I remember a heartrending episode from a lecture by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross when she recalled a person diagnosed with a terminal illness shortly after retirement. Her words were 'I made a good living, but I never really lived.' Hence the regret in the title. The author constructs the book out of her many experiences of caring for the dying. Although the circumstances are very different, the insights are similar, and we are introduced to a wide range of people with a variety of characters and backgrounds. Each assignment turns out to be a new classroom.

The five regrets of the title are: I wish I'd had the courage to live life true to myself, not the life others expected of me; I wish I hadn't worked so hard; I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings; I wish I'd stayed in touch with my friends; and I wish I'd let myself be happier. These of course are all questions that readers can immediately ask themselves and apply to their lives; and they are lessons best learned early rather than late in life, although better late than never. Schopenhauer remarked that we live our lives as if they are going on forever until we realise they aren't.

Ultimately, the book is about the real priorities and values in life. Living a life true to oneself takes real courage in the face of peer and family pressure.

This first regret is the most common one. Bronnie adds that what matters to people is 'how much happiness they have brought to those they love and how much time they spend doing things they themselves loved.' Facing death brings one to review the way one has lived one's life and re-examine one's priorities. Bronnie herself says that the most important lesson she learned was to have compassion for herself, which then enables one to have compassion for others; sometimes our lack of self-love and self-respect leads us to be very hard on ourselves, and consequently on others.

In terms of our purpose, it is important to appreciate life as a gift and an opportunity then work out what project we love doing, proceeding with 'focus, determination and faith.' It is easy to block the flow of life with fear. We all know how important friends are, but do we keep our friendships in constant repair, as Dr Johnson recommended? Our friends are those who know us and accept us as we are. We need to appreciate them and remind them of how important they are in our lives. Those who wish they had let themselves be happier often have an issue with self-respect, not feeling in some sense that they deserve to be happy. However, to a large extent, happiness is a choice we make in terms of our attitude.

Bronnie's own life story is interwoven into the book. There are many dramatic episodes, the most striking being a very deep healing. She is told that she must have an operation within a year, but feels that the intelligence in her body and cells knows how to bring about healing. She reminds us that our past is held in the body, and can be released. She describes how she was reading a book with a meditation about the role of cells in healing. She asks her cells to free her from her illness, and the next thing she knew was that she was running to the lavatory and projectile vomiting for such a long time that she felt she had nothing left inside. She then slept for 6

hours, and it was as if she was reborn. She recalls other low points, but is always able to pull through. One of her issues is a common one of not feeling able to receive as she spends her life giving to others. This too is a matter of feeling that we deserve it. In the end, the lessons from this book and studies of NDEs are the same: nothing is more important than the giving and receiving of love; and that we should live lives of passion, courage and integrity.

**ecology-futures studies****A Global Forecast**

David Lorimer

2052

Jorgen Randers

Green Books, 2012, 376 pp., £19.95,
p/b – ISBN 978-1-60358-4-210

This year marks 40 years since the publication of *The Limits to Growth*, of which Jorgen Randers was one of the original authors. This book is a report to the Club of Rome. Some readers will remember the storm it created at the time and how many people came to dismiss it as if it made specific predictions. In fact, it elaborated series of scenarios based on assumptions and worked out through computer programmes. The most important outcome was the analysis of ecological overshoot, which has in fact come about, and was the likely consequence of slow decision-making. Logically, in this overshoot situation, there are only two ways of reaching a sustainable trajectory: either collapse or a managed decline. This is an uncomfortable and yet increasingly pressing reality that we are reluctant to face as a society. Jorgen has been living with these issues for more than 40 years, worrying about them and gradually realising that changes can take a long time.

The irony of the situation is that we are faced with mainly solvable challenges, but our focus on short-term priorities makes us unlikely to rise to the occasion. In addition, Jorgen points out that 'it takes time to identify the problem, time to accept that it is real, time to solve it, and time to implement the new solution.' The scope of the book is very impressive. The author identifies five big issues towards 2052: the end of capitalism, the end of economic growth, the end of slow democracy, and the end of a stable climate. He then elaborates his global forecast in terms of population and consumption, energy and carbon dioxide, food and footprint, the nonmaterial future and the Zeitgeist in 2052. The third part analyses the drivers and sets out a more detailed forecast for the five regions of the United States, China, OECD, BRIC and the rest of the world. This gives more nuance to his forecast. In addition, there are a large number of individual viewpoints on specific issues contributed by experts in the field, which are then woven into the overall narrative. Finally, Jorgen offers twenty pieces of advice from his perspective, some to individuals, some to investors and some to politicians.

Any forecast has to deal with a complex feedback pattern of interacting issues, assumptions and variables. For instance, it is thought that rising CO₂ levels will result in a greater overall yield of food, but the places where various kinds of food are grown will change. The best champagne may in the future be made in England rather than France if the north of France becomes too hot. To what extent will GM technology actually increase food production? And if it does, what knock-on effects will there be on the environment, for example in terms of superweeds? Individual extreme weather events will become more common and can't be specifically predicted. In 2010, we experienced drought in Russia, but floods in Pakistan. This year, we have drought in the corn belt of the US and in China. This not only affects local yields, but results in higher prices, which in turn can lead to food riots as it is the poorer people who will have to spend the highest proportion of their income on food. So there are feedback loops between the ecological and social dimensions. In fact, Jorgen thinks that social crisis may occur before generalised ecological crises. I think his food forecasts are on the optimistic side, considering the potential impact of Indian and Chinese middle class moving up the food chain and therefore increasing the demand for grain fed meat. I also think that his forecasts for the availability of irrigation water are optimistic, especially when so much salination has already occurred.

His projections on population are on the low side, peaking at 8.1 billion in the early 2040s. He thinks that urbanisation and the changing role of women are the main drivers, and forecasts that 80% of the world population will be urban by 2050, up from just over 50% now. Up to 2 billion of these people will be living in slums, and will therefore be vulnerable to food shortage and disease. Moreover, driven in part by the Internet, even more of our entertainment will be virtual, in a process described as the externalisation of the mind. People are already online most of the time, a factor that will become even more widespread and is bound to have an effect on the sense of self, emotional make-up and even basic cognitive orientations.

Another trend referred to on a few pages is the emergence of global consciousness, but the implications of this are not fully explored, as in the Worldshift books also reviewed in this issue. This change of consciousness is already resulting in large-scale Internet campaigns, which are beginning to have an effect and probably only need to reach about 5% of the world population that constitutes the creative

minority of the emerging world view. The new generation has a different and more cooperative attitude, but they will face their own economic challenges as slower economic growth and longer working lives and will mean that fewer jobs are available. It is pretty shocking to learn that 30% of last year's Oxford graduates are still unemployed. We already know how serious the challenge of unskilled youth unemployment is. If we do not address this properly, we could be storing up a revolution.

Geography has a lot to do with the kind of future that we can expect. In Europe and the US, there is likely to be a good deal of economic stagnation, while in China and BRICs, the outlook is more dynamic. However, I think that Jorgen underestimates the enormity of the current financial crisis, which may fundamentally change our parameters. Even so, it is clear that we will face considerably more constraints in terms of resources, fossil fuel prices and consumption pressure than we have over the past 50 years. We will also have to invest a higher proportion of GDP on adaptation and emerging new costs such as substitutes for fossil fuels, replacing ecological services, repairing accumulated damage and rebuilding infrastructure destroyed by extreme weather events. Nor do we really know how unstable the climate is likely to become in the next 40 years – Jorgen forecasts a global temperature rise of more than 2° but does not think that the serious effects of this development will arrive before 2050. He thinks that we will have to learn to live with impending disaster without losing hope, encouraging us to hope and work for the unlikely, urging our politicians to take forward-looking policy decisions in spite of the inherent short-term perspective of our political and economic system.

Economic Futures

David Lorimer

THE END OF GROWTH ADAPTING TO OUR NEW ECONOMIC REALITY

Richard Heinberg

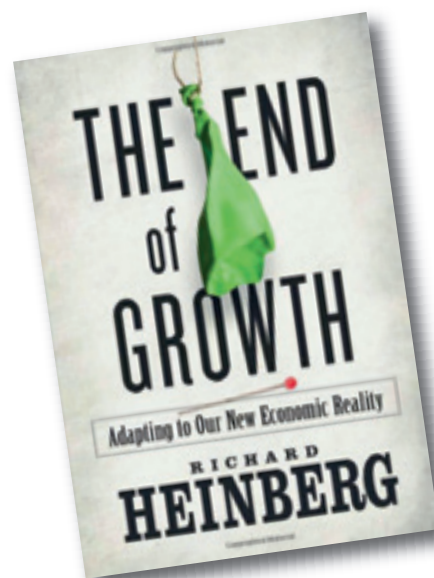
Clairview Books, 2011, 320 pp.,
£14.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-905570-33-1

ECONOMICS UNMASKED

Philip B. Smith and Manfred
Max-Neef

Green Books, 2011, 200 pp., £12.95,
p/b – ISBN 978-1-900322-70-6

It is becoming increasingly clear that our current economic system is not fit for purpose and will have to be fundamentally restructured within the next decade. The authors of these



books have thought long and hard about our economic predicament and the prospects for the immediate and long-term future. I have reviewed all Richard Heinberg's previous books, the last of which was *Peak Everything*; and the second book combines the insights of a physicist with a development economist. Heinberg's hypothesis is a very sobering one, implying that we will have to adapt to a new economic reality where economic growth worldwide can no longer be presumed. We hear a lot about the need to get back to growth and what we have come to regard as normal, but Heinberg helps define a New Normal. His starting point is that the crisis of 2007-2008 was both foreseeable and inevitable, and that it marks a permanent and fundamental break from past decades. This is due to the depletion of important natural resources, the proliferation of negative environmental impacts requiring mitigation and investment, and financial disruptions due to the inability of our existing financial systems to adjust to resource scarcity and sharply increasing environmental costs. The recent Deepwater Horizon catastrophe is a timely example in terms of expense and fallout. We also need to remember that 200,000 extra people are being added to the planet every day.

For decades, we have been able to ignore the underlying contradiction that we can have unending economic growth in a finite world. Already, as pointed out in my review of 2052, we are in ecological overshoot, a situation that cannot continue indefinitely in spite of substitutions and increased efficiency. Heinberg begins with a brief history of economics, which has consistently ignored the physical limits of Planet Earth – the very context in which economies operate and on which they depend. He provides an excellent account of the genesis of the Wall Street crisis in terms of the effects of deregulation, the housing bubble and the development of derivatives and

other sophisticated financial instruments in what he calls the shadow banking system. Terrifyingly, already in 2005 just 5 banks held 96% of the \$100 trillion of derivative contracts.

He also points out that in the US, aggregate debt has increased by more than GDP for every year since 1965. He provides a comprehensive analysis of the limits to various types of debt including government, household, corporate and financial sector debt. This brings us to the crux of the matter, namely that these levels of debt are so unprecedented that it is becoming harder for us to spend our way out of this situation, as we have tried to do since Keynes in the 1930s. Already, 20% of US federal revenues go towards interest payments and are on track to surpass even military expenditure. Heinberg also reminds us that no senior executive from any bank has yet been prosecuted for scams involving betting against securities that they themselves had designed and sold. We have already seen the bailouts and stimulus packages, and these have in fact redefined the role of the Federal Reserve. We have effectively transferred a massive amount of debt from the private to the public sector, which means that governments are now on the line, especially as they can no longer be guaranteed continuous growth of the tax base as in the past.

The next chapter considers reasons why overall growth is unlikely to return to previous levels, including issues connected with peak oil (and its cost), water, food, metals and other minerals including phosphate. Then one needs to add the effects of climate change, pollution, environmental decline and natural disasters. Heinberg doubts that substitution and efficiency can keep us growing, and warns that China may also be experiencing a real estate bubble. In addition, there will be further pressure from population, and rising tensions between the old and the young. So we have to ask ourselves how we redefine progress and well-being, and how we can formulate a post growth financial system. His default scenario is all too likely, and may lead to widespread social unrest. None of the ways in which a debt crisis can be resolved are comfortable, and governments are currently addressing these issues in a piecemeal and *ad hoc* fashion.

This leads on to four fundamental principles for any new economics. Current growth in population and consumption rates cannot be sustained, renewable resources must be consumed at a lower rate than natural replenishment, nonrenewable resources must be consumed at declining rates, and waste must be minimised. Then efficiency must be

balanced with resilience. Our problems are in fact resolvable in principle, but that does not make it easy. Here we have an 'if' and a 'but' clause: the first is if we are willing to change our way of life and fundamental structures of society, and the second, 'but our society as a whole is not inclined to do what is required to solve them, even if the consequences of failing to do so are utterly apocalyptic.' This means that it is likely that policymakers will do the right thing 'only after all other alternatives have been exhausted.' The sustainability revolution has to occur, but it is likely to be driven by crisis rather than foresight.

This is where the other book comes in. It is subtitled 'from power and greed to compassion and the common good', and seeks to provide a blueprint for a humane economics in the 21st-century. It is a visionary book that traces the history of economics and how our current situation has evolved. As one would expect, the authors are very critical of the downside of economic growth in terms of pollution, exhaustion of resources and growing inequality between rich and poor. They also describe the disastrous results of structural adjustment programmes on Costa Rica, which began with debt accumulated from large projects carried out by US companies. Both books mention in their analysis the importance of the development model of Amartya Sen, with his emphasis on the importance of growing freedom. In a chapter on compassion, they draw on the relatively unknown work of De Sismondi who was very critical of the work of Ricardo.

Like Heinberg, they argue that the world is on a collision course due to the converging crises of human-induced climate change, the end of cheap energy, extensive depletion of key resources and the gigantic speculation bubble, which is 50 times larger than the real economy. They then analyse the root causes of this convergence, and outline a number of myths that sustain the dominant model, including the assertions that globalisation is the only effective way of development, that greater integration into the world economy is good for the poor, that comparative advantage is the most efficient way to ensure a prosperous world, that globalisation means more jobs, and finally that the World Trade Organisation is democratic and accountable. A humane economics is based on a number of postulates, among which are that the economy should serve the people and development is about people, that growth is not the same as development, which does not necessarily require growth, that no economy is possible in the absence of ecosystem services and that economic

interest cannot be placed above reverence for life. Both of these books are sombre analyses in their view of the future of politics and economics, but it is very clear that there is an urgent need for new thinking and for these questions to be debated at the highest level. The one development that could radically change things, as indicated by the Thrive Movement, is new and accessible sources of energy, but this research has long been suppressed by existing interests. The central issues will not simply go away, and need to be addressed. Muddling through may be the most likely path, but that does not make it the most desirable one.

WORLDSHIFT

David Lorimer

THE SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY READER

Ervin Laszlo (SMN) and Kingsley Dennis (eds)

Inner Traditions, 2012, 179 pp., £12.99, p/b - ISBN 978-1-159477476-8

New Consciousness for a New World

Kingsley Dennis

Inner Traditions, 2012, 227 pp., £14.99, p/b - ISBN 978-1-159477412-6

THE SONG OF THE EARTH

Maddy Harland and William Keepin (eds)

Permanent Publications, 2012, 254 pp., £14.95, p/b - ISBN 978-1-856623-095-7

These books reflect a central Network theme of the need for a new consciousness corresponding to a new world and new institutions. This also implies a new and expanded relationship between science and spirituality, a transcendence of both materialism and nationalism, and recognition not only of the interconnectedness of life and consciousness but also of the interdependence of human communities. Much of this will be familiar to the reader and has been elaborated in previous books by the authors and editors.

Worldshift International (www.worldshiftinternational.org) is a global consciousness evolution initiative to promote, support and engage with the concept of a world-shift within our current global systems including an inner world-shift in thinking at a personal level and an evolutionary shift in human

consciousness as a whole. The aim is to encourage new systems that will allow us to live in creative harmony and balance with ourselves, others and with Nature. The necessary ideas already exist and are extensively discussed in these volumes, but there is as yet insufficient pressure for change, even if the process has already been initiated. We can readily see that the relationship between the system of Nature and the system of human community needs radical readjustment, and that it is the human system that must change. Otherwise the change will be initiated by Nature and we will be disruptively forced into a new arrangement. Certain deep-seated assumptions will need to be ditched, such as that Nature is inexhaustible, that the biosphere is a mechanism, that life is a struggle where the fittest survive, and that the market effectively distributes benefits. These assumptions have led to unsustainable conditions in society, the economy and the biosphere.

The three books reviewed here provide ample material for getting to grips with the central issues, even with no previous reading. The Reader features very short essays by leading thinkers on science and spirituality, the nature of mind and consciousness, and spirituality as a basis for the coming Worldshift. Most of the luminaries in the field are included, such as Deepak Chopra, Stan Grof, Jean Houston, Larry Dossey, Peter Russell, Marilyn Schlitz, Bruce Lipton, Joanna Macy and many others besides. This means that readers are introduced to many key ideas in summary, with suggestions for practice and transformation of one's habits of perception. Each of the six sections is introduced, so readers have a clear idea of what is coming.

Kingsley Dennis is a new name to me, and he has written an excellent and comprehensive account ranging across science, spirituality, economics, society, ecology and politics. These systems are all related in what he calls a mutual intercausality of complex feedbacks and are brought to bear on our time of crisis and transition. Then there is a telling story at the end of each chapter. Even though we are experiencing converging crises, the overall message of the book is the possibility of positive transformation entailing preparation, adaptation and resilience. One area of disruption highlighted is the potential effect of magnetic disruptions from solar storms. The largest of these occurred in 1859 and is known as the Carrington Event, which even then cause the failure of telegraph systems throughout Europe and North America. A similar storm in 1989 melted the transformers in Quebec, and it may well be the case that the recent blackouts in India were caused by the same phenomenon. Any

such event could lead to widespread social disruption and potentially extreme reactions from the authorities in terms of what he calls the fortress mentality of lockdown, or even digital draconianism with even more extensive systems of control and surveillance.

Against all this, we must remember that the human imagination is a primary force, and that it can be used both positively and negatively. What we need now is a reinvigoration of positive vision and the belief that the world can be transformed for the better through connection, communication and consciousness. In this respect, Kingsley recommends improving the meme pool by expanding our scope of information, revising our reality maps and enhancing our external networks - this will help drive perceptual evolution leading to greater awareness and a parallel increase in responsibility. We are an unfinished and immature species still in process of becoming and it looks likely that we are entering a more intense force-field that will step up the pressure for change.

The Song of the Earth comes out of the permaculture and eco-village movements. It discusses the holistic worldview, the awakening and transformation of consciousness, reconnecting with Nature, health and healing, and socially engaged spirituality. It claims, correctly in my view, that people all over the globe are yearning for a new human civilisation of harmony and cooperation between people and living in balance with the Earth. This corresponds to the vision of deep ecology and the knowledge that we are all One Life and One Mind. To pick just two of the contributions: Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee writes eloquently about spiritual responsibility in a time of global crisis, reminding readers that we are responsible for awakening our energy centres and for our own evolution, both individual and collective. He sees us as slaves of the One, and servants of the many. Ross Jackson, well-known for his role in the Occupy Movement, provides a foretaste of what a Gaian Society might look like in 100 years. This will include new institutions corresponding to the integrated Gaian scientific paradigm such as the Gaian League replacing the United Nations (created on a premise of inter-nationalism), a Gaian Trade Organisation based on a set of principles consistent with a sustainable civilisation and a Gaian Council consisting of a few highly respected individuals elected from the major regions and with a mandate to act in the interests of the entire global community. Only those who have already demonstrated dedication to higher goals would be eligible for election. If one asks how this might come about, then Jackson suggests an

initial breakaway strategy to create a new joint initiative. Together, these books not only give us an overall account of the drivers of our converging crises, but also indicate many ways forward as we gradually forge a new and sustainable culture of harmony and balance. They play a vital role in raising awareness as a part of the necessary shift towards a global and universal outlook that also respects the diversity of local cultures.

The Battle over Food

David Lorimer

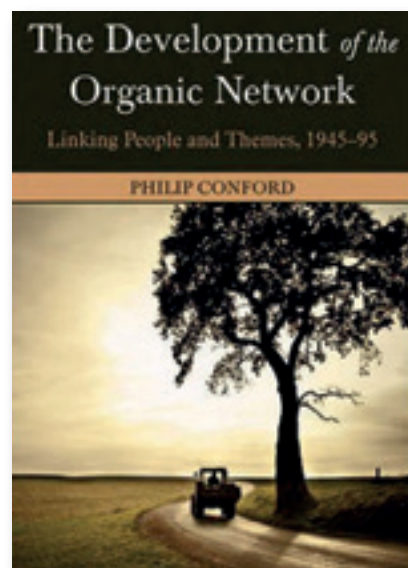
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANIC NETWORK

Philip Conford

Floris Books, 2011, 477 pp., £25, p/b - ISBN 978-086315-803-2

This is the magisterial sequel to the author's earlier book, *The Origins of the Organic Movement*. It contains an unprecedented range of information about the development of the organic network, linking people with themes between 1945 and 1995. The nine chapters cover farming, gardening, health and nutrition, commerce, ecology, science, politics and the relationship between Earth and spirit. The book also contains an appendix of leading figures in the organic movement, and another one of groups, journals and institutions - it will be useful to have some contact details here of those wanting to follow up references.

The roots of the movement go back a long way, but a new phase of development opened up after 1945. The context was post-war, but also the growing emphasis on agricultural efficiency and therefore on industrial methods of production, which had already been criticised by pioneers like Sir Albert Howard. Closely allied to this



method of agriculture was the development of industrial food processes, both adding to and subtracting from Nature, and increasingly open to corporate manipulation. The next two chapters are devoted to explaining the organic alternative in terms of both farming and gardening. Here we are introduced to many well-known people, organisations and publications, but also to others no less admirable but much less well-known. As I have also argued, there is close connection between organic agriculture and natural health. The Peckham experiment in community health was a tragic lost opportunity, and it was interesting to learn that Queen Mary visited the Centre in 1948, just as the NHS was being established. One can see the effect of medical ideology and the reaction of authorities saying that it extended into a region beyond the ambit of modern medicine and hygiene and was therefore not eligible for support. Hence the path towards a National Disease Service rather than a National Health Service. Eventually, this may become so expensive that these early efforts will be revisited.

Conford shows how many conflicts arose within the movement in connection with commerce, vegetarianism and politics. Some of these issues arise as fringe ideas then move into the mainstream and purists reject any form of compromise. Other developments evolve socially, such as farmers' markets and box schemes - in this context, it is curious that there is no mention of the huge number of new farm shops. There is comprehensive coverage of the role of environmental publications and their relationship to each other - for instance, *The Ecologist* and *Resurgence*. The chapter on science begins with a scathing and hilarious account of Dick Taverne's criticisms of the organic movement: they are mainly rhetorical and a long way from being evidenced-based assertions, as he claimed. Examples of scientific work are given later in the chapter. The section on politics makes very interesting reading as one comes to appreciate the range of political opinions. These have evolved substantially from conservative and aristocratic origins, but the organic movement has never committed itself to a single political party. What has become more significant is involvement in policy-making, especially by the Soil Association.

The final chapter is devoted to discussion of spirituality, where the author makes the point that many of the significant figures like Fritz Schumacher had a Christian background. A wide range of spirituality is surveyed, including the more mystical views of Findhorn and Sir

George Trevelyan, *The Way of Edward Goldsmith*, and the esoteric Christianity of Rudolf Steiner. Conford identifies the two bedrock concepts as limits and wholeness, which I would add a systems view. He ends with a discussion of the significance of husbandry as an overall framework, seeing it as implying ideas of 'craftsmanship, reverence, responsibility, beauty, stability and fruitfulness.' This means working in harmony with the natural cycles and also husbanding resources. All this very much reflects the philosophy and practice of the Prince of Wales, who is only mentioned in passing on a few pages. Perhaps the clue to this can be found in his appendix entry, where Conford remarks that his involvement has tended to give the impression of organic approaches being elitist. This is an argument often responded to, and it is true that the Prince is only one of many important figures described in this book. Encyclopaedic in its scope, this book will surely remain a reference for many years to come.

general

Being Different, Being One

Shakti Maira

BEING DIFFERENT - AN INDIAN CHALLENGE TO WESTERN UNIVERSALISM

Rajiv Malhotra

HarperCollins India, 2011, 488 pp., Rs599, h/b, ISBN: 978-93-5029-190-0

Being Different is a passionate and deeply intellectual book with many sharply delineated insights into the differences between what the author defines as the 'Judeo-Christian West', and the dharma of India. It is a timely book as globalisation, underpinned largely on "Western" ideas and imperatives, seems to be in trouble. There is a need for different ideas based perhaps on an alternative understanding that simultaneously encourages and strengthens diversities, and unites us all in a robust universalism.

A central premise of this book is that Indian philosophy and culture has much to offer, if they are properly understood. So far, much of what the dominant West knows about India has been through a "Western" gaze, and through a "digestion". According to Malhotra, both these processes have been patronising, acquisitive and distorting.

He wishes for a reversal of this gaze, so that the differences are seen with clarity and there is some introspection about the limitations of the Western model. He argues with passion and provides many examples and anecdotes to illustrate the differences between the two worldviews. He wants the exchange between cultures and religions to be based on respect, and not merely on tolerance. He would like a rebalancing as well as a search for a deeper "integral unity", instead of the "synthetic" variety he thinks has been operative for the last 500 years or so.

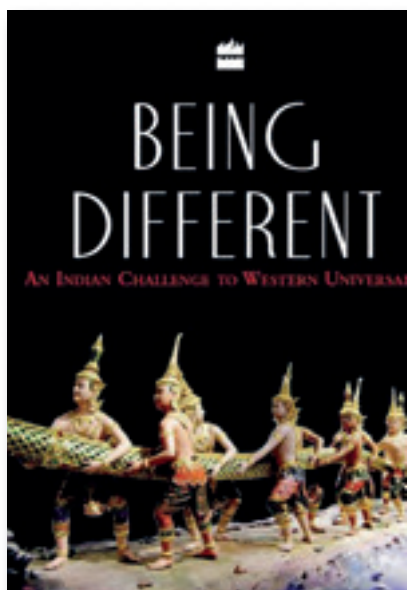
Many of us are dismayed with dominant socio-economic paradigms that diminish diversity and aggressively impose monopolistic practices, whether in religion or ideologies, or in culture, business, farming practices, through brands and patenting of natural materials, and so on. We don't see the value in increasing spirals of missionary zeal - Christian or Islamic, Communist or Capitalist, MacDonald's or Levis, and we wish for alternatives to this global capital serving, global environment killing, consume-and-waste universalism, which is a kind of monoculturism that is flattening the earth.

We also don't want to confuse 'sameness' with 'togetherness', or 'sameness' with 'allness'.

This book offers a critical examination of the deeper structural problems that exist in this closed history-centric Western model that has been aggressively exported and imposed around the world. For instance, take the idea that every person is blighted at birth by original sin and the only agency that can solve this universal problem is an externality. The alternative would be one where we took responsibility for our actions and intentions, which is what the Indian model of karma offers.

This book tells us a great deal about the Indic traditions, and suggests that the dharmic model might be more sensible, sustainable, and even more progressive as it is intrinsically based on an open architecture, has built-in wiring for diversity, in which mutuality, interdependence, and ahimsa or 'non-harming' are foundational.

Malhotra claims that many Sanskrit key word-ideas cannot be easily translated. It is true that Sanskrit words have often been wrongly force-fitted, as in soul for *atman*, religion and law for dharma, and God for Brahman. There might not be a one-word translation, and we may need several words to get across the meaning of some key Sanskrit terms. This should not deter an exchange of ideas, and the author does just this. With keen analytical skills, he delivers some of the sharpest clarity I have seen on several Indian/Sanskrit word-concepts.



To give you a taste for this writing, in explaining that Karma is not the same as the Western notion of suffering, he says:

"It is because human suffering is ubiquitous that every major worldview has a theory of suffering that offers an explanation and solutions. Christianity and Judaism rely heavily on the concept of original sin. This fundamental flaw in all human beings condemns them to a life of suffering on earth. Suffering arises therefore from sin, not ignorance. All humans share this original sin as a consequence of the actions of Adam and Eve, who unable to resist temptation, partook of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden. As a result of this transgression, they and all their progeny (that is to say, all humans) are afflicted by original sin... The remedy is to be saved by an act of forgiveness by God."

For Christians and Jews, the original sin was the attempt to be 'like gods' (i.e., all-knowing). Hence, Christianity and Judaism have always held the quintessential Hindi idea of humanities inner divinity to be an abomination and a sign of moral turpitude."

This book is a good place to get a refresher on the interlinked dharmic concepts of *atman* (individualised self), karma, reincarnation, *dukkha* (suffering, unhappiness) and *moksha* or *nirvana*.

Atman is not a fixed, eternal entity, but an individuation of the unitary, and it remains part of the allness that is Brahman. Karma shapes this individuation. Past karma conditions the individual present and present karma conditions or reincarnates in future. Each of us comes because of certain causes, so there is some pre-destiny, but it is not a closed system. For, we determine our future by

creating karma through our actions and intentions. There is no fixed soul that needs to be "saved". The central problem is not sin but ignorance. The task, then, is not to seek divine intervention, but to figure out how to grow out of and become free of ignorance, which can be done by embracing a unitive wisdom, by becoming or realizing that unity of which we also are.

This book written by someone who is simultaneously located in the West and in India. Malhotra is able to see the West as an Outsider-Insider, and India as an Insider-Outsider. He is able to see the huge problems that have occurred from the domination of binary Aristotelian logic – of the excluded middle; the further impress of Descartes' mind-body dualism, as well as the so-called 'enlightened' split between religion and knowledge. Yet this book weakens due to the very thing that gives it strength – it is written by an Indian who has lived in the West for a long time, and thus his view of India has some hints of rose-tinting.

In fairness, I should disclose that I too spent 22 years in America, and have an understanding and sympathy for Malhotra's views about the West. To be a modern straddler, as he is, is useful. But having moved back to India 12 years ago, I'm not convinced that India has much to offer. India's job is not to change the West, I now feel, but to change itself.

Being Different is primarily a book of concepts, ideas and philosophies, and we should not imagine that there is a robust practice of the dharmic model in India. There has occurred a real gap in the understanding and practice of dharma in contemporary India and I'm not convinced that this is entirely a result of the dislocations of European colonization or Muslim conquests. For example Gandhi, a modern dharma practitioner, has been forgotten in a free India, and the culprit is not Nehruvian socialism alone.

I happen to live opposite a temple, and the practice of Hinduism that I see hardly lives up to its profound spiritual philosophy. I suspect that the majority of people pray for the usual things – protection, money, a boy-child, good marks in exams, a good husband for daughters. I doubt there is much merger into a unitive non-dual consciousness happening in this temple. I think Gandhi would say about India's dharmic civilisation today, as he once famously said about British civilisation, "It would be a very good idea!"

Having finished reading this well-researched book, I felt we still have a lot to learn about what keeps nature, life, and all us together in this amazing creative diversity. What principles, qualities and values keep this massive

relational and interconnected system going, humming and singing? I wonder, too, about the dynamic qualities of balance, harmony, proportion, rhythm and context – relational qualities that were once seen as the basis of beauty in India and by the Grecian West.

Would this book have been even more persuasive if rather than asserting difference, it was tilted differently and was titled, 'Being different, Being One'?

This book is a significant and unusual intellectual effort that offers paradigmatic ideas for anyone engaged in rethinking, and re-imagining, the relationships between humans and life that might make the world saner and more sustainable.

Shakti Maira is an artist, thinker and author of '*Towards Ananda: Rethinking Indian Art and Aesthetics*'. Recently, he co-organized an international seminar in Delhi, '*The End of Art and the Promise of Beauty*'. His website is www.shaktimaira.com.

Evolving Values

David Lorimer

THE NEW LEADERSHIP PARADIGM

Richard Barrett

Self-published, 2010, 508 pp., no price given, p/b – ISBN 978-1 4457-1672-5. See www.valuescentre.org

This ground-breaking book develops a framework for the evolution of consciousness, values and leadership, partly based on the hierarchy of needs from Abraham Maslow. There are also interesting parallels with Laurence Kohlberg's stages of moral development and James Fowler's stages of faith, both of which move from personal towards the universal. Barrett sets out the fundamentals of his system and then applies these to leading self, others, organisations and society. It is becoming increasingly apparent that ethically-based companies are experiencing greater financial returns as well as providing a more fulfilling life for their employees. This entails a shift from an I to a We perspective and the development of adaptability and resilience. Barrett's analysis is based on three universal stages of evolution whereby individuals become viable and independent entities, individual entities formed to form group structures that are also viable and independent, and finally group structures cooperate to become higher order entities.

There is a general move from dependence to independence to interdependence; and from personal

mastery to individuation to self-actualisation. This entails adaptability, continuous learning, the ability to bond and cooperate, and the ability to handle complexity. Concurrently, there is an evolution towards full spectrum consciousness involving seven levels, which Barrett applies in a number of contexts throughout the book. These levels are survival, relationships, self-esteem, transformation, internal cohesion, making a difference and service. Throughout the book, these are explained first in tables and then in more detailed analysis in terms of identity, motivation and enabling strategies.

A key theme in organisational leadership is the development and maintenance of trust, which Barrett sees as based on the twin pillars of character and competence. The components of character are listed as caring, transparency, openness, honesty, fairness and authenticity, while competence entails skills, knowledge, experience, reputation, credibility and performance. Trust builds internal cohesion and connectedness, corresponding with the fifth level of personal consciousness, and, for those who understand this language, the alignment of the ego with the soul.

In personal terms, we move towards freedom by going beyond the socialised or dependent mind to the self-authoring or independent mind towards the goal of a self-transforming mind where we can detach ourselves from outcomes. Interestingly, 58% of college graduates are still at the first stage, while only 6% reach the self-transformative. The book shows how the evolution of consciousness, values and leadership capacity are so closely correlated as to be inseparable. There is a very useful analysis of the information gathering and decision-making process both in terms of meaning and the criteria used in the decision. A great deal depends on whether we are primarily located in the reaction of instincts and subconscious beliefs, the response of conscious beliefs and values or the reflection of inspiration and intuition. This will correspond to the prevalence of deficiency or growth needs at individual stages.

The detailed chapters of the book apply the model to self, others, organisations and society, gradually building up from the individual to the widest social vision. It is important to learn how to master our conscious and subconscious fears through a process of identification and release involving the three levels of the body-mind, ego-mind and soul-mind. This leads to greater internal cohesion and the basis for making values-based decisions, and it is a great help to gain a clearer idea

of the characteristics of self-actualised individuals in terms of their flexibility, focus and capacity for empathy and compassion. All this is important for cooperation within organisations. At the end of this chapter, there is a very helpful outline of a leadership journal in terms of your story, potential, challenges, personal mastery, evolution and self-coaching. This framework is also provided for organisations.

At the level of society, there are also some searching questions to be asked of any potential leaders in terms of the courage to be different, nurturing your followers, being a global citizen and self-actualised individual operating with a self-transforming mind. In other words, this presupposes the successful completion of earlier stages. Barrett applies his model to the stages of national consciousness, which exhibits some interesting parallels with Spiral Dynamics. We are in the process of evolving towards a global and interconnected consciousness beyond the interests of individual nations. Barrett provides some interesting data on plus and minus values exhibited in individual countries, and indeed in the differences between Democrats and Republicans in the United States. Interestingly, both parties emphasised the importance of accountability. It is clear that the major challenges facing the world can only be resolved through consent and cooperation and a move from belief-based decision-making to values-based decision-making. This masterly book will be of enormous interest to any reader in a leadership position since it helps to clarify the relationship between the development of consciousness, values and leadership capacity in a clearer analysis than any I have seen before. It also becomes apparent that individual evolution is a vital basis for collective progress.

guidance of the soul in life, and seeks to define the path towards unfolding our potential for greatness and becoming a successful visionary - one who makes their vision manifest in the world. This also means giving priority to being over doing, and tuning in to our core values and purpose. Deepak give readers an opportunity to create their own soul profile, personal vision and mission statement around these issues. It is important to be precise, as he points out, since 'a focused purpose awakens the unseen powers of the soul.'

This leads on in the initial chapter to specifying the needs of the group in terms of security, achievement, cooperation, nurturing and belonging, creativity, progress, moral values and spiritual fulfilment. In each case, the leader's potential response is outlined. Emotional bonding requires the capacity for empathy and the development of emotional and spiritual intelligence including shared enthusiasm, caring, reinforcing the strength of others and increasing their self-esteem. Leaders need to be able to deal with their own emotions as well as those of other people. The awareness of a leader affects everyone around them in terms of their level of consciousness, especially being centred, coherent and inspiring, tuning in to intuitive insights. The author provides useful exercises along the way and a good deal of helpful guidance.

Leaders walk the talk, hence the importance of dynamic and persistent action. They play a variety of roles including protector, achiever, team builder, nurturer, innovator, transformer and even sage. Deepak shows how the greatest leaders fulfil all seven roles. This is not a matter of struggle, but rather of allowing life to unfold in the direction of creative growth. At the end of this chapter there is a checklist for right decision-making.

Unfolding Greatness

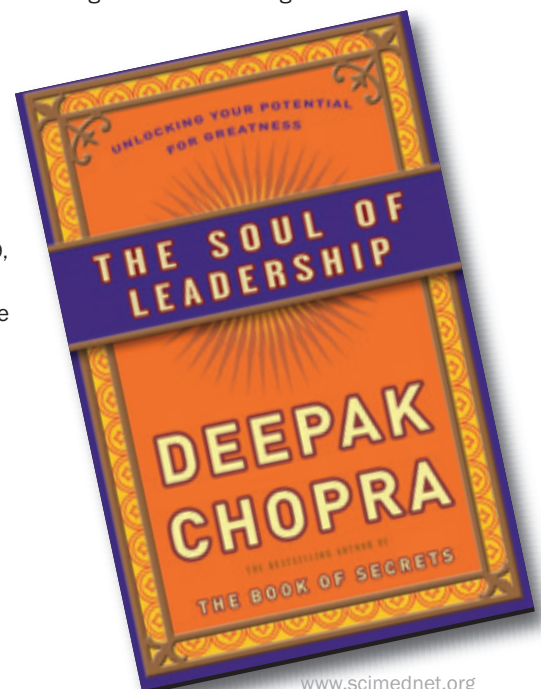
David Lorimer

THE SOUL OF LEADERSHIP

Deepak Chopra

Harmony Books, 2010, 220 pp., \$19.99, h/b - ISBN 978-0-307-40806-8

This book has a very different structure from that of Richard Barrett, and is inspired by a course that the author teaches at an American business school. The principles in it can be applied to leadership in any area. The plan of the book is based on the acronym LEADERS, standing for look and listen, emotional bonding, awareness, doing, empowerment, responsibility and synchronicity. It presupposes the existence and



Next is empowerment, and we all know the dangers of power in terms of accumulation and corruption leading to a fall. Here Deepak also explains the shadow side of leadership roles with great psychological insight. The idea here is to become aware of and acknowledge negative feelings, taking responsibility for them and not projecting them on others.

Responsibility is also a key component and includes being responsible for one's thinking, feelings, how one perceives the world, one's role in society, one's speech and one's body. Finally, there is an unexpected chapter on synchronicity, remarking that successful visionaries expect miracles because they trust in constant support from the soul. Nothing is impossible when we realise that God is the infinite power that organises creation and that we are all fundamentally connected in One Mind. The process begins with regarding synchronicity as normal and intelligence as existing everywhere. We look for hidden messages and go where we are guided. As examples, Deepak takes Jeremy Moon and Renata Black, telling the story of their own business development, which they then apply to the model presented in the book. This is very helpful in consolidating the principles described, which will be invaluable to anyone seeking to deepen their leadership capacity.

Driving Desires

David Lorimer

WHAT MAKES US TICK?

Hugh Mackay

Hachette, 2011, 318 pp., A\$35, p/b - ISBN 978-0-7336-2507-7



Hugh Mackay is Australia's leading social researcher, and I met him through a mutual friend in Sydney last February, where he kindly purchased a copy of this wise and deeply humane book

for me to review. Subtitled 'the ten desires that drive us', the book examines the upside and downside of these forces. It is important to be aware that these desires can bring out both the best and the worst in us, and are not inherently good or bad in themselves. We frequently say one thing and do another, and even do the

very things we criticise other people for doing. In other words, we are inconsistent and not always rational, even if we pretend to have rational explanations for everything we do.

The ten desires are the desire to be taken seriously, the desire for 'my place', the desire for something to believe in, the desire to connect, the desire to be useful, the desire to belong, the desire for more, the desire for control, the desire for something to happen, and the desire for love. Each of these is discussed in some detail with illustrations from a wide range of situations. Readers can see that the desire for belonging, belief and connection is very important, but equally we want to be taken seriously as individuals. In my values work, I refer to this as the desire to fit in and to stand out. This is a fine balance. In terms of place, a home is a place of connection, and communities need centres, which is why some housing developments can be socially disastrous in creating a sense of isolation and disconnectedness.

Believing in the same ideas also gives us a sense of connection, but equally it defines us over and against those who disagree. We all crave certainty, and seek to reinforce our existing beliefs. Sceptics and believers can be the same people in different contexts. Mackay sounds a warning note when he refers to what he called the leader virus resulting from this same lure of certainty. He regards it as a misplaced desire to need to believe in a leader, while forgetting that leaders are human, potentially flawed and corruptible. Putting people on a pedestal invites them to be shot at, and we are inclined to go from one extreme to the other.

Mackay sees the need to connect as more than social; we also need to connect with ourselves and with the natural world. We satisfy our need to connect socially in both a herd and tribal fashion, applying this not only to religion and sport, but also to the brands we support. Jack Wills did their main initial advertising by giving away clothes to the coolest people on the campus. A lot of connection now happens through social networks, but Mackay cites a fascinating case where a person removed her Facebook profile on the grounds that she wanted to connect physically with her friends, but she then found that these friends were too busy to meet regularly face-to-face. The desire for more drives consumerism, but Mackay also applies this to more violence, war, and even more life in terms of an extension in the hospital. He sees only to control and is based on anxiety, and, like perfection, considers it to be the wrong goal. We only obtain an illusion of control through increased surveillance

and regulation. We should rather apply this more to ourselves and hope to control other people, shifting our focus towards participation and engagement.

One of the most interesting chapters is on the desire for something to happen. Mackay sees this as a 'tension between our intellectual need for surprise and uncertainty and our emotional need for security and stability.' Paradoxically, we want to be left in our comfort zones and yet we thrive on the excitement of being taken out of them. This tendency can even lead us to want contradictory things at the same time: excitement as well as peace of mind, stimulation as well as silence. A lot of stimulation is now found on the Internet, where there is always something happening. However, this can lead to distraction and short attention spans. Mackay leaves love, the deepest of our desires, to the last chapter, and he examines it from various angles. This brings us back to his explanation of the Greek word *eudaemonia*, which represents a rounded life including virtue, a sense of purpose, being engaged with the world and having an experience of love and friendship. This is the kind of fulfilment that we can both seek and contribute.

Not only in America

Gunnel Minett

INSENSED (THE NOVEL)

Cary Jane Sparks,

Strange Boar Publishing, California, 2011 www.strangeboarpublishing.com, 410 pp., \$15, p/b - ISBN 9-780983761204,

This is a novel; a pleasant read and the characters are fictional, but it is as educational and eye-opening as any non-fiction book.

The plot is set in the 'New Age belt' in California and the first reaction is that this could only happen in America. But reading on it becomes painfully obvious that this is not the case. If nothing else Californian New Age teachers have managed to export their worldviews very successfully to the rest of the world. In the book we meet a number of very 'serious' seekers, looking for a more spiritual life than is on offer in the everyday western world.

There's a couple trying to open the ultimately green restaurant, where everything not only has to be sourced locally and grown in the greenest possible way, but, they also hire Tibetan monks to bless, food, buildings and staff and make sure everything has the 'right positive vibrations'. There are also obsessive, career-driven people who want to be so perfect they have to devote their whole life to

courses, meditation, finding the right 'spiritually enhancing' products to improve their everyday environment etc. There's the 'spiritually advanced' teacher, who channels her teaching and consequently nothing that she says or does can be questioned. And there are the followers, prepared to believe everything they are told by these advanced beings, and willing to live their lives totally controlled by someone else.

Although the author assures us at the end of the book that none of the characters have any resemblance to real people, it's rather alarming to realise how many real people these characters could actually be based on. And although 'The New Age' has been through many phases since it first emerged, it seems that it is only the content of what is taught that keeps changing (probably to attract new seekers) rather than the way it's taught. The overall message is still generally based on misunderstandings of ancient teachings. And these misunderstandings conveniently offer 'solutions' to people who have lost a sense of purpose in life in a desperate pursuit of instant, personal gratification, thereby creating a very lucrative market for books, courses and a huge offering of 'spiritual' paraphernalia.

As the book also illustrates, there's still a firm belief in a 'spiritual hierarchy' amongst most New-Age people, making some people more 'advanced' than others. This unfortunately means that, regardless of whether the message makes any sense, it must not be questioned. Instead of allowing questioning and criticism from New-Age seekers the common reaction from their 'teachers' is to encourage their disciples to attend more courses and buy more (often expensive) 'spiritual aids'. These will make them see how wrong they are to question the teacher/guru. Questioning and criticism is simply regarded as an expression of negativity that the true seeker needs to work hard to 'free' themselves from.

Certainly, it can be unproductive to focus on negativity, but this doesn't automatically lead to the conclusion that criticising your guru is negative.

Truly spiritually advanced people have no problem accepting this. This also applies to the other side of the New-Age coin, that everyone should be praised all the time, regardless of what they say or do and regards of what the situation is. On the contrary, without questioning growth can be severely restricted, which is something the author shows in the best possible way, using humour and mild satire.

For this reason alone, the book is a very positive and refreshing addition to New-Age literature and should be on

the recommended reading list for all trainings and courses. And for anyone not interested in a direct pursuit of a spiritual path, it is still an entertaining novel. A word of warning though, for those of us who may have been down this route once; It may bring up unwanted memories of times past when we were struggling with our own common sense in our attempts to take onboard some new bizarre 'truth' that would help us advanced on the so precious route to 'enlightenment'.

Beliefs in Changing Times

Lawrence LeShan

PRELUDE IN BLACK AND GREEN

Ada Nicolescu

Trafford Publishing, 2009, 368 pp., \$25, p/b - ISBN 978-1425189310

This is - on its lucid and engaging surface - a novel about a family living comfortably and warmly in pre-World War II. They have a maid, a nanny and a chauffeur, go to the mountains or the seashore in the summer, take trips abroad and - without being particularly rigid about it - in general follow a traditional lifestyle and have every expectation of it continuing indefinitely. Their perception of the world survived World War I which raged around them and they do not expect the basic aspects of the physical and social environment essentially to change very much.

However the time happens to be the mid-1930s, the place happens to be a major city in middle Europe and the family happens to be Jewish. And the strains of the Horst Wessel song, the Nazi anthem, are ringing ever louder in the streets.

"The Brothers Karamazov" is a novel about a Russian family in roughly the same socio-economic class, but no one would say it is about the trials and tribulations of the brothers. As we turn the pages we find ourselves in the midst of a titanic clash of ideas (seen through the occasions and conversations of everyday life) about good and evil and the nature of the world, particularly as expressed by Ivan and Alyosha.

Nor would we say that "Don Quixote" is about (in Chesterton's words):
 "...a dusty road in Spain
 Up which a lean and foolish knight
 Forever rides in vain."

It is about how we hold onto and exaggerate outmoded ideas and distort perceptions in terms of them. We charge against windmills and are unable to see the implications of the changes going on around us.

Karamazov, Quixote, Anne Frank and "Prelude in Black and Green" all deal with one of the great problems of the human condition. How do we retain and live by our deeper beliefs and convictions and still deal effectively with changing times and normal situations? Our deeper beliefs give us strength and resilience and the ability to express the basic human needs to love and allow ourselves to be loved. (And who can doubt that, known as they are after all these years, Anne, Alyosha and the man of La Mancha all have triumphed? For example, after reading Cervantes' book most of us, when we look around us, are more likely to see the Lady Dulcinea in the whore Aldondo than the other way around. And that is the victory of The Knight of the Dolorous Countenance.)

However, these beliefs, for all the strength they give us, if held too rigidly without recognition of the changes in the society in which we live can lead to ineffectiveness in protecting ourselves and those we love.

All four of these books (Karamazov, Quixote, Anne Frank and Prelude) deal with this human problem in terms of the events in daily life. "Where is depth hidden?" asked Hugo von Hofmannsthal and replied, "On the surface." It is not important that one is set in Russia, one in Spain, one in Holland, one in Romania. They all deal with the human condition in rapidly changing times. Einstein once defined "common sense" as "that collection of prejudices which you have accumulated by age eighteen."



" But it is also true that by age eighteen we have accumulated ideals, visions and hopes. How do we retain these in the swirling currents around us?

A beautifully written scene in "Preludes" is a metaphor of the basic conflict between our past and our present. Adrian Stein (the head of the family of the protagonists) has taken some visitors to look at an old Bucharest synagogue. Driving home afterwards they find themselves caught up in a demonstration and surrounded by a mob of Iron Guard fascists in their green shirts and pistol belts shouting, "Death to the kikes." Two ways of life, opposing views of reality, of good and evil, stand in direct conflict. Adrian, recognising and dealing with both, brings his family through the maelstrom. Others fall off the path on one side or another.

A good novel tells a story that holds your interest and makes you want to keep turning the pages. It introduces you to people you begin, as you read, to care about. It gives you an understanding of a particular time and place. (By the time Paul Baumer dies at the end of "All Quiet on the Western Front" you understand and are empathetic with the life of the front line soldier. This is often what the author intended - to bear witness to a time in history. But sometimes the book goes beyond the author's conscious goal. It then leaves you with the comprehension that you have learned something more about yourself and about the strange, wonderful, tragic and comic species to which you belong. It is hard to read Remarque's novel and not look with a new eye at your beliefs about patriotism, loyalty and the kind of relationships we are capable of.)

"Prelude in Black and Green" fulfils all of these requirements. It tells an engrossing story, it shows us a time and place and what happened or could have happened there. It leads to a deeper understanding of ourselves and adjusting to new times and environments. Like Anne Frank's diary it leaves you larger when you finish it than you were when you began.

Lawrence LeShan is the author of many books and is a Honorary Member.



Joy and woe are woven fine,
A clothing for the soul divine;
Under every grief and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.
It is right it should be so;
Man was made for joy and woe;
And when this we rightly know,
Safely through the world we go.

William Blake, Auguries of Innocence, 1863

The attached image of a painting by William Blake, entitled "The Whirlwind of Lovers"