

book reviews

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science-philosophy of science

Science vs. Spirituality

David Lorimer

WAR OF THE WORLDVIEWS

Deepak Chopra and Leonard Mlodinow

Rider, 2011, 315 pp., £20, h/b – ISBN 978-1-8460-4303-1

Fifteen years ago Mark Woodhouse wrote an extensive study called *Paradigm Wars* in which he characterised the tensions between materialistic scientism and a more holistic view. I myself covered some of this same territory in my book *Radical Prince* by way of explaining the background to the Prince of Wales' ideas. This book originated in an event at Caltech where Deepak was championing a spiritual worldview and met Leonard, who offered to teach him quantum physics. As they discussed topics arising, it became apparent that their worldviews diverged considerably and that it would be worth exploring this in more detail in a series of exchanges. These are structured around the four main themes of Cosmos, Life, Mind and Brain, and God, with an introduction to the war from the scientific and spiritual perspectives.

As pointed out early on, the fundamental issue is knowledge and how to attain it. The spiritual

hypothesis advanced by Deepak proposes that there is an unseen reality that is the source of all visible things, that this reality is knowable through our own awareness and that intelligence, creativity and organising power are embedded in the cosmos. This puts the nature of consciousness at the centre of the debate. The viewpoint defended by Deepak is not religious per se and insists on the distinction between religion and spirituality, which Leonard also recognises. However, he feels that this is a form of wish fulfilment or a comforting illusion that cannot be supported by scientific evidence. The scientist looks for data to support the theory and rejects theories that clash with observational evidence. Leonard fully expects consciousness to be explained by means of current scientific methods.

A great deal depends on whether one gives primacy to the inner or outer. Since the 17th century, science has focused on observing and measuring the external world in ways that can be quantified and replicated. Underlying this is a mechanistic philosophy and a tendency to equate science with scientism without examining the presuppositions associated with this outlook. Mysticism, on the other hand, takes consciousness as its starting point and reports finding the ground of being in the depths of experience. As Ken Wilber points out, these states of consciousness can in fact be replicated and compared between practitioners, showing that there is also an empirical basis to spiritual practice.

The next question is whether all this experience is in fact the by-product of the brain in the sense that it is caused by rather than correlated with neural processes. Leonard goes for causation, insisting that 'the origin of mind lies in the physical substance of the brain as repeatedly demonstrated in biology.' He also argues that there is a physical basis to OBEs and regards the possibility of post-mortem existence as wish-fulfilment. Like Russell, he feels that it takes special courage to believe in science and the extinction of consciousness.

Many questions are covered, such as whether the universe is conscious, whether it has design, whether the brain dictates behaviour and whether

God is an illusion. Each writer contributes a short essay responding to the other - sometimes Deepak goes first, sometimes Leonard. This allows considered discussion of each other's views, but the format lacks the penetration that a debate would have given it so that each speaker could put the other on the spot. The reader is sometimes left with questions, but one learns a great deal about the relative positions of the authors and where they are incompatible. Needless to say, most readers will take one side or the other, but the probing process is a useful one in refining one's own views.

Towards the end of the book, there is a discussion on the future of belief, which Deepak sees as a shift away from God as an external force to God as an inner experience, in other words a shift from religion to spirituality. This creates a new openness in the debate, which frees people from religious dogma while not necessarily committing them to materialism. Both men feel a kinship with other lifeforms, but one regards it as unthinking but wonderful and the other as conscious. Each sees the other as relatively unwilling to question and alter their beliefs. Leonard's higher authority is 'the way Nature actually works', a phrase full of implications and reflecting a slightly naive realism. The vision that beckons is one of an expanded science open to both experiment and experience. The detail of the debate leaves the reader enriched with a more complex understanding of the ways in which science and spirituality view the world.

Complexity Science makes Homeopathy Plausible

Clare Goodrick-Clarke

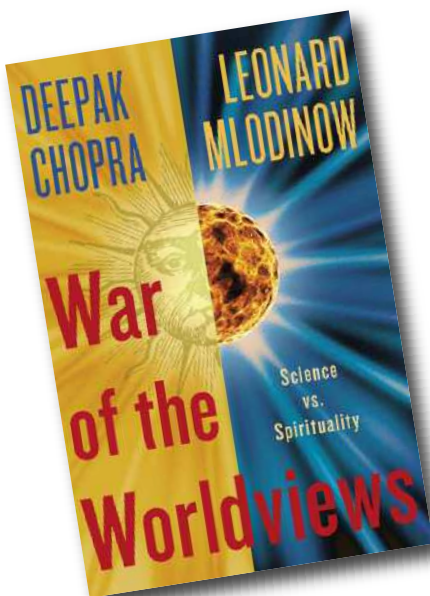
HOMEOPATHY: GOOD SCIENCE - How New Science Validates Homeopathy

Peter Adams

www.peteradams.weebly.com

Rhyme and Reason Books, 2010, 186 pp., £8.99, p/b - ISBN: 978-0-9565694-0-0

This book should be required reading not only for those interested in



homeopathy but also all those curious about science. The author, Peter Adams, stretches his brief wide to examine how new paradigms in science are at last beginning to unlock the mysteries of homeopathy. As Adams says, 'science is changing and homeopathy is becoming scientific'.

For the author 'the combination of strange theories and impressive cures is the most fascinating thing about homeopathy'. The strength of this book lies in the fact that the author, a practising homeopath and was himself at one time a sceptic; yet having seen homeopathy successfully treat a sick cow, he was prepared to be open minded about *how* it might work. The astonishingly positive response of animals to homeopathy nails the placebo theory, so something else must be at work. Instead of 'homeopathy works, now let's find out how and why' it has been assumed for too long that homeopathy cannot work because the remedy contains too few molecules of the original substance. Because it cannot work, runs the logic of this position, it does not; thus the experience of several generations who have been successfully treated with homeopathy is dismissed. This is simply not a scientific approach. In February 1991 *The British Medical Journal* declared 'The amount of positive evidence [for homeopathy]...came as a surprise to us. Based on this evidence we would be ready to accept that homeopathy can be efficacious, if only the mechanism of action were more plausible'.

More importantly, Adams argues, the refusal to investigate *how* homeopathy works has limited scientists from making important discoveries that may have wider applications in other fields. The molecular structure of water may change under different circumstances, for example, and a deeper understanding of this phenomenon could help with cleaning polluted water.

Adams documents how some theories arrived at independently which help to explain homeopathy have been later discredited precisely *because* of their apparent support for homeopathy. Samuel Hahnemann, founder of homeopathy, had noted the biphasic response to drugs, called *hormesis* in biochemistry. At the end of the nineteenth century, biochemists Hugo Arndt and Rudolph Schultz demonstrated that large doses inhibit activity while small ones stimulate, activating a response. In the early part of the twentieth century the Arndt-Schultz rule was called in question when it was realised it could

be taken to support homeopathy. And yet the self-regulating system of the human body demonstrates non-linear responses. Doubling the dose does not double the effectiveness of a medicine and sometimes halving it can be more effective.

New discoveries in science are concerned not with molecules only but with complex systems, of which the human being is the ultimate expression. Complexity science, the most challenging and optimistic science of our time, reveals new insights into the working of the human body which is very far from *L'homme machine* described by La Mettrie. The reductionist view that the whole can be explained by the operation of its parts and that disease is due to molecular causes has been invalidated by complexity science. Rather, the human organism is composed of numerous expanding spheres of complexity, each one overlaying another, so that the complexity is multiplied into thousands of intelligent activities relating to the dance of life and homeostasis. What is important, says Adams, is not the physical body itself so much as the intelligent organisation of the physical body in which 'millions of regulatory processes are being coordinated simultaneously'.

To understand complex systems, Ilya Prigogone has suggested, it is more useful to compare them with other complex systems, like cities or countries. It is these complex systems that direct the healing process and therefore beneficial medicines will be those that can stimulate auto-regulation. Complexity science shifts the site of illness from the individual part to the whole and thus whole person expresses the disease, often becoming irritable before coming down with 'flu, for example.

Diseases which appear after prolonged stress show that a change in levels of health can be brought about by a system that is no longer able to maintain itself. In the human being, the inability to restore order after a period of stress will eventually lead to illness. Most people are adapting to stressors constantly throughout the working day, but eventually the adaptive process itself may fail, often due to a new and even relatively minor upset.

Medicines that bypass or suppress the self-regulatory processes may be harmful in the long run, even though they appear effective in the short term. Whereas most modern orthodox medicines work by inhibiting the body's natural defence mechanisms in some way, homeopathy enhances it. This is why, after taking a remedy, the patient

feels better in herself, more alert, enthusiastic and creative, even though the physical symptoms may take a while to resolve completely.

Perhaps the most urgent message of the holistic viewpoint is the perspective of illness as a point of change and growth. This is frequently noted in children who put on a growth spurt both physically and mentally after an illness such as chicken pox. It is not generally admitted in adults but illness can be an opportunity for change and, with the right medicine in the right hands, can ultimately lead to a new level of health. The symptoms are an indication that all is not well, some systems are not functioning as well as they might. Homeopathy provides the information the system needs to respond with healing.

The homeopathic information is dynamic, not material, it is carried in the medium of water, but it is not the water itself. Adams compares the potentised remedy to information on a CD. The music is carried by the CD as information which the CD player can interpret and reproduce as music. The remedy contains information which the organism can interpret and reproduce as better functioning. In health, the intelligent system knows how to maintain homeostasis. Complex systems depend upon information. Some information which comes through the organism is influenced by stress or emotion and this manifests as disorder in the system, perhaps as arthritis, migraine, or hay fever. Medical research into bioregulation recognises the role of 'information' to influence the system. Homeopathy is information transmitted by water. Throughout the text Adams includes examples from his own casebook where definite benefit has been obtained from homeopathic treatment, though he is sufficiently honest to admit he has cases where homeopathy didn't appear to work at all.

When Samuel Hahnemann published his new medical approach in 1810 his publisher, Christof Hufeland, physician and pioneer of macrobiotics, commented that if homeopathy were true then it would herald the beginning of a new science. Two hundred years later, new paradigms that might begin to explain homeopathy are beginning to emerge and with it new ways in which we view sickness and health.

Clare Goodrick-Clarke is an honorary fellow of Exeter University where she contributes a module on the Esoteric Body to the MA in Western Esotericism (www.exeter.ac.uk/centres/exeseso). She is a qualified homeopath and the author of Alchemical Medicine (Healing Arts Press, 2010).

World and Mind from the Vacuum

Gyorgyi Szabo

DEMYSTIFYING THE AKASHA: consciousness and the quantum vacuum

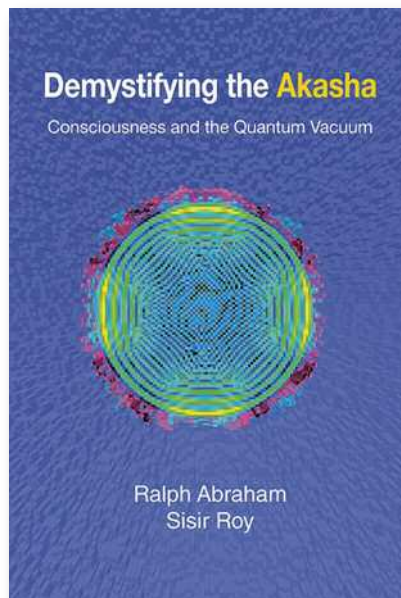
Ralph Abraham and Sisir Roy

Epigraph Books, 2010, 211 pp.
€14.14 ISBN 078-0-9826441-5-7

Following growing interest in David Bohm's concept of the implicate order and SMN member Ervin Laszlo's work on the cosmic matrix he named Akashic Field, it is noteworthy that two leading scholars, mathematician Ralph Abraham and mathematical physicist Sisir Roy, have undertaken to write a book they claim will 'demystify' the Akasha. They agree that the Akasha is the background against which everything in the world becomes perceptible—in the words of Paramahansa Yogananda—and they wish to show that this is not only a perennial insight, but a mathematically demonstrable state of affairs.

This is an important and extremely ambitious task. Whether they succeed in carrying it out, only time will tell. As of today, there are no more than a handful of readers who have both the philosophical depth and the mathematical skills to pronounce judgment on this. For readers who lack one or the other or both these qualifications, the book is a major challenge. But it is one well worth undertaking.

In addition to offering a mathematical 'model' that shows how both world (spacetime) and mind (consciousness) could have arisen from what physicists classically refer to as the quantum vacuum, Abraham and Roy describe the great traditional concepts of consciousness of the West as well as of the East. They then formulate the problem of continuity vs. discreteness entailed by the traditional conceptions. Most traditional, and also contemporary (but not quantum physics-based) models of consciousness view consciousness as a continuum—a field without seams and breaks. Quantum physics, on the other hand, developed a discrete, 'digital' view of the foundation of what quantum physicists (often reluctantly) concede as representing physical reality. The problem is that quanta are discrete, but spacetime as a field is continuous. How discrete quanta arise in continuous fields is a key problem in integrating quantum physics and general relativity. This problem is posed here in regard to



consciousness: is it a continuous field, or a set of discrete, but in some way interconnected events?

Abraham and Roy do not claim that the concept of consciousness they embrace refers to individual mental awareness. They consider individual mental awareness as part of the larger concept that includes the personal unconscious as well as the collective mind, both conscious and unconscious. In this inclusive sense their concept of consciousness is equivalent to what in the tradition philosophers have called 'cosmic consciousness.'

Abraham and Roy outline a mathematical model of the quantum vacuum as a model for (cosmic) consciousness: they 'repurpose' the digital and nonlocal model of the vacuum as a model of consciousness. The solution this offers to the problem of the incompatibility between the traditional field vs. the modern discrete-event based concept of consciousness is simple yet radical: for Abraham and Roy, consciousness is *beyond* spacetime. Cosmic consciousness beyond physical spacetime allows a logical assessment of various paranormal phenomena, including telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition. It permits at the same time a similarly logical assessment of the phenomenon of non-locality as it appears in quantum physics. Paranormal phenomena and physical non-locality are not contradictory or even diverse; they could be one and the same phenomenon. Telepathy, and similar paranormal events signify the 'entanglement' of entities that are 'nonlocal,' the same as the entanglement of quanta that originate in identical quantum states.

The Abraham-Roy mathematical theory—called the 'AR model'—is a mathematical derivation of the spacetime continuum from the quantum vacuum. The latter is the non-continuous and nonlocal dimension of reality the ancient rishis called Akasha. Deriving a continuous spacetime from a non-continuous and nonlocal substrate allows the development of a concept of consciousness that overcomes the continuity/discreteness divide in a consciousness located in the platonic realm beyond space and time.

This is an important book that could mark a milestone in our understanding of the cosmic roots of reality. It is also a contribution to the clarification of problems of consciousness that have long been cloaked in mystery. While by referring them to the Akasha they cannot be said to have been definitively 'demystified,' they are now cloaked in much less of a mystery than before

medicine-health

Empathy and Morality

John Nightingale

ZERO DEGREES OF EMPATHY

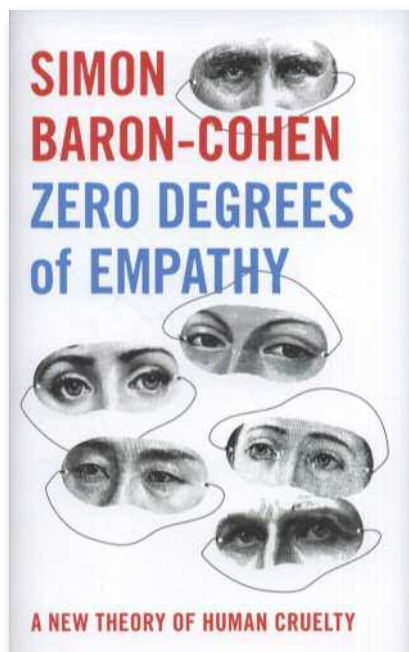
Simon Baron-Cohen

Allen Lane, 2011, 208 pp., £20, h/b
– ISBN 978-0-713-99791-0

Simon Baron-Cohen is a professor of psychology and psychiatry at Cambridge and an expert in autism. He understands empathy as the quality, originally defined by Martin Buber, of treating someone else as a 'thou' rather than an 'it'; this involves both a fellow feeling for other people, together with a correct perception of what their feelings actually are. To say presumptuously 'I know exactly how you feel' to a bereaved person may show a lack of empathy in the one sense, while to work out what another is feeling but proceed selfishly to play on those feelings may do the same in another.

Empathy, he writes, is distributed among the general population in the form of a bell curve, with most people being in the middle and a few at each extremity; on average women score a bit higher on the scale than men.

He is particularly interested in those with 'zero degrees of empathy' and gives the example of personality disorders (as commonly defined by psychiatrists) in which empathy can be low or non-existent. Three of these disordered types he describes as 'zero-negative' – where the lack of



empathy seems to have no redeeming feature. One is the 'borderline' in which those involved are subject to violent swings of mood in which they are unaware of the distress their behaviour may have on others. Another is the 'narcissist' whose self-absorption may mean a failure to attend to another's need. Then there is the 'psychopath' who, paradoxically, may have quite an awareness of what another is feeling but very little sympathy; such a person can easily be uncaring, brutal or manipulative. Though together people with such defined personality types may be little more than 5% of the population they may, the author thinks, teach us important lessons about human motivation.

There are patterns of brain activity associated with a lack of empathy. For example an empathy deficit may be linked to increased sensitivity in the amygdala at the base of the brain, indicating a proneness to primitive 'reptile' reactions such as flight and fight. There may be a deficit in the frontal lobes which typically have a restraining influence and allow for the possibility of a more considered response. There may also be a triggering of 'mirror neurons' by the distress of others, for example by images of starving children. At a recent conference of The Scientific and Medical Network I heard Dr Valeria Gazzola say that there seems less of evidence of mirror neuron activity in the brains of psychopaths; however psychopaths can apparently develop their capacity for such activity – so long as they **want** to do so!

Another chapter is about the genetic evidence; certain genes

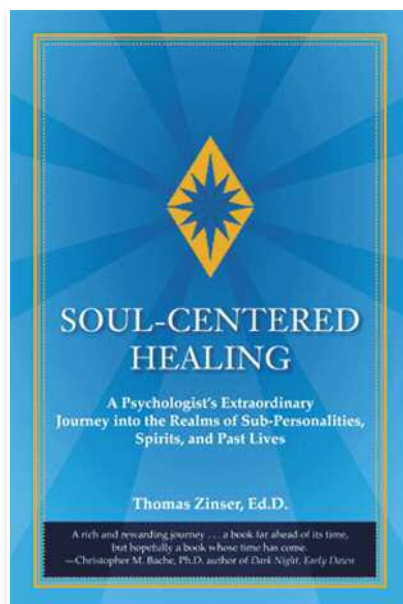
produce proteins which themselves may be associated with deficits in empathy. But genes merely indicate a tendency which has then to be activated by the environment.

The author is no genetic determinist. For example, following John Bowlby, he stresses the value of a loving upbringing in laying down an inner emotional 'pot of gold' on which a child may later draw, and refers to exercises for developing empathy which may be used even for adults. He warmly commends 'restorative justice' in which offenders are encouraged to meet with victims and realise how they have hurt them, and for the process to be reciprocal in order to reconcile divided communities as in Northern Ireland or Israel/Palestine. Empathy is seen as an underused resource of great potential.

The high point of this original book is to show that some people with zero empathy may still be highly moral – those displaying 'Asperger Syndrome' who have a strong sense of order and hence a rule-based morality which they may apply rigidly to include themselves. (Someone might be known as 'a beast but at least a just beast.')

This 'systemising' is also distributed along a bell curve; men on average tend to score higher than women. Not only can systemising compensate for a lack of empathy but it can also fill empathy out with the more robust virtues of justice and courage so that a person or society can develop to the full.

John Nightingale is a retired Anglican Vicar with experience in adult education.



The Spiritual Mechanics of Mind

Alan Sanderson

SOUL-CENTERED HEALING

Tom Zinser

Union Street Press, Grand Rapids MI 49507, 2012, 269 pp., £16.00 p/b – ISBN 978-0-9834294-0-1

Soul-Centered Healing is an extremely important book. It shows the way, as never before, to a working understanding of the spiritual mechanics of mind. It does this clearly and directly, and it tells in detail how information from a channelled spirit guide, repeatedly tested in the consulting room, was used to resolve complex psychological problems. With this publication, Thomas Zinser takes a giant stride towards the new paradigm for which so many are longing. I believe *Soul-Centered Healing* is worthy to rank with *De Motu Cordis* and *The Principia* as a beacon in the history of profound (and useful!) ideas.

Thomas Zinser had no thoughts of soul when, in 1983, he resigned from his post as staff psychologist at a private mental hospital to set up in psychotherapeutic practice. In this enthralling, beautifully written book, Zinser describes his Odyssey. It begins with his early experiences working with multiple personality disorder and concludes 25 years later with the final homecoming as a confident, many-faceted therapist with a conviction in the primacy of spirit in the human physical experience. To his homecoming Zinser brings a carefully-woven tapestry, with a picture of coherence and power such as no psychologist has previously provided. It is a soul tapestry and it carries great implications, not only for psychotherapy and the understanding of personality, but for the spiritual dynamics of the cosmos.

How did it happen? I almost put, 'By Divine intervention.' Surely not by chance. There could have been no book without Gerod, the genie of the story.

Soul-Centered Healing has three parts:

- To the Boundary of Spirit.
- Healing the Inner World.
- Soul Dimensions.

In Part 1, Zinser introduces the reader to sub-personalities, those parts of the self that carry unresolved pain and trauma. He starts with the discovery that one of his patients possesses many distinct personalities. Intrigued and

challenged, he immerses himself in the study of multiple personality disorder. He begins to treat others diagnosed with MPD. Then, at a conference in 1985, he learns from John and Helen Watkins about ego state therapy. It's an approach that recognizes that everyone possesses ego-states, and that hypnosis can be used to work directly with these parts of the self for healing. In this view, MPD is on the extreme end of the same continuum. Ego state therapy became the mainspring of Zinser's therapeutic approach.

Opening up these inner worlds of sub-personalities, however, triggers many blocks and defences and leads to deeper confusion. It culminates in a session where Zinser cannot tell whether he is dealing with a sub-personality or a separate entity who has taken over the client's body. With so many clients, this deeper level work was leading to an impasse.

This is when an unexpected door opened. A woman, claiming to channel a spirit guide, offered Zinser an opportunity to communicate directly with this spirit through automatic writing. He accepts the offer and he meets Gerod. In further meetings, he learned that Gerod had access to his clients' inner worlds and could clarify the cause of difficulties and how best to resolve them. This proved to be an immense source of help and new learning. Over the course of 14 years, Zinser and Gerod were to meet over 650 times. Soon they were communicating in speech, which led to a much faster and freer dialogue. Zinser consulted Gerod on most of his clients and constantly checked his predictions, which he found to be reliable. Gerod gave much information on ego states and on the types of attaching spirits.

Part 2, 'Healing the Inner World,' focuses on the individual and the inner world of ego states and the beneficial forces available for working with them. Zinser writes:

Gerod's information about these clients and the different sources of blocking revealed within each client a dynamic and complex inner world. Ego states were still a primary focus of healing, but Gerod's view of these parts of the self was a radically different understanding than my own. I also learned from Gerod about the *protective part of the mind* and the *higher self*, one a significant source of blocking and the other a direct connection to the Divine. Each came to play a significant role in the healing process of ego states. It took thousands of client sessions and hundreds of

talks with Gerod to identify these parts of the self, establish a common language and understanding about them, and learn how to incorporate them into the healing process.'

In Part 3, 'Soul Dimensions,' we enter the realms and phenomena beyond the ego and its sense perception. These include past lives, good and evil, attachment or intrusion by spirits, and the primal forces of Darkness and Light. With Gerod's help and guidance, Zinser is able to work with his clients at these energetic, psychic and spirit levels. *Soul-Centered Healing* is the story of what Zinser learned about these dimensions through repeated observation and the healing methods that grew out of this work.

What are the implications of *Soul-Centered Healing* for the treatment of emotional disorder and the vast field of mental illness? That is one of the many questions that crowd around us clamouring for answers. What is needed now is for those of us who work in the field to test Zinser's findings.

What more can be said? Quite simply, 'Read it.' Read it for the well-told story. Read it for the joy of being present as two souls, one on each side of the Great Divide, discuss the wonders of the soul as it breathes the Darkness and Light of the universe. Read it for the excitement of holding an unfolding piece of history in your hands.

Dr. Alan Sanderson is President of the Spirit Release Foundation. A longer version of this review can be found under Members' Articles on the website.

Spagyrics – an Integrated Approach

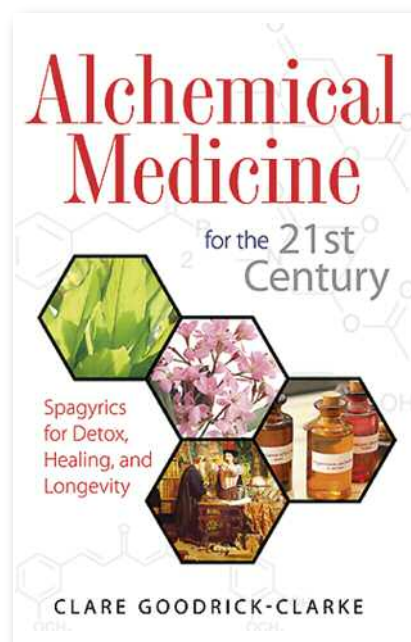
Helen Campbell

ALCHEMICAL MEDICINE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Clare Goodrick-Clarke (SMN)

Healing Arts Press, Rochester, Vermont, 2010, 186 pp., \$16.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-59477-319-8

Spagyric Medicine is used widely throughout Europe with German Complementary Medicine Research still at the forefront of research and practice. It is based on the alchemical concept of transformation of plant energy and is currently being used in Germany, Sweden, Holland, Austria and Belgium. *Alchemical Medicine for 21st Century* studies medicine from Hippocrates to Paracelsus to modern alternatives. It is a readable and informative book.



Chapter notes, index and bibliography are all full, enabling study in a methodical manner. Plants described are those which would have been in any house or cottage garden in the past available for all to use, and this indicates how easily this system of medicine could be used by those prepared to learn. Clare Goodrick-Clarke gives very clear and precise information about the system of treatment for transformation of plants to healing medicines. The process ensures that all poisonous matter is removed from medication before prescription.

Ralph Twentyman (*The Science and Art of Healing* 1989) in discussing the history of medicine (p. 64) said 'healing must involve a change in consciousness as well as a change in somatic symptoms. Something unconscious or forgotten must be recalled or allowed to sink into forgetfulness'. This quotation clearly accents the need for consideration of interaction of mind, body and spirit as postulated from the Greeks onwards and accentuated by Paracelsus.

Holistic medicine (coordinating mind, body and spirit) is the foundation of individualisation of medicines selected. This is explained throughout book from Greeks through to present day. From Paracelsus the holistic view is that signs and symptoms of disease are not caused by external symptoms but rather through the body's attempt to restore its own homeostatic imbalance – lack of which - results in lowered resistance called susceptibility.

Part One covers the history and theory of spagyrics and the second part sets out theory of preparation and detailed healing profiles of

seventeen plants and their therapeutic action. Plants each have properties and reactions whereas alchemy also encompasses the spiritual and temporal nature of reality as well as structure, physical laws and functions.

Spagyric methods of preparation can stand alone as a complete healing system as the medicine is in the optimal form for assimilation biologically to give the necessary dynamic to start the healing process. Concept that mind, body and spirit should be treated together to improve the balance of health has persisted from well before Paracelsus' time in 16th century till today.

Clare Goodrick-Clarke has methodically and thoroughly given an academic and detailed explanation of the history of these concepts from Greeks till today. The process of treating like with like is basis of homeopathic medicine whilst spagyric medicine also uses that principle. Spagyrics are not potentised as is done with homeopathic medicines.

There is a transformative concept of alchemy with which spagyric medicine complements all other models of medicine whether allopathic or alternative. Alchemical processes result in transmutation of one substance to another by removing toxicity in burning and followed by use of salts of the plant creating a healing gentle medicine. There is considerable evidence that the Periodic Table sets out the alchemy of life with position in periodic table determining whether the substance is stable or not. Constant transmutations take place as changes of rows and columns change the nature of the plant used.

The book traces the history of alchemy from the Egyptians, Greeks and Arabs before Paracelsus' (1493-1541) through to Goethean science. Spagyrics is study of plants as therapeutic substances separating constituent virtues of a plant, purifying these and then recombining after purification. Hence the word spagyric coming from two Greek words for dissolve and bind. It is this process of separating and combining which implies a synthesis in which the finished whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Spagyrics utilises the bio-active substances in food and herbs which play a significant part in protecting us from heart disease and strokes. Phytochemicals in plants work synergistically with others as healing agents and as catalysts. The description of plant healing is well explained. Spagyric medicine has similar effects to homeopathic medicine but Goodrick-Clarke considers them to be less likely to set up reactions. Cartesian

philosophy developed separating mind and body. The spagyric medicines described can be used by the professionals and the individual alike – thus proving to be empowering for individuals.

Academic biology has not yet made the energetic quantum leap to this field of thinking of need for holistic approaches to health embracing the quotation outlining concepts of holistic treatment by Ralph Twentymen. Clearly there are many conflicting interests in medicine but this book may give public more information as to how they can look after many aspects of their own health.

I do not expect the book will influence those who separate body functions from mind and spirit. I commend Clare Goodrick-Clarke's work to you as a challenge helping you to consolidate history with present attitudes.

*Helen Campbell is a practising
homoeopath*

Instinct Based Medicine

David Lorimer

THE ONLY ANSWER TO CANCER

Dr. Leonard Coldwell

21st Century Press, 2011 (6th edition), 328 pp., \$19.95, p/b – ISBN 978-0-9824428-7-6

THE ONLY ANSWER TO SUCCESS

Dr. Leonard Coldwell

21st Century Press, 2010, 319 pp., \$19.95, p/b – ISBN 978-0-9824428-7-6

Dr. Leonard Coldwell's spectacular medical and speaking career has grown out of the way he handled his early experiences. By the time he was 12, his mother had been diagnosed with terminal liver cancer and given 2 years to live. He began a self-study course of naturopathic medicine and all the therapies he could find and discovered the extraordinary self-healing capacity of the body, available to each one of us. That was 40 years ago, and she has been enjoying robust health since her recovery. His father was diagnosed with colon cancer and was treated with surgery, after which his tumour grew more aggressively and he died. Dr. C, as he calls himself, writes that he could usually cure colon cancer within 3 weeks with an almost 100% success rate. The story of his grandmother is the most heartrending. For 28 years she had

an enlarged cancerous lymph node in her breast. This didn't grow and it did not hurt, but she was scared into surgery and died an agonising death over a two-year period of treatment. He himself lived with continuous pain and illness for many years until he healed himself by natural means.

His own results with cancer must be among the best in the world. He has worked with over 35,000 patients with cancer and other terminal diseases, with an overall success rate for those who have no orthodox medical treatment before using his system of 92.3%. There is a deep philosophical and medical divide between orthodox and naturopathic healing methods, which is particularly evident in cancer cases. His understanding is that cancer is not so much a disease as a drastic attempt by the body to heal itself. He explains that cancer cells have mutated so that they can live in an environment where there is a lack of oxygen. It had already been discovered in the 1930s that cancer cells cannot grow in an oxygen rich or alkaline environment, which means the basis of the natural approach is to recreate this environment for the cells. Tumours are highly toxic on the inside as they accumulate toxins so that the poisons cannot spread to the entire system. This is his rationale for saying that anything that cuts opens the protective shell of the tumour often leads to a rapid death as the toxins spread through the body. In many cases, it is the toxicity of the treatment that finally kills the patient. He cites the work of other naturopathic authorities like Gerson and Manfred von Ardenne.

'There are no incurable diseases, only incurable people', so in this sense it is critical, as Sir William Osler said nearly 100 years ago, to find out what kind of person has the disease or condition. In Dr. C's view, the principal causes of cancer are stress helping to create acidosis in the body, accumulation of toxins in the system, lack of hydration and cell damage from electromagnetic fields. The pharmaceutical cancer establishment has enormous political power and does its best to suppress natural approaches and their practitioners. They also make a great deal of money out of the treatments and have little or no interest in prevention. Dr. C explains the physiological and psychological features of cancer and cancer sufferers, emphasising the importance of emotional well-being and the dangers of developing a victim mentality, a state that is encouraged by the rigours of orthodox treatment. Those who recover have decided to take charge of their lives and have developed a positive future orientation,

sometimes involving a radical change in life direction or circumstances. This powerful book contains a great deal of invaluable advice on prevention and types of treatment, and with his enviable track record, it is well worth taking some of Dr. C's health recommendations.

The key importance of positive thinking allied to positive action (thinking by itself is not enough) forms the bridge between the two books. I saw Dr. C in action on a conference cruise last January. He challenges you to be the best you can be and make the most of your potential. In this book, he lays out in detail the psychology and principles of success with an extensive series of exercises encouraging readers to formulate their own goals and procedures. In that sense, it is also a workbook if the reader is prepared to make the effort. He is right to insist that 'success is never the result of luck or coincidence. Lasting results always follow logical, goal oriented, sensible, continuous and flexible action.' And success is not a thing, but rather a feeling and the important outcome of effort and training is not so much what you own but rather who you become. For those who would like to follow up on further information, you can go to or

The Power of Compassion

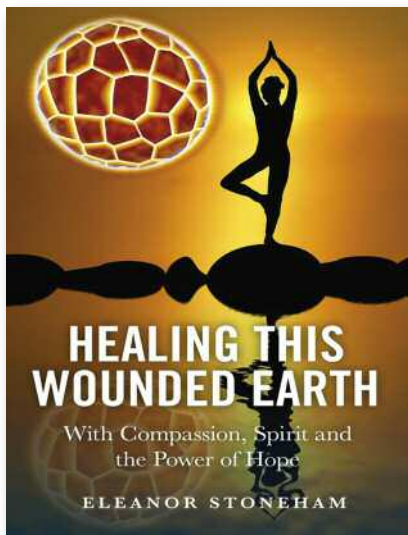
Yvonneke Roe

HEALING THIS WOUNDED EARTH

Eleanor Stoneham (SMN)

O Books, 2011, 292 pp., £14.99, p/b
- ISBN 978-1-84694-445-1

Within a few pages of starting *Healing this Wounded Earth* I was making a mental list of all the friends and



colleagues I wanted to give or lend this book to. I loved reading this book and am sure will turn to it again in the future. Eleanor Stoneham describes how it was during a challenging period in her own life that she took inspiration from Henri Nouwen's book *The Wounded Healer*. She then went on to research and explore where else one can find the compassion and vulnerability expressed to help heal our own wounds and in parallel those of the world around us. In each chapter she carefully and clearly states her aim. Some of the material will be familiar to Network readers. Although a Christian herself, the reach is broad and she mentions most of the great religions and schools of philosophical thought. There is a judicious use of quotes and many familiar names and thoughts and yet the book seems fresh and new. The basic thesis that we have to heal ourselves to heal the world is explored sensitively. I happened to be reading Jung's *The Undiscovered Self* at the same time and he deals so well with the issues Eleanor raises. She describes the difficult issues of our day - consumerism, using up the planet's natural resources, the role of faith today as well as economic and spiritual considerations. I thoroughly recommend this book.

Yvonneke Roe is a GP in London.

philosophy-religion

Christ Dharma

Nicholas Colloff

WITHOUT BUDDHA I COULD NOT BE A CHRISTIAN

Paul F. Knitter

One World Publications, 2009,
240 pp., £12.99, p/b -
ISBN 978-1-85168-673-5

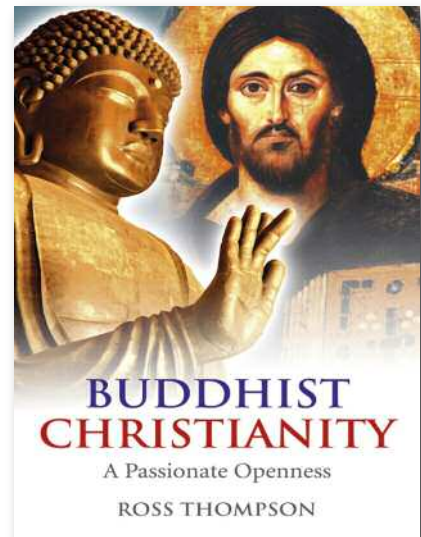
BUDDHIST CHRISTIANITY: A PASSIONATE OPENNESS

Ross Thompson

O Books, 2010, 306 pp., £14.99, p/b
- ISBN 978-1-84694-336-2

An apocryphal story has Jesus traveling to Kashmir during his missing years to learn the wisdom of 'the East'. He would have found there a flourishing Buddhist culture the embrace of which would transform the way he presented his mission.

This story aside, both the authors of these compelling and rich books perceive taking such a journey now



as a necessary and fertile one both autobiographically to enrich their own Christian faith and within the wider encounter between both traditions and between these traditions and the modern world.

Paul F. Knitter quotes his once teacher, the great German Catholic theologian, Karl Rahner, suggesting that if Christianity is to survive, it must become a church of mystics. People who place at the heart of their journey not subscription to set of saving beliefs but a faithful practice that leads to real, abiding and transformative experiencing. Salvation that is felt and embodied as well as believed in and hoped for. A critical encounter with Buddhism can radically aid Christianity in this mission.

Both books cover similar territory from their own perspectives. Thompson's book I would characterise as the more interior of the two while Knitter's long term commitment to work on justice and peace demands that he explore the social and political dimensions of the encounter.

At that heart both offer Buddhism as a way of teasing Christianity away from imagining that its doctrinally expressed truths are 'the truth'. Buddhism has a deeper and more central recognition that all language is symbolic. It can only point to, show forth the moon, it cannot be a substitute for experiencing it (and often we found ourselves more interested in the hand that points than the way pointed to).

In this both have to tackle re-visioning who Jesus is. If one is a Christian, in some fundamental, grounding sense, Jesus must be unique but if you are to be open to the truth embodied in other traditions, He cannot be the only way to salvation.

For Knitter it makes sense to see Jesus as 'the Awakener' that Jesus' divinity was not something that was

dropped on him from above (or something that he has that we do not) but that divinity, being the Son of God, was something he grew into, a realization that deepened as an abiding conviction and way of life, that he radically shared with others unto death and beyond. In this 'salvation' for us is not something that we, having claimed Jesus as our own, wait around for, trying to keep out of trouble and doing good works, before being lifted into heaven but a continuous process of opening ourselves to, and assimilating, the divine life through spiritual practice and love of neighbour.

For Thompson it makes sense to see Jesus as a 'Bodhisattva' - a being who has refused entry into Nirvana until all beings, until 'the last blade of grass', has entered enlightenment. But a radical kind of bodhisattva, one who has taken upon himself the bad karma of others so that we recognise that our salvation is not an individual task but a corporate struggle: 'It is a struggle carried by the community of those committed to sharing his death in order to share his life with the whole world (2 Corinthians 4:11) (Thompson page 151).

One of the most valuable features of Thompson's book is that he uses a 'Buddhist Christian perspective' to re-vision possibilities for both traditions. In probably his most illuminating chapter he explores the construction of desire. Christians tend to see a disordered desire transformed by redirecting it towards its proper place in God. Buddhists see the need to still the whole structure of desire and to step into desirelessness. But both tend to see the problem of desire as that of the individual. Thompson shows that what we desire is constructed communally: we learn what is to be desired from the social structures we inhabit. Both traditions need to develop a more robust understanding of how corporately we transform the communities we inhabit that in turn liberate individual opportunities for transformation.

This is a place from which Knitter can add his own most interesting contribution. He seeks to expound why Buddhism allows Christianity to more deeply occupy its 'unique' territory - that radical concern that God is perceived to have for those who are most deeply marginal, suffering or poor. God in Christianity is biased - we find God when we attend to the needs of those whose need is greatest. This vitally contrasts with Buddhism's universalising compassion. Compassion does not take sides, justice does. Knitter beautifully

suggests how both are necessary and both enable each other.

If we are to pursue justice, we need to understand how our capacity to be peace, to wait upon opportunity, helps us achieve justice. In this Knitter has a compelling discussion of anger - that it drives us towards pursuing justice but must be contained within a capacity to be detached, to let go. To bring us to a space where we can allow ourselves to release anger, and move towards clarity and charity.

Christianity is the intention of justice, Buddhism is the practice of peace. To achieve justice, we must be peace, but individual peaceful attainment must be suffused with the need to transform the structures of injustice. In this Knitter's last chapter, Christianity and Buddhism, from radically different perspectives, dance towards a common transformation, enabled by each other.

This is only to capture one related theme from the two books. There are many other strands such as the radical similarity between the ethical teaching of Buddha and Christ rooted in radically different biographies and contexts or the comparative exploration of 'sin' and 'karma', 'heaven' and 'reincarnation'. All of these themes are enriched in both texts by the narrative of a personal unfolding story that makes the engagement between high thinking and illustrative story an accomplished achievement in both.

Both authors, I think, successfully avoid either being simplistically syncretistic or pulling the same rabbit of a 'perennial philosophy' out of the very different hats of two living, embodied, complex traditions. Knitter's image of passing over to Buddhism to return to a renewed Christianity holds true for both authors. They may not win plaudits from either mainstream Christians or Buddhists, even as both remain resolutely clear about the radical differences that obtain between them. However, for those of us who think that neither tradition is finished or complete and that both can and should remain in what Thompson calls 'a passionate openness' both to each other and the world both books are beautifully written and passionately held contributions to an on-going exploration into the truth of things.

Nicholas Colloff is the Director of Innovation at Oxfam GB, and studied religion, philosophy and psychology at the universities of London and Oxford.

The Forms and Rhythms of Life

David Lorimer

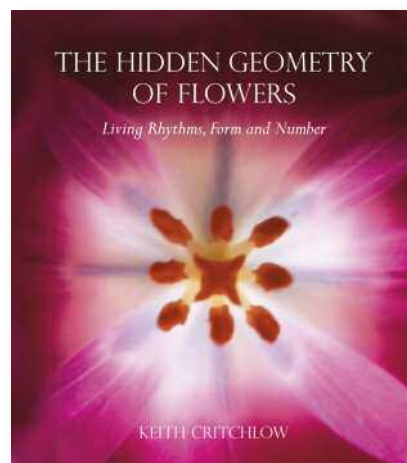
THE HIDDEN GEOMETRY OF FLOWERS

Keith Critchlow

Floris Books, 2011, 447 pp., £30, p/b - ISBN 978-086315-806-3

This remarkable and beautiful book is the culmination of years of research into the nature and geometry of flowers, drawing on the author's extensive understanding of Platonic philosophy as a means of expressing and understanding the Good, the Beautiful and the True. The countless illustrations and hand-drawn diagrams mean that readers are instructed and illuminated at the same time in a similar way to Christopher Alexander's epic volumes on *The Nature of Order*. Reading the book is a form of living education which means that you will never respond to (I did not say look at) flowers in quite the same way again. This is highlighted by the Prince of Wales in his foreword, when he talks about the perception of beauty as a resonance with the patterns which we ourselves are made of. The result is a feeling of harmony, the subject of the Prince's own book.

There are four main parts between the introduction and the conclusion, covering flowers from different perspectives, the geometry of flowers, the flowers of geometry, and leaves and photosynthesis. Keith takes readers back to the origins of philosophy and education in ancient Greek culture, enabling us to understand why geometry and number played such an important part in the culture. We also come to realise the importance of different levels in understanding the totality. The first is the evident or material level, the bodily plant or flower. Secondly, the social or psychological level of how flowers affect us emotionally, then the deeper cultural



and mythological meaning, and finally the inspirational level – all these are explained in some detail. Another essential component to consider is the very conditions of existence in terms of space, time, number, form and substance, all of which are exhibited in the flower and its development. The book focuses mainly on the spatial and numeric aspects of flowers, although without forgetting the power of colour, fragrance and delicate form illustrated throughout.

Two further essential educational concepts are introduced: the way in which the growth of the flower proceeds from point to line to plane to solid in a spiral fashion corresponding to the Fibonacci sequence. Then there is the Socratic divided line with its two poles of unity and multiplicity with a line through the middle proceeding from mathematics to geometry. Above the line lie the higher forms of knowledge, namely *dianoia* or discursive knowledge and *noesis* or intellection; this is also the realm of permanence. Below the line are change and the corresponding apprehensions of *pistis* (faith) and *eikasias* or conjecture. This hierarchy of consciousness is also one of knowledge, which modern philosophy has flattened, assuming that reason rather than intellect in its traditional unitive understanding is the supreme form of knowing. Later, Keith explains the Pythagorean unfolding of number, initially as arithmetic, then number in space as geometry, number in time as music or harmony and finally number in space and time as astronomy and cosmology. This helps the reader understand the inner coherence of Greek education based on number and beauty, aspects of which were also understood by Kepler and to a lesser extent by Galileo. It also reminds us that the end of education is not simply information or even knowledge, but rather wisdom.

There are illustrations and diagrams on nearly every page, which makes the book a veritable feast for the eye. The reader is visually introduced to the notions of oneness, twoness, threeness and so on up to 21, an incredibly complex and beautiful form of geometry. There is a whole section illustrating the geometry of flowers, with patterns superimposed on pictures of flowers, so readers come to understand at the geometry associated with these patterns and enhance their own capacity to apprehend and perceive these qualities in flowers, whether a daffodil, rose, poppy or lily. The section on the flowers of geometry reverses the process, giving primacy to the geometrical pattern and the

ways in which these are produced with the compass, gradually becoming more elaborate and complex. It is a revelation of intricacy to understand these patterns more deeply, all the more so if one actually practises the geometry oneself.

The chapter on the leaf explains the process of photosynthesis as the translation or transformation of light into nourishment, and building on the earlier insight that plants are light-seeking organisms and that in a physical sense light is the ultimate nourisher; spiritually, light is an emanation of the Divine. Leaves come in all sorts of shapes and are also susceptible to geometrical analysis. The overall cycle of the plant exhibits cycles of expansion and contraction, as Goethe realised 200 years ago, with the seed representing the ultimate contraction and fruit the ultimate expansion, proceeding by way of the leaf. We are also reminded of the essential role of bees in this interdependent process, which also requires an understanding of wholeness. Keith concludes that light, also a representation of consciousness and wisdom, is primary, enlightenment being the supreme human achievement.

This brilliant and profound book serves as a primer of a new way of seeing or rather a reminder in the Platonic sense of the hidden geometry of flowers and of the qualitative and symbolic significance of number.

Compassionate Connection

David Lorimer

THE POWER OF MODERN SPIRITUALITY William Bloom (SMN)

Piatkus, 2011, 274 pp., £13.99, p/b
– ISBN 978-0-7499-5285-3

William Bloom has been at the forefront of those redefining spirituality in the UK for many years, and is often called upon to represent modern spirituality in debates with more traditional approaches. In this comprehensive and lucid book, he brings together the fruits of his reflection and personal experience over the last 40 years to provide the reader with a map and a set of practical exercises. An encounter with Archbishop Trevor Huddleston was clearly a defining moment when he accused William and his colleagues and having no historical foundation, no heritage of ethics and values, no philosophical roots, no sense of context and therefore nothing useful to say about surreal world injustices and morality. This sharp rebuke set

him thinking, and his considered response can be found in this book.

Many readers will be sympathetic with his contention that we want the benefits of religion and spirituality without having to buy into a set of beliefs. Asking his students to define spirituality has enabled him to formulate three golden keys - connection with the wonder and energy of life, the capacity for reflection, and dedication to service. This enables the development of heart and mind, the acquisition of a sense of meaning and purpose, what he calls an embedded sense of well-being and the ability to enjoy life without turning away from its challenges and suffering. He examines the context in which modern spirituality has arisen, with our unprecedented access to information and an emphasis on self-determination and diversity. He also identifies values shared by the world's spiritual traditions, but adds to these values from the green movement and developmental psychology, enabling him to articulate a holistic values statement including the responsibility to radiate a benevolent presence - this requires the kind of self-management described later in the book.

The rest of the book is devoted to a more detailed consideration of connection, reflection and service, always recognising that people will have individual styles and preferences. Readers are invited to think about their own spiritual styles and gateways to connection with the help of extensive lists and to reflect on the nature of their experiences. However, the emphasis is rightly on everyday life, and it is here that vocational challenges can arise, as he illustrates in the case of priests and nurses, who can lose touch with the importance of their work. At this point, he introduces his four core skills which can be applied to the three areas: the ability to pause and be mindful, the capacity to relax and be centred in your body, observing events in a good-humoured way, and yielding to the feeling of connection. He goes on to describe these in much greater detail while recognising the challenges involved and suggesting corresponding exercises to strengthen the capacity. I particularly enjoyed his description of keeping the inner smile. It is also important to schedule spiritual practice in order to embed it in everyday life.

The capacity for self-management can be awakened either through a general sense of dissatisfaction or through a wake-up call experience. William describes how Eileen Caddy worked in this way, compassionately

reviewing her own thoughts, feelings and behaviour and saying that she let God work on her. He also recalls a friend nearing death and completing a process of self-healing, remarking that an open heart is a much greater blessing than death is a tragedy. I found the chapter on the challenges of spiritual growth especially helpful when looking at the whole issue of spiritual baggage. William provides two very useful charts, one showing the direction of transformational process, for instance from fear to love, from ignorance to wisdom and from resentment to forgiveness; secondly, the human paradox of tension whereby we want to change but we also want to stay the same. We are tied by bungee cords of resistance and easily slip into default behaviour patterns. It is very helpful to explore the psychology of resistance in terms of conditioning, repression and homeostasis, and to realise that the polarity between expansion and containment, action and rest operates in his Nature as a whole.

The third part is a response to the criticism that modern spirituality is not concerned with the wider community. Again, the development of spiritual qualities does not depend on particular belief systems, but rather expresses itself in compassion, wisdom and dedication to others. William provides a helpful exercise for clarifying your values and discusses doing good as part of the flow of life and the importance of seeing the best in others as proposed by Carl Rogers: unconditional positive regard, empathic understanding and congruence. A more subtle topic concerns the quality of our presence and therefore the atmosphere we radiate around us. This gives us the opportunity of what William calls vibrational service in that we have an effect on the world through our mood and vibration. This is particularly apparent when we think of great spiritual teachers and the healing and uplifting quality of their presence. Another important ability is transforming our own negative energy and practising forgiveness.

William concludes by observing that the spiritual journey is from one state to another, connecting, reflecting and serving. In the process we open our hearts, expand our consciousness and develop a 'compassionate generosity'. In every situation we can ask ourselves how we can connect more fully with life, reflect on the opportunity to develop wisdom and compassion, and how we can give service. Nor is this an individual endeavour but rather a coming together as a larger community of practice. Whatever your

spiritual path and inclination, you will surely find wise advice and gentle encouragement in this book.

Voices of Reason

Max Payne

ATOMS & EDEN - CONVERSATIONS ON RELIGION AND SCIENCE

Steve Paulson

Oxford, 2010, 312 pp., \$17.95, p/b - ISBN 978-0-974316-2

For anyone interested in the interface between science and religion this book is a compulsory read. Steve Paulson has made a collection of 20 radio interviews with leading scientists, philosophers and theologians ranging from Richard Dawkins to Ken Wilber. Their conflicting and contrasting answers to the relation between science and religion, the nature of God, and the meaning of human existence outline the fundamental issues more clearly than any one book by a single author, however erudite.

To Richard Dawkins religion is simply a superstition that has been outmoded by the advance of science. Ken Wilber regards science as merely dealing with the ground state of a vast transcendent spiritual reality. The others roughly fit into a spectrum in between. There is an interesting convergence amongst the different perspectives. A key strategic point is the nature of consciousness. If the human mind is merely the product of neuronal activity in the brain, and nothing but, then all religion is at best only a comforting illusion. However if science cannot reduce consciousness to matter, then in what aspect of reality does mind inhere? Stephen Gould's idea of

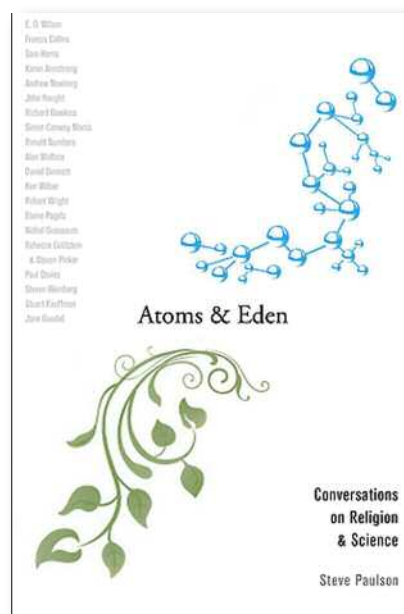
science and religion being 'non overlapping magisterial' gains little support: reality must be one. If such things as telepathy and various out of body experiences were considered to have been scientifically verified, then many of the contributors who are sceptical agnostics would alter their position. The results of meditation and mystical experience then become serious explorations into the dimension of transcendence.

The atheist critics of religion tend to define 'God' as being personal, and have a contempt for religious dogma, and regard rituals as offering merely psychological comfort. The more open-minded sceptics reject dogma but accept that science has its limits, and that there may be a transcendent spiritual dimension beyond the reach of science towards which religion points. The most extreme example of this position is Sam Harris who denounces orthodox Christianity in the name of science, but yet who practises Buddhist meditation and concedes the possibility of reincarnation. Nidhal Guessmum is an astrophysicist and a practising Moslem who rejects the naive fundamentalism that takes the Koran literally instead of understanding it metaphorically. He makes the same point. Indeed it seems there is general agreement that a reverence for scripture and formal dogma is a barrier to any reconciliation between science and religion. In contrast, John Polkinghorne has argued that it is only necessary to tweak the interpretation of the book of Genesis in order to reconcile modern science with trinitarian Christianity. It is a pity his views are not represented here so as to give all sides to the argument.

A strictly materialist view must mean that human life is meaningless from a cosmic perspective. On the other hand Paul Davies, while not being committed to any religious standpoint, nevertheless sees the universe as creative activity with a plan. Others too are impressed by the 'Anthropic Principle' - that is that the whole universe appears to be improbably finely tuned to produce human intelligence. This again raises questions about the purpose of human life which religion attempts to answer, and atheism ignores.

What is played out at the interface between science and religion will obviously affect the civilisation of the 21st century very profoundly. Members of the SMN will note that the dimensions of consciousness are a key issue in this debate, and our interest in telepathy, NDEs, and dowsing put us in the centre of it.

Max Payne is a Vice-President of the Network.



psychology- consciousness studies

A Moat in the Eye

Dean Radin

THE BELIEVING BRAIN

Michael Shermer

Times Books, 2011, 400 pp., £17.99,
p/b ISBN - 978-080509-125-0

PARANORMALITY

Richard Wiseman

Spin Solutions Ltd., 2011, 198 pp.,
£14, p/b ISBN - 978-095687-565-3

The authors of these books, one an academic psychologist and the other a magazine publisher, are both outspoken defenders of the skeptical faith. Shermer's book is subtitled, 'How We Construct Beliefs and Reinforce Them as Truths,' by which he means why you (not him) are silly enough to believe in ghosts, gods, the wrong flavour of politics, and outlandish conspiracy theories. Wiseman's book is subtitled, 'Why We See What Isn't There,' again meaning why you have delusional beliefs in ghosts, psychics, mind over matter, and precognition—not him.

I agree with Wiseman's thesis in *Paranormality* that it's all too easy to be fooled into believing things that are not so, sometimes intentionally and sometimes inadvertently. We are indeed prone to remembering amazing coincidences in our lives and forgetting the much larger body of mundane events. We are poor estimators of the probability of events, and we are quick to jump at exciting paranormal explanations for bumps in the night when more boring, normal ones might suffice. Wiseman is an accomplished magician and expert in deception, and his

descriptions of how such mistakes can occur are clear and useful. In his penultimate chapter, he raises the interesting question of *why* we evolved to 'experience the impossible,' which means (to Wiseman) anything that carries a whiff of the paranormal. He concludes that it is based upon our need to quickly find patterns in randomness.

Shermer's book delves into more detail on Wiseman's 'why' question. Shermer is an avowed materialist. Within his neuroscience-based worldview, all subjective experiences are due solely to the firing of brain neurons, and nothing more. He posits that the brain is a 'belief engine' hardwired to look for patterns. It then assigns those patterns meaning, intention, and agency, which harden into strongly held beliefs. The brain continually seeks evidence to confirm its beliefs, ultimately leading to a comfortably closed condition whereby what the brain *believes* determines what it is able to *perceive*. Furthermore, the smarter the brain, the more capable it is of rationalising its beliefs, independently of whether those beliefs were obtained by what Shermer calls 'nonsmart' reasons. Throughout the book, Shermer repeatedly hammers home how the best way to overcome your unavoidable biases is through science. He is sufficiently self-aware to admit that his own strongly held beliefs *might* be incorrect but is quick to add that he doubts he is wrong.

Both books present some interesting ideas. But occasionally things go terribly wrong, especially in how the authors deal with the paranormal. There are many examples of what Shermer labels 'blind spot' biases, in which both authors clearly identify biases in others but fail to see these in themselves. Other examples involve the 'confirmation bias,' where they report information that supports their case but ignore anything to the contrary. Still others are due to the 'sunk-cost bias,' which Upton Sinclair described: 'It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his job depends on his not understanding it.' To illustrate, let's consider an example from Wiseman's *Paranormality*. The book opens with an account of how he learned about a dog named Jaytee, who reportedly displayed a telepathic connection with his human companion, a woman named Pam Smart. Whenever Pam was returning home, her parents noticed that the dog went to a certain spot near the front window of the house and patiently waited for her there.

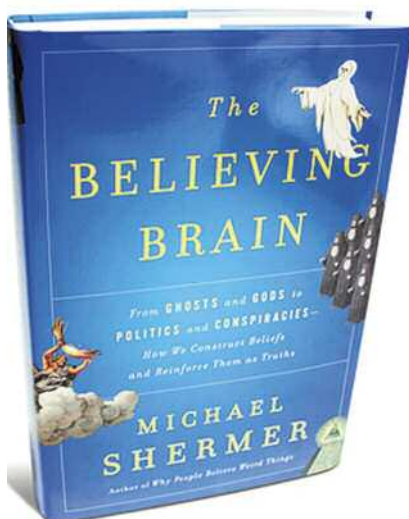
Wiseman describes a series of tests he conducted to see if Jaytee

was genuinely telepathic and claims he found no evidence. The story provides a convenient opening for explaining how easy it was for ordinary folks to fool themselves into thinking that something as obviously weird as telepathy is real. Readers who hadn't heard about this before will likely find it an amusing story that soundly puts the idea of dog telepathy to rest.

But here's the problem: British biologist Rupert Sheldrake was the first to test Jaytee, eventually amassing some two hundred sessions with the dog. His test designs evolved to exclude all known loopholes, including those mentioned by Wiseman, and the results remained the same: Jaytee's behaviour dramatically changed when Pam was returning home from miles away, even when the signal to return was determined randomly and wasn't known to anyone near Jaytee. Wiseman conducted all of four tests using Sheldrake's equipment and test design, and he obtained the same successful outcomes repeatedly observed by Sheldrake. Was Wiseman lying, or is this simply an extreme case of blind spot bias? Wiseman never did mention Sheldrake's data in *Paranormality* (confirmation bias).

There are other examples of omission, but most outrageous is the fact that every one of the targets of Wiseman's debunking—from psychics to mediums to precognition in dreams—has been thoroughly tested under strictly controlled laboratory conditions, in some cases for over a century. And worse, Wiseman is well aware of this, having obtained his doctorate under the auspices of the Koestler Unit of Parapsychology at the University of Edinburgh. Indeed, he finds the accumulated evidence so persuasive that, in a 2008 newspaper interview, he stated that while he still doesn't personally believe in psychic phenomena, 'By the standards of any other area of science, remote viewing is proven.' Wiseman later clarified that he meant to say not just remote viewing but that psychic phenomena in general were proven by scientific standards. This too is ignored in *Paranormality*. Is this startling oversight due to another confirmation bias or to the sunk-cost bias? Perhaps Shermer's *The Believing Brain* can help us understand.

Unfortunately, Shermer makes things worse. While reading *The Believing Brain*, I kept stumbling over irritating errors, some minor and others major. To give an example of a minor error, Shermer implies that piercing one's arm with a 10-inch skewer, feeling no pain, and producing only a drop of blood is



explainable only as a magician's trick (that is, the needle only appears to pierce the arm). Apparently he never heard about Sufi rapid wound healing or the anaesthetising effects of hypnosis, both of which conclusively demonstrate that it is indeed possible for some people to pierce their arm, tongue, cheeks, or abdomen, with no pain or blood loss, and to show incredibly fast healing of the resulting wounds.

Major problems include the following: **(1)** Shermer systematically avoids the substantial experimental database demonstrating that telepathic-like connections do exist. Recent updates of these data can be found in technical articles published in mainstream journals, including *Psychological Bulletin* and *Frontiers in Quantitative Psychology and Measurement*. **(2)** Shermer asserts that when an experimenter and remote viewer are both blinded to the target, 'psychic powers vanish.' Nonsense. For more than a century, investigators studying psychic effects, including remote viewing (in earlier times known as clairvoyance), have employed protocols that explicitly and strictly avoid this obvious bias, as well as many more complex and not so obvious biases. **(3)** Shermer cites a study conducted by IONS' own Marilyn Schlitz, who collaborated with Richard Wiseman on a feeling-of-being-stared-at study. Dr. Schlitz obtained significant results, but Wiseman did not. Shermer interprets this as an 'experimenter bias problem,' apparently unaware that the two investigators were specifically studying the possibility of an experimenter effect by working in the same lab at the same time, using the same procedures and equipment, the same subject population, and the same analyses. They still obtained different results. **(4)** Shermer reports that a study published in a top medical journal, *The Lancet*, was flawed. That study involved documentation of near-death experiences (NDE) by patients suffering cardiac arrests in hospitals. The flaw was that a physician had examined the EEG records of those patients and found that their brains had not flatlined. This implied that the patients' weren't actually brain dead; therefore, the NDEs reported must have been hallucinations. This is mistaken on two counts. First, the EEGs of the patients in *The Lancet* study were in fact never taken. Second, during a cardiac arrest, EEGs go flatline in about 15 seconds, and if allowed to remain in that state for as little as another 30 seconds, it can take hours, days, or longer for the brain to recover. The effects of brain trauma due to reduction of

oxygenated blood (and glucose) are completely unlike the phenomenology of an NDE, which involves crystal-clear perceptions and memories, often accompanied by life-changing personality differences. Vague perceptions, confusion, and amnesia are completely inconsistent with such profound transformations, so the idea that NDEs are due to the hallucinations of a dying brain isn't justified. **(5)** Shermer writes, 'Scientists have now conclusively demonstrated what typically happens in research in which one subject tries to determine or anticipate the thoughts or actions of a second subject using paranormal means When the second subject is instructed to randomly perform some task . . . the sequence is not going to be random. Over time the second subject will develop a predictable pattern that the first subject will unconsciously learn.' Yes, if experiments were actually conducted in this way, it would indeed be a problem. But researchers are well aware that people do not act randomly, and as a result such experiments have not been conducted this way for more than a century. I could go on, but I think my point is clear. I agree with the core themes of these two books: beliefs distort what we can perceive, beliefs are inevitable, and science is indeed one of the best methods devised so far to slice through the distortions generated by our beliefs. Understanding this is valuable; thus these books do serve a purpose.

But let us reconsider the plight of the poor skeptic. He understands, intellectually at least, that beliefs bias perception. But he is incapable of escaping his own beliefs. He is thus compelled to ignore evidence that runs counter to his core, and so for him, psychic phenomena are strictly forbidden. Evidence to the contrary cannot be seen at all, or if vaguely glimpsed, it is distorted beyond all recognition and then ridiculed for good measure. Against the skeptic's unenviable position, even the tiniest smidgeon of positive evidence must be vigorously attacked and subdued, because otherwise the 'sunk cost' of an entire career bet on professional skepticism is at stake. That's an awfully heavy burden to carry when the evidence just keeps on getting stronger.

Dean Radin is the author of The Conscious Universe and Entangled Minds.

This review by Dean Radin of The Believing Brain and Paranormality was first published in the Fall/Winter 2011 issue of The Noetic Post, the bulletin of the Institute of Noetic Sciences. With permission from the publisher. ©2011

Shamanic Views on Health

Natalie Tobert

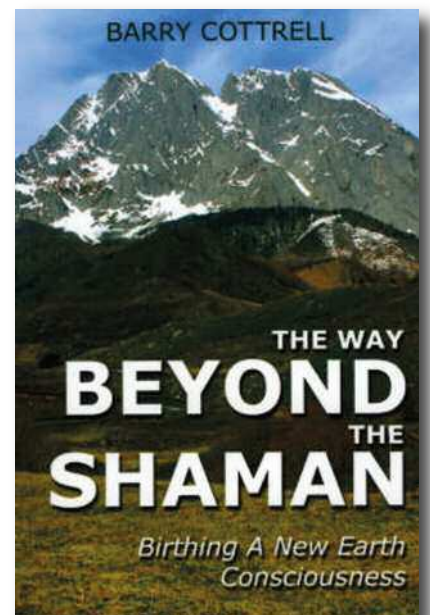
THE WAY BEYOND THE SHAMAN: Birthing A New Earth Consciousness

Barry Cottrell

O Books, 2008, 192 pp., £11.99, p/b
- ISBN 978-1-846694-121-4

Barry Cottrell suggests global problems of today 'have their roots in Western culture's collective denial of the soul and spirit, both in nature and in ourselves' and this creates a spiritual vacuum. His book explores our relationship with earth, and offers insights to influence human survival. The first part traces the roots of shamanism, whilst the second examines shamanic experience from traditional and modern perspectives. In the third part Cottrell presents his original knowledge derived from accessing levels of consciousness through shamanic practices. My key interests are his interpretations on causes of cancer and mental ill health.

Cottrell's material is presented with the following underlying assumptions: humans are dependent on the earth; nature, soul, spirits and humans are interlinked; spirits exist in our domain; reincarnation is ubiquitous. He suggests western people are struggling to emerge, 'like a butterfly from a chrysalis' to an age of the spirit. My background lies within the academic discipline of medical anthropology, where it is normal to consider events from at least two perspectives: ours, and the others. Karen Armstrong suggests we try to understand things from others' perspectives. Readers of this book



would need to consider different ways of understanding the world and perceiving reality.

Cottrell explains a shaman is a person who deliberately travels into 'unseen' worlds during an altered state of consciousness, to obtain healing for members of their group. This ancient technique for accessing realities beyond the physical world is a fundamental process of humans. He describes Neanderthal peoples' activities and their cave temples with deep chambers, used to engage with the presence of spirits. Neanderthal people were open to experiencing intuition and contact with spirits of the earth, and subtle energies of the natural world. He contrasts this with intellectual awareness of modern human beings, and suggests today we value intellect more than instinct. His aim is to shift our understanding of shamanism out of the past, towards a new future, to understand the broader perspective of earth as a planet of sound and healing. This is why he says many bring their dis-eases here to be healed. My own interests are on the relationship of shamanic interpretations of health and illness, and it is this aspect I focus on.

Cottrell compares spiritual emergency with the trials of shamanic initiation, and quotes Joseph Campbell: '*the schizophrenic is drowning in the same water in which the mystique is swimming in delight*'. He recalls the 1960s where anthropologists like Castaneda and Harner appeared to put their objectivity to one side, and taught neo-shamanism to those who followed their New Age ways. He suggests we consider shamanism from a new perspective, to address the effects of our '*thrashing around in the astral worlds*'. We need to move on to a finer frequency of awareness, which has always been there. As our mind becomes more aligned to our own physicality, it helps deepen our understanding of consciousness, supports our acknowledgement of ancestral spirits and invisible forces, and better enables us to receive support from other realms to live on earth.

His interpretation of human degenerative diseases is innovative, based on his intuition or channelling of information. Those who suffer from life threatening diseases, including cancer, need to be considered from the perspective of 'many lives'. One cause of cancer is 'social pressure' which a person absorbs, and which is something they are not. He suggests '*social pressure has far more to do with the creation of disease... and is generally understood, far more than so many supposedly harmful substances.*' Cancer is a type of disease, like a cold

fire, that burns away a link between spirit and body. It originates from a time when human beings separated their consciousness from earth. He includes the epidemic of breast cancer, suggestive of tensions of the female psyche. One way to treat cancer is to use surgery when it is urgent to preserve life, then sound could be used to heal, as more appropriate than chemical pharmacology.

Cottrell's interpretation of people who have mental health problems is interesting. He sees them as discharging unresolved negative energy that has built up within the human psyche. People who have mental illness are performing a service for the community and should be honoured. The hearing of voices and delusions in schizophrenia are coming from an astral realm with unrefined energies. He suggests we need to raise awareness in the wider community, that the minority of people with mental health problems enable the majority to live more stable lives. They are not simply living out personal karma.

People with mental illness have brought skills with them from former incarnations, to move beyond ordinary consciousness. They have chosen at a profound level, to be a vehicle through which lower astral energies are discharged. He suggests the stigma of mental illness is a result of our failure to understand what people are going through, and that they serve the whole of humanity. The suffering of a person with mental health problems is compared to the suffering of the shaman.

This interpretation of mental illness is interesting to me, as I worked in mental health promotion for years, with people of different cultures. They had other more spiritual understandings of the body and of causes of mental illness, which influenced the diagnosis and treatment they would accept.

This book invites readers to reconsider human beings' participatory role on earth, and the importance of intuitive consciousness compared to intellectual consciousness for our health and well being. Information in the text is based on the author's interpretations of direct cognition and experience of existence at many levels. Perhaps it is time to evaluate shamanic methods of interpreting illness causation, conduct research into new ways of addressing symptoms, and develop innovative practices for future health care and treatment.

Dr. Natalie Tobert is director of Aethos Consultancy, which offers training to medical and healthcare practitioners on spiritual and cultural perspectives of health. <http://aethos.org.uk/>

Wisdom of the Transpersonal

Hazel Guest

JOURNEY IN DEPTH

Barbara Somers with Ian Gordon-Brown

2002, 276 pp., £30, h/b - ISBN: 0-9542712-0-3

THE FIRES OF ALCHEMY

Barbara Somers

2004, 248 pp.,

ISBN: 0-9542712-2-X (h/b) £30
0-9542712-3-8 (p/b) £19.95

THE RAINCLOUD OF KNOWABLE THINGS: A Practical Guide To Transpersonal Psychology

Ian Gordon-Brown with Barbara Somers

2008, 448 pp.,
ISBN: 978-1-906289-03-4 (h/b) £30
978-1-906289-02-7 (p/b) £19.95

SYMPTOM AS SYMBOL

Barbara Somers and Ian Gordon-Brown

2010, 271 pp.,
ISBN: 978-1-906289-10-2 (h/b) £30
978-1-906289-09-6 (p/b) £19.95

Series ed. by Hazel Marshall

Archive Publishing, Dorset, England

NB If you are ordering any of the hardbacks, please use ref scimed04 and email Ian Thorp on ian@archivepublishing.co.uk

Having met in 1970 Ian Gordon-Brown and Barbara Somers founded the Centre for Transpersonal Psychology in London in 1973. The term 'transpersonal psychology' was first coined and defined in 1968 (Sutich) in the USA, so these were pioneering days, with Ian and Barbara creating something original and unique this side of the Atlantic. Bringing to this project their combined backgrounds in academic psychology, Carl Jung, Buddhism and Alice Bailey, they designed their own workshops. These proved so successful that towards the end of the 70's they began their first training course for psychotherapists. Eventually this was accredited by UKCP.

Ian's sudden death in October 1996 caused the programme to come to an untimely end. However there were those who felt that the material from the workshops and seminars must not be lost. Using notes, recordings, and with the help of Barbara Somers, the editor who trained at the Centre has reproduced in these four volumes much of the material from those programmes. The dust jackets include

recommendations by several well-known figures including the late David Fontana, member of the Network and another pioneer of the transpersonal in the UK.

Although the series, which is collectively titled *Wisdom of the Transpersonal*, is designed primarily for psychotherapists and counsellors to enrich their understanding of the human psyche, they are also designed to be read by anyone who has an interest in pursuing a path of psycho-spiritual self-healing and development. Each new concept starts off at a simple level with definitions, helped along where needed by illustrative diagrams, and an index at the back of each volume enables the reader to select specific topics.

Journey In Depth takes us straight into the idea that psychotherapy needs a spiritual dimension; that it is not just about helping people with problems to adjust to society's norms, but rather it is a journey of the soul towards wholeness. This book 'integrates the personal with the Transpersonal, allowing readers insight into their childhood and the greatest challenges they face on their psycho-spiritual journeys.' Diana Whitmore. It deals with the experiences of childhood, of parenting, the challenges of having siblings or of being an only child, how the Shadow comes about, the Mother and Father archetypes, one's sense of personal space, mental and physical illness as symptoms, and dreams as a portal to the unconscious.

The next title, *The Fires of Alchemy*, is self-explanatory. This volume is in two parts, dealing with the alchemy of the west and of the east, and draws much from Carl Jung in its themes and interpretations. Accompanied by beautiful reproductions of old alchemical drawings, we are guided gently through the stages of the Work: *calcinatio, solutio, coagulatio, and sublimatio*. Part 2 deals with Taoist alchemy and includes the inspiring ox-herding series of pictures.

The Raincloud of Knowable Things differs in format from the preceding two volumes, as it does not reproduce seminars but consists of the Centre's weekend workshop programmes, described in full with all the explanatory talks and experiential exercises. For me this is the most important of the four volumes. Theory may be fascinating and spiritually satisfying, but it is work on oneself that is at the heart of the individuation process, and facilitating that journey is what *The Raincloud* is all about.

Many authors have written *about* the transpersonal, but this book is unique in giving a template for how to run the Centre's series of transpersonal workshops in practice, including

instructions on how to use spot imaging and guided fantasy. However although it has been designed primarily as a handbook for psychotherapists it can still be read by a layperson. Each new topic is introduced simply with definitions, and the text is peppered with illustrative diagrams.

The first three workshops, open to the general public, were a prerequisite for enrolment on the training course. The first of these covers basic concepts such as the distinction between Ego and Self, the collective unconscious, Jung's four functions, and subpersonalities, as well as introducing guided fantasy. The second explores the masculine and feminine principles, while the third deals with life cycles and growth. The chapters then progress towards more advanced material including initiation, archetypes, chakras, and the links between intuition, inspiration and will. The final chapter which bears the same title as the book, delves into one's relationship to the collective, the cosmos, and the future. The volume ends with a number of appendices providing additional information — explanatory, practical and historical.

This brings us to the final book in the series, *Symptom As Symbol*, which presents those training seminars linking physical and mental characteristics with the psyche. Overt features are viewed as symptoms of the inner. As well as physiological symptoms the standard categories of mental illness and abnormality, neurosis and psychosis and personality disorders, are examined in depth in terms of both their origin and their treatment, though the authors are at pains to point out their disapproval of labels. Therapists are warned of the many pitfalls when dealing with disturbed clients. There is a chapter on sexuality and another

on the meaning of illness. The overall message is to recognise the symptom and let it lead to the underlying cause of disturbance in the psyche with a view to achieving reintegration of that which has been split. The book ends on a positive note with the last chapter *The Transcendent Function*.

Sutich, A. Transpersonal Psychology: an emerging force. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 1968 (1),77-78.

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Who is Afraid of Scary Thoughts?

Gunnel Minett

DROPPING THE BABY AND OTHER SCARY THOUGHTS - Breaking The Cycle of Unwanted Thoughts in Motherhood

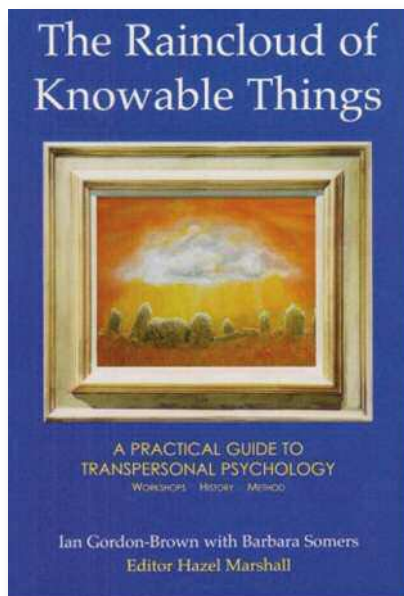
Karen Kleiman and Amy Wenzel

Routledge, Hove, 2011, £13.99, 247 pages, ISBN 978-0-415-87700-8

In America 91% of all new mothers and 88% of all new fathers struggle with 'scary thoughts' at some point following the baby's birth. 'Scary thoughts' is the generic term for intrusive, anxiety-driven thoughts that the mother or father feels are beyond their control. In some cases these thoughts may cause serious problems both for the parent and the child. One reason being that the parent (in this book it is usually the mother) may try to distance herself from her child or that the thoughts are so overpowering that they drown out everything else in the mother's life.

Up until recently having scary thoughts as a new parent has had a certain stigma attached to it. According to folklore and cultural beliefs all new parents should be delighted and confident with their new role and automatically change their way of life to fit their child's needs. And of course, as every parent would probably agree, the actual birth of your child usually has a remarkable effect on the psyche. From being a carefree soul or even a dare-devil, the new child will in most cases trigger a wave of anxiety and responsibility that we did not know we were capable of.

But being an anxious parent is different from being haunted by scary thoughts. Parents with excessive



anxiety around their role as parents may need help to become the good parent they really want to be. Unfortunately that help may not be so widely available. This is because many of the health care workers trying to assist the new parents may not have had the same level of scary thoughts as these parent. So they may not know how to help.

This is the problem that this book is addressing. As this is something that has only come out in the open it's not just parents who need to learn more about this situation. It applies equally to health care professionals. The book is therefore aimed at both groups. In addition to defining scary thoughts in clinical terms and the medical help available, it also provides parents with tools for self help. And since scary thoughts may not always be a direct consequence of becoming a parent, they may also appear in other situations in life. The book is offering very useful, practical and easy-to-use tools for anyone struggling with scary thoughts or excess anxiety in life.

It would have been interesting if the book also had included a wider view on this subject: whether the number of parents struggling with scary thoughts varies between countries or cultures, whether the numbers are the same now as 50 or 100 years ago or any other comparison to widen our understanding of this problem. For instance, currently there is what some would call an epidemic increase in parental concerns for their children's wellbeing in most of the western world. We know from constant reports in the media that parents concern about their children's safety has reached absurd levels in many cases. This refers in particular to sexual and violent crimes, whereas statistics will show that children are far more likely to be exposed to other threats during their childhood. Statistics will also show that paradoxically many of these threats (such as drugs, alcohol and street violence) come from lack of care and attention from the parents themselves, in particular when their children become teenagers.

Other facts to consider are that tranquillisers and other mood enhancing drugs are also much more widely prescribed in the western world today, not just for parents but also for hyperactive children. This may indicate that chemical or biological changes could play a role in creating excess anxiety. Demands on parents, and in particular mothers, to multi-task and juggle work and childcare are perhaps also higher now. Not that demands from work were not huge for earlier generations, but their demands

on perfection in all areas may have been less. In total there are a number of aspects that may play a vital role in understanding scary thoughts. It would therefore also be interesting to understand if there possibly could be correlations between all these aspects of parenting or if they are all unrelated coincidences. Hopefully there will be a follow-up to this book which will deal with issues of this kind.

Cheating Death?

David Lorimer

THE IMMORTALIZATION COMMISSION

John Gray

Allen Lane, 2011, 273 pp., £18.99, h/b – ISBN 978-1-846-14219-2

John Gray has a wide-ranging background in politics and European thought, and is the author of *Straw Dogs*, a critical book about humanism that I reviewed a number of years ago. Here he turns his attention to what he calls science's strange quest to cheat death in two very different ways: the belief among the distinguished early founders of the Society for Psychical Research that there was a form of life after death communicable through mediums and specifically through the complex series of what has come to be known as the cross-correspondences; and the quest in the USSR to remake mankind and free us from death (this second part, although fascinating in itself, will be of less interest to *Network Review* readers).

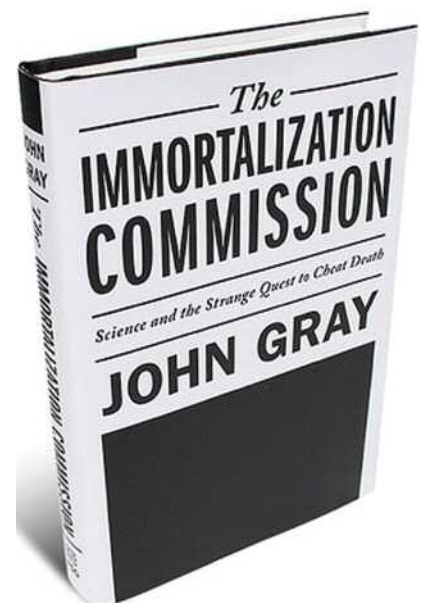
Gray's position is that Darwinism has conclusively demonstrated that human beings are no different from any other animal 'in facing final oblivion when they die and eventual extinction as a species.' For him, 'Darwinism cannot be reconciled with any idea of a post-mortem world' since the boundaries between species are blurred and shifting. However, the opposite view was espoused by Alfred Russel Wallace, much to the dismay of Darwin and Huxley. Gray comments that Wallace's conversion to spiritualism was part of a lifetime of heresy. Wallace argued that evolution was now taking place mentally and spiritually, and that this process can continue after death.

The first 100 pages are devoted to discussion of the early SPR researchers, including Henry Sidgwick, Frederic Myers and Arthur Balfour, one-time prime minister. Each of these individuals has an interesting background story that drove their interest in immortality. In the case of Sidgwick, this is related

to his work on ethics and the argument that immortality is required in order to reinforce ethical behaviour and a sense of duty in this life: without God there is no reason to be moral. Gray quotes an interesting alleged post-mortem communication from Sidgwick to the effect that we know more solve the riddle of death by dying then we solve the problem of living by being born - the extract is subtle and searching. In Sidgwick's case as well as that of Myers, there is evidence that they repressed a tendency towards homosexuality, which provides a further complicating factor.

Gray boldly states that none of the anomalous experiences investigated by the psychical researchers demonstrated post-mortem survival, although the researchers themselves disagreed, and indeed the cross-correspondences as a series of communications provide excellent evidence of individual communication, which Gray contributes to the powers of the subliminal mind, a concept invented by Myers (and he only mentions in passing the remarkable books by Geraldine Cummins purporting to originate from Myers). An important philosophical theme is the contention that there really is no substantive self, but merely a series of connected impressions, so there would be nothing substantial to survive death. This argument has been advanced by Hume and Buddhism and was also intriguing to Sidgwick, who nevertheless rejected its implications.

The concluding chapter brings both strands together with Gray arguing that the hope of life after death has been replaced by faith that death can be defeated by science, as envisaged by thinkers like Ray Kurzweil.



However, science as a tool for problem-solving creates new problems at the same time, many of which have to be addressed politically rather than scientifically. He sees science and religion as serving different human needs - religion for meaning and science for control - and he finds it ironic that the attempt to convert the world unbelief is a form of religious activity. He may well be right that both science and religion are efforts at transcendence that finish up with an acceptance that the world is beyond understanding and full of paradoxes. While I don't agree with his conclusions, Gray's sober reflections on the human condition certainly give pause for thought.

Can Consciousness be 'Magical' but not Quantum-based?

Dr Steve Minett

SOUL DUST: THE MAGIC OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Nicholas Humphrey

Quercus, 2011, 243 pp., £25, h/b - ISBN 978-1-84916-237-1

Nicholas Humphrey occupies an intriguing, 'bridging' position in the field of consciousness theory: on the one hand, he's a card-carrying, reductive, materialist who believes that mind and consciousness are entirely dependent on classical physical processes in the brain. On the other, he's a 'qualiophile'; he clearly delights in, and is enchanted by, the phenomena of raw sensory experience. Far from denying, or ignoring, qualia, like many of his fellow materialists (such as Daniel Dennett) Humphrey's latest book is replete with literary and artistic quotations extolling the virtues of everyday sensory experience.

Moreover, qualia are key to his explanation of the biological function of consciousness: Humphrey very cleverly side-steps the pitfall of most attempts to explain consciousness, which try to link it to the carrying out of some biological skill or function. No, according to Humphrey, we have consciousness not to *enable* us to do something we could not otherwise do, but rather to *encourage* us to do something we would not do: to make us *take an interest in, and mind about* things and to set ourselves goals, which we otherwise wouldn't. In other words, consciousness is about *motivation not performance!* This culminates (in Humphrey's theory) in natural selection tricking us, via consciousness, into the delusion that we have immortal souls, again purely for the beneficial, biological side-effects that this generates.

'Soul Dust' is much more about what consciousness is for than what it is: when Humphrey does stray into the territory of what causes consciousness, he nods in the direction of Hofstadter's 'strange loop' theory, which, while emerging from some extremely esoteric mathematical thinking, is still physicalist and deterministic. What is missing for me, and I suspect for many others interested in consciousness theory, is any reference to quantum mechanics. Why should this matter?

It matters because I see Humphrey's argument as an analogue of the 'God-created-the-fossil-record' position against Darwinism. As many a good Victorian bishop argued, the evidence of the fossil record was not to be taken seriously: it was simply God's way of testing our faith in the biblical creation story. In a similar way, Humphrey is now arguing that 'the Magic of Consciousness' is not to be taken as indicating any connection between human beings and any trans-biological world. Except, that is, as an evolutionarily useful delusion - a trick played on us by natural selection to promote the biological success of our complex but potentially fragile species. This position neatly corrals the wild phenomena of consciousness safely within the paddock of classical physics, fenced in by the tight bounds of functionalism.

Let me be clear: in questioning Humphrey's position, I'm not for a moment suggesting that the fact that we all experience phenomenal consciousness 'guarantees' that we all have personal, immortal souls, in the style of monotheistic theology. (I personally doubt this.) But what the 'magic' of consciousness may be

indicating is the narrowness and limitations of functionalist theory: maybe our strange experience of qualia *should* lead us to suspect a causal connection with the bizarre and 'magical' world of quantum mechanics. Patricia Churchland once complained to Stuart Hameroff that even if consciousness did turn out to have a quantum explanation, this would still be a *reductive* explanation. Hameroff replied, yes, but it would directly link our consciousness with the fundamental laws and processes of the universe, rather than reducing it to a local phenomena of classical physics. Any account of consciousness which ignores this possibility has, in my view, to be described as a case of premature closure.

Dr. Steve Minett is teacher and researcher in theories of consciousness <http://consciousnesstheories-minett.com>

ecology-futures studies

Global Glasnost and Perestroika

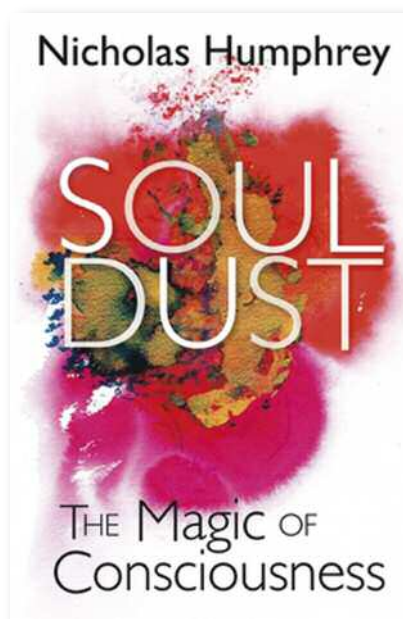
David Lorimer

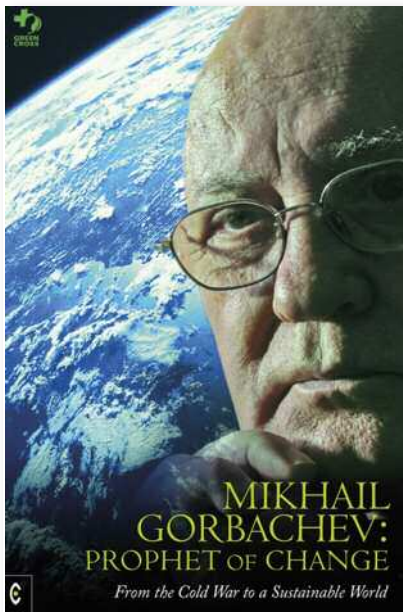
MIKHAIL GORBACHEV – PROPHET OF CHANGE

Edited by Green Cross International

Clairview, 2011, 326 pp., £14.99, p/b - ISBN 978-1-905570-31-7

Many readers will remember when they first read the words *glasnost* and *perestroika* soon after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union in 1985. The next few years were politically momentous, with the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the opening up of Eastern Europe in the late 1980s. The end of the Cold War, however, did not mark the end of militarisation, but rather a new phase in which the United States strove to dominate the world unilaterally and over the last 10 years has given priority to the war on terrorism rather than global development. Since the Second World War, military expenditure has been deeply embedded as a principal driver of the American economy; as recently as 2004, President George Bush told President Kirchner of Argentina that the best way to revitalise the economy is war. This is one area where *perestroika* (restructuring) is needed; also *glasnost*, but in a deeper sense—not just transparency but an awakening of consciousness and an implementation of universal values.





This volume has been published on the occasion of Gorbachev's 80th birthday, and brings together many of his major speeches over the last 25 years, with a short commentary at the end of each giving its wider significance in the development of his thinking. He was the first head of state to highlight the need for ecological security, and called for the establishment of an environmental equivalent to the Red Cross at the 1992 Earth Summit when he observed that the most pressing challenge for humanity is the relationship between humanity and nature. This resulted in the creation of Green Cross International in 1993, which has served as a platform for Gorbachev's work on security, eradication of poverty and environmental degradation.

The book is structured in five parts: the world in transition after the end of the Cold War, a world free of weapons of mass destruction, the green agenda, water for peace and finally a series of tributes from world leaders and colleagues. This last section highlights Gorbachev's overall contribution and the extraordinary impact he has made on so many people. One person writes about the power of his smile, while George Bush senior tells the story of the parachute jump he made on the occasion of his 80th birthday. When he landed, his friend Mikhail was waiting with his wife with a bunch of flowers and a glass of fine vodka.

Gorbachev's speeches are notable for their clarity of thought and exposition for universal values applied to the challenges of our time. Already in 1988, in an address to the UN, he remarked that 'we have entered an era where progress will be based on the interests of all mankind... and policy by the priority

of the values of all mankind in a mutually connected and integral world.' This implies a balance of interests rather than a balance of power and a capacity for genuine visionary leadership that was so conspicuously lacking at Copenhagen, with its lowest common denominator and business as usual compromise mentality.

Gorbachev succinctly summarises the main challenges to mankind's future as 'threat of catastrophic climate change, the degradation of the environment, massive poverty that breeds extremism, migration flows and state failure, diseases and epidemics, organised crime, drug trafficking and massive violations of human rights.' He rightly points out that there are no military responses to these challenges and asserts that we cannot be indifferent to the fact that governments continue with wasteful expenditures on weapons of war rather than prioritising these real threats to world security. Two brilliant speeches on the green agenda highlight the issues in a striking fashion. He calls for the replacement of an overriding culture of violence and conflict with the new culture of peace, which means developing 'a complex of attitudes, values, beliefs and patterns of behaviour that promote the quest for mutual understanding and opportunity for individuals to live harmoniously with each other and with the larger community of life.' This means promoting a new definition of global security and sustainability ethic already embodied in the Earth Charter, which should be required reading in every school.

Gorbachev is an optimist in the sense that he refuses to make do with the status quo and is consciously looking for ways to make the world a better place and help address the practical challenges—this he calls optimism by action, realising that global objectives are all interdependent. We repeatedly see 'world politics lagging behind the real processes unfolding in the world.' This represents both a credibility gap and a morality gap between stated intentions and resulting actions. He repeatedly draws attention to the dangers of continuing distorted priorities and the inertia of government inaction. This inertia, he insists, will continue to generate new crises and emergencies until world leaders develop preventive mechanisms. These have already been proposed, but 'are being shot down by those who like to talk about the ineffectiveness of the UN while doing everything to sideline the world organisation.' We need what he calls a circuit breaker.

He calls for the Earth Charter to be recognised as a third pillar of sustainable development alongside the Charter of the UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Later speeches show his grasp of the food and energy crises, and particularly issues relating to access to uncontaminated drinking water, which he vigorously argues is a basic right. This implies an update of the currently unsustainable model of development. Gorbachev resolutely remains open to new possibilities, quoting Churchill who said that it is a mistake to try to look too far ahead: 'the chain of destiny can only be grasped one link at a time.' This volume is a timely reminder of the greatness and vision of Mikhail Gorbachev - the subtitle, prophet of change, is also an urgent call to action. Not since reading the speeches of the former president of India, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, have I experienced such a powerful combination of universal values with practical proposals for the betterment of humankind and the planet.

Rescuing our Future

Chris Clarke

THE PROTEIN CRUNCH

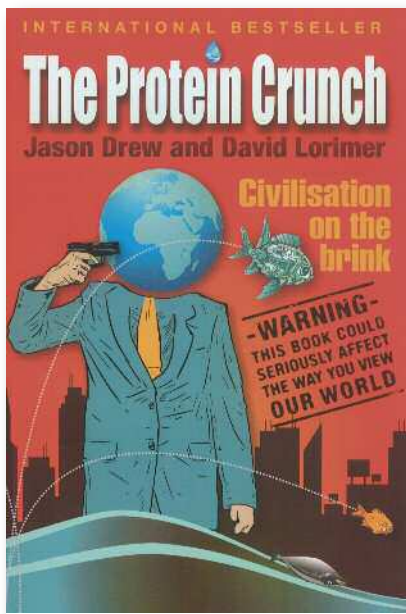
Jason Drew and David Lorimer

Print Matters Planet, 2011,
184 pp., £9.99, p/b –
ISBN 978-0-986-99762-4

'Warning,' says the cover, 'this book could seriously affect the way you view our world.' This is indeed true, and it is the reason why *The Protein Crunch* is important. Its unique contribution is to survey, in a largely unadorned litany of facts, the ways in which the many different resources of the earth on which human beings depend are now under threat, classified under the headings of water, land, seas, population and 'agri-industry'.

These are areas where I thought I was well enough informed, particularly by the summary volume of the last report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and by following up the presentation of 'Peak Oil' in Rob Hopkins' *The Transition Handbook*. Such books have shifted the views of academics and activists like myself; but they leave the majority of the population untouched or, if their immediate interests are threatened, more hostile. Jason Drew and David Lorimer paint a picture on a much broader canvas, with a different focus and a punchier style, directed to a bigger audience.

The theme is human beings: what we fundamentally need in order to



live and what we are doing to destroy the supplies of these necessities – single-mindedly cutting off the branches on which we sit. The ‘basic needs’ of humanity, on the traditional classification, are food (including water), shelter and clothing, of which the most critical is food. And food is the focus of the book, with aspects of shelter also being touched. Food depends on three areas: the quality of soil, the usage of open water and the species it supports, and a right use of irrigation. (High-tech substitutes that dispense with soil or seas are irrelevant, given our current demographic conditions and the timescale of a mere couple of decades for the sawing off our branch.) In each of these areas the authors catalogue the startling speed with which these resources are being made unusable. Because of deforestation, soil is simply being washed away at the rate of three tonnes of soil per year for every person on the planet. Current lack of action on climate change will by 2025 cut fresh water supplies so as to reduce food production by 350 million tonnes per year – equivalent to the entire US grain harvest. These are just two of the multitude of factors that are listed.

We are doing this because of the misapplication of capitalism. ‘We live,’ write the authors, ‘in an age of super-capitalism’ in which individuals and governments alike are beholden to multinational corporations. Democracy has been increasingly compromised in the interests of a controlling super-capitalist elite, before which we feel helpless. But the authors move on in the final chapter to catalogue the many areas in which we can, and must, make the

specific changes that are needed: introducing new measures of wellbeing to link to population control, education involving both head and heart for a generation that can engage with the future – and many more specific goals. The power of the internet is stressed; and after the ‘Arab revolution’, which mainly occurred after this book was written, we can add the extraordinary power exercised by mobile phones in the hands of people who are truly committed to building change.

The book is designed to be a shot of truth that almost everyone can absorb easily and quickly (in 184 pages). This inevitably requires omissions and shortcuts which occasionally niggled me. For example, although the associated website does a good job of steering you to serious research papers, there are no references at all in the book, so that I was often left wondering. This was particularly the case with the book’s title, based on the assertion that ‘When we talk about food what we really mean is protein.’ While not denying that there is an intensifying food crisis, as a vegetarian I couldn’t help questioning whether, if available protein were sensibly distributed, the critical factor would really be protein as opposed to food-energy. Another lacuna was the absence of any specific discussion of spirituality: remember the role of church buildings in the fall of communism in countries like Poland, and the role of everyday Muslim piety in much of the Arab revolution, to say nothing of the more ‘underground’ spread of spiritual awareness, far though it still has to go. But these are quibbles: buy the book and pass it on someone who needs it more than yourself as fast as possible!

Chris Clarke is a member of GreenSpirit and a writer on science, spirituality and ecology

Waiting for Ourselves

David Lorimer

HOPE – Healing Our People and Earth

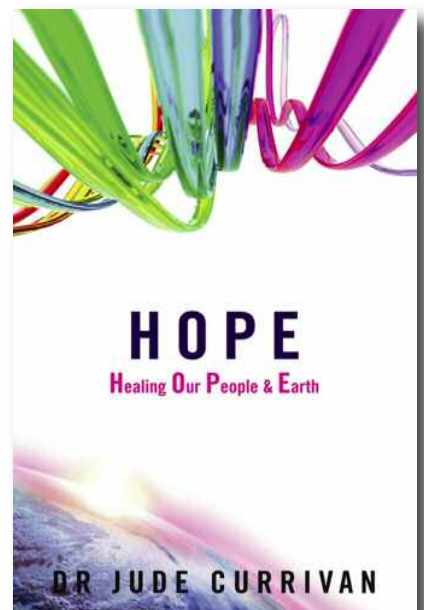
Jude Currivan (SMN)

Hay House, 2011, 333 pp., £11.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-84850-373-1

Jude Currivan did her Master’s in physics and cosmology at Oxford before completing a Ph.D. in archaeology at Reading. She is also a mystic who has travelled to many parts of the world conducting healing rituals. This gives her an interesting perspective on the world, which she expresses in this book. The scientific and mystical vision sees the Cosmos

‘as a unified cosmic hologram where consciousness explores itself by holographically co-creating realities on all scales of existence and myriad and multi-dimensional levels of awareness.’ Jude feels that we cannot have hope for the future without undertaking healing of people and planet, encouraging readers to remember their deeper identity and then to participate in this process by ‘envisaging, co-creating and embodying a planetary community at a higher level of consciousness than ever before.’ The three parts of the book address this question of identity, consider the special characteristics of individual nations and propose ways of healing the world.

Jude has both an academic and a personal experience of many of the places she visits and writes about that form part of the human heritage. She goes back to Sumeria and Egypt in her quest to understand the origins of human beliefs and behaviour, arguing that a ‘resolution’ between masculine and feminine is crucial to our collective healing and the recognition of ‘compassionate connectivity’ in our hearts. This leads on to an analysis of the need to heal five archetypal patterns of abandonment, abuse, betrayal, denial and rejection. These negative pathways cause enormous individual and collective suffering but they need to be recognised and reintegrated in order for healing to occur. She points towards a deeper level of causality where information is fundamental, the universe is integrally interconnected and cosmic mind expresses itself as energy through holographic processes at every scale of existence. This forms the basis of a potential nonlocal influence using



coherent intention and the power of love as a healing method. At this point she introduces her knowledge of astrology in relation to the times we are living through.

Jude extends this perspective into her analysis of the fundamental issues affecting nations, drawing on charts from 1776 and 2001 in the case of the USA while reviewing the history of the nation as if it were an individual. It is fascinating to read about the various waves of immigrants that make up the current population. This part is perhaps the most original, as one understands the psychological profile of the USSR in terms of abuse and the tendency to elect dictatorial leaders, of which Putin is the latest embodiment. She shows how the pathway to peace in the Middle East is in fact straightforward if people had a constructive intent; and she comments on this year's Arab spring as a yearning to break free from ancestral patterns. China and Tibet form another intractable nexus, while the UK exhibits an archetype of betrayal coming down through legend and history.

The process of healing the world involves three fundamental aspects, according to Jude. First, the return of the feminine and the consequent embodiment of unity awareness; then the transformation of our collective worldview beyond scientific materialism, implying a reconnection with the Earth; and finally the realisation that we are the ones we have been waiting for - no saviour is going to arrive from on high. Her vision has much in common with that of Gorbachev, although it is expressed in very different language: the path to peace, the need for nuclear disarmament and the necessity of reconstructing our international institutions, including

our financial system. She demonstrates a good grasp of current affairs and the complexities of the 2008 meltdown as well as the significance of the BP oil spill. As we move into 2012, there is a sense of uncertainty and possibility, which makes the crucial to support moves towards the shift we are all co-creating. Some readers may find talk of cosmic chakras uncomfortable, but the meaning is nevertheless clear as a direction in which we are evolving towards universal consciousness and unity awareness. This is certainly a book to inspire Hope.

A (Threatened) Taste of Honey

Charla Devereux

QUEEN OF THE SUN

An anthology edited by

Taggart Siegel and Jon Betz

Clairview Books, 2011, £16.99, 160 pp., p/b - ISBN: 978 1 905570 34 8

'If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would only have four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man.' (Attributed to Albert Einstein)

The honeybee population is dramatically on the decline worldwide. Like the caged canary in a mine, this is a warning – in this case, of problems in the environment due in part to the unsustainable nature of farming practices such as monoculture (growing the same crop in the same fields year after year) and the use of pesticides. Globally there are more honey bees than other types of bee and pollinating insects, and it is estimated that one third of the food that we consume each day relies on pollination mainly by bees. Flowering food crops in the UK, including apples, pears, field and broad beans, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries rely on honeybees. If this warning is not 'officially' recognised on a large scale, it could ultimately have a devastating impact on the world's food supply.

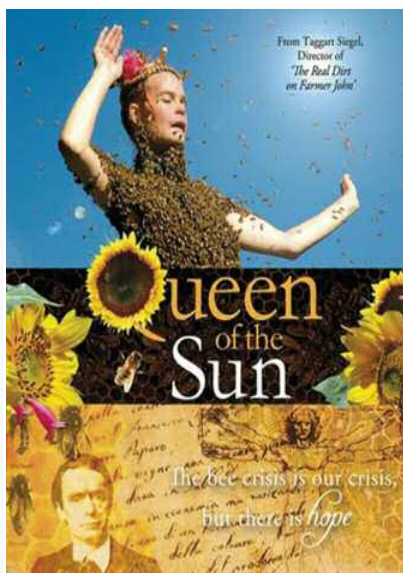
Taggart Siegel was alarmed by articles that were beginning to appear concerning the global consequences if the honeybee were to vanish. As a film director concerned with perspectives rarely popularised in the mainstream, he worked with producer Jon Betz, to make a film that would help to bring the plight of the bees to a wide audience, and this book is a companion to that film. Both film and book explore the global bee crisis

through the eyes of biodynamic and organic beekeepers, scientists, farmers, philosophers and poets, providing a history of beekeeping from natural harmony to mechanisation, and the underlying causes of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), a phenomenon in which worker bees from a beehive or honey bee colony abruptly disappear. CCD was first reported in late 2006 in North America; since then similar phenomena have been reported throughout Europe and parts of Asia.

An intriguing fact the authors bring to light is that warnings about the demise of the honeybee were voiced as early as 1923 by scientist, philosopher and social innovator Rudolf Steiner. Based on observation, he predicted that bees could die out within a hundred years if artificial methods of reproduction were to continue. He felt that the short-term advantages from such methods, being increased production yield, would not be sustainable in the long term. By the early 1970's reduction in the number of feral honeybees in the US was beginning to be noticed with the rate of attrition reaching new proportions in 2006.

Among the causes for the dramatic decline being considered are biotic factors such as Varroa mites and insect diseases, environmental stress, pesticides, radiation from cell phones, and genetically modified crops. Perhaps a combination of factors contribute to the cause. It does seem likely, however, that man's obsession to try and 'improve on nature' could very well be at the root of the problem. In addition to some of the culprits already mentioned, there is the artificially breeding of queen bees, thus interfering with the normal activities of the hive. As part of this interference, the eggs of the drones (the male bees) are culled, as the queen is bred and brought to the hive rather than being bred within the hive, and so it is felt they not only offer little to the hive but they eat honey that could be put to better use. (An interesting observation, however, is that the queen will usually lay more drone eggs in an attempt to redress the balance!) There is also concern that the artificial breeding of queen bees drastically diminishes the physical constitution of the queen. The quality of food, as sugar or corn syrup is substituted for the honey that is removed from the hive, and the stress of this unnatural practice all add to the problem.

The book contains numerous articles and interviews providing insights into the amazing world of the beehive, making for a fascinating, as well as educational read. It could be that solutions to the honey bee



problem would provide much needed insight into other ecological global problems that are becoming more and more prominent.

*Charla Devereux is Network Manager of SMN and author of several books. Her latest is *Lucid Dreaming* (2011), co-authored with her husband Paul.*

Beyond Eden

David Lorimer

GARDENING AS A SACRED ART

Jeremy Naydler (SMN)

Floris Books, 2011, 119 pp., £16.99, p/b – ISBN 978-086315-834-6

As a professional gardener himself and a scholar of symbolism and Goethe, Jeremy is ideally placed to write this book. The way we treat our gardens reflects our own attitude towards nature and the tension between feeling that we belong to Nature but at the same time wanting to control it. By tracing the history of gardening from Egypt onwards, Jeremy is able to convey the different understandings of Nature and gardens arising in various cultural milieux, including Greece, Rome and then on to the Middle Ages. He argues that the development of rational consciousness is accompanied by a growing detachment from Nature and the corresponding desire for control. The participant becomes the onlooker, the admirer of views from above. Islamic gardens express the symbolism of sacred geometry and become places

of contemplation and prayer, also representing paradise. The mediaeval *hortus conclusus* or enclosed garden is dedicated to Mary while at the same time symbolising the transformation and purification of the soul with its white lilies and red roses.

A key distinction largely lost in modern times except perhaps in Rupert Sheldrake's morphic fields is that between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. The former 'denotes the creative and formative forces that stand behind the visible world of sense perceptible forms', as understood by Schelling, Coleridge and Goethe. Nature as a spiritual subject rather than Nature viewed as a physical object. The emphasis is on the process of growth and becoming and 'the experience of the communion between the inner life of human beings and the inwardness of nature.' This experience is one of contemplation rather than observation.

The birth of perspectival consciousness coincides with the loss of symbolic consciousness and the separation of the Observer from the Observed. The geometrically laid-out formal garden is revived, as in the spectacular Villa d'Este, dating back to the late 16th century. Here we have human sovereignty over Nature and the imposition of mechanical order, including hydraulic fountains. Jeremy explains how this drive towards human supremacy reaches its climax in the gardens of Vaux-le-Vicomte (which I visited with friends last autumn) and Versailles. We learn that Fouquet's Vaux 'required the destruction of three villages, the diversion of a river and the employment of some 18,000 labourers.' Double that number was required for Versailles, along with 6,000 horses. It was a veritable military operation to try to divert the 60-mile distant River Eure to feed its fountains, an operation that cost an estimated 10,000 lives and eventually had to be abandoned.

The next development is the landscape garden, inspired by the paintings of Claude Lorraine and others. Here the gardener is working with Nature and the spirit of the place, as one can see in places like Stourhead, transformed by Capability Brown, who, in his lifetime, landscaped around 140 country estates. Here the idea is to enhance Nature, working as an artist. This impulse developed strongly during the 19th century, which saw the introduction of gardening magazines and the mechanical lawnmower during the 1830s. Jeremy introduces the work of Gertrude Jekyll and William Robinson, illustrated with

beautiful photographs. Claude Monet went even further at Giverny, where his garden was a living presence reflected in his paintings where he sought to understand the creativity in Nature and in himself. This thoughtful book challenges the gardener in us to work as an artist and experience the sacred presence around us by becoming creatively engaged with the hidden formative forces of Nature.

An Aquarian Renaissance

David Lorimer

PARADIGM PULSE

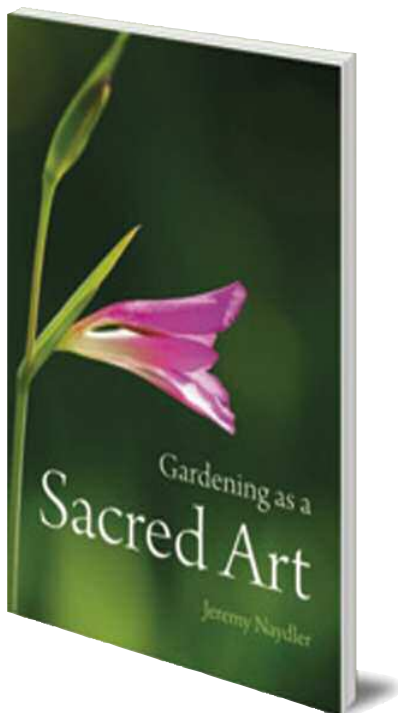
Jens Jerndal (SMN)

Xlibris, 2010, 197 pp., p/b, no price given – ISBN 978-1-4500-8712-4

Jens Jerndal has been studying and writing about various aspects of new paradigm thinking for over 20 years. This is his most comprehensive and informative book ranging over a vast field of interrelated disciplines. Readers of *Network Review* will be familiar with the arguments that we need a new and integrated worldview to supersede the fragmented outlook of mechanistic reductionism. Jens puts the case not only for the necessity of such a paradigm shift, but describes how it is already happening and how he sees its further development over the coming decades. An important moment in Western history was the formulation of the Declaration of Independence by the founding fathers of the United States in 1776. With his background in astrology, he places our culture within a wider context of human development.

Characteristic of the new paradigm is that it 'works with consciousness, information and energy, and understands that this invisible reality precedes, determines and shapes all material manifestations.' The human being is understood as a microcosm of the Original Consciousness that we call God. This implies a deep interconnectedness, which is also an important characteristic of the emerging paradigm, and is reflected in the development of our global communications systems where information is the key commodity.

Among the many themes explored are globalisation, nutrition and health, the future of medicine, science, education, energy, environment, tourism, changing patterns of relationships, sex and spirituality, the machinations of the New World Order, peace, political systems and the nature of power, and the subtle structure of the human being. The overall argument is integrated into the framework of what Jens calls the Aquarian Super-Paradigm, which is a



tour de force of integrated thinking. He is well informed and anything but naive when addressing the shortcomings of current political, economic, scientific and medical systems. In all these areas, he makes detailed proposals for new models and structures.

The key question is how this will all come about. On one level, elements of this new paradigm are already shaping our thinking, as Jens demonstrates, and we can see growing crises emerging within the current systems, into their own hands rather than being controlled and manipulated by the powers that be through fear. This means a growing empowerment and freedom, more cooperation and harmony, and an expansion of human capacities and potential. The vision of this accessible book will help understand and become more aware of these new possibilities. You can also visit Jens' blog on www.ParadigmWatch.com/index.php

general

A State Crime against Democracy?

David Lorimer

9/11 – TEN YEARS LATER

David Ray Griffin

Haus Publishing, 2011,
378 pp., £8.99, p/b –
ISBN 978-1-907822-38-4

Earlier this year, before the 10th anniversary of 9/11, it was dramatically announced that Osama bin Laden had been killed and buried at sea. How do we really know? One of Griffin's earlier books examined the question of whether he was still alive and the faking of a number of alleged video broadcasts. Indeed, the claim that bin Laden was responsible for 9/11 was questioned by the FBI, whose spokesman said that 'he has not been formally indicted and charged in connection with 9/11 because the FBI has no hard evidence connecting bin Laden to 9/11.' The British government document justifying the attack on Afghanistan ironically stated that it did not provide a prosecutable case in a court of law. Immediately after the event, bin Laden said that he was glad that the attacks had happened but had no information about them.

The confession videos may well be fake. In the event, the US government claimed that justice had been done by killing bin Laden when no judicial case had been prepared against him (p. 12).

Having reviewed all Griffin's previous books on 9/11, I found this one to be a good summary of the case already made, but also asking the question why mainstream journalists have reacted in the way they have when many of these same people, if investigating other matters, would have reached Griffin's uncomfortable conclusion. By and large, they have accepted the official version of events and attacked people like Griffin without actually reading his books. It is assumed by self-styled rational people that the 9/11 Truth Movement is full of conspiracy nutters who have not examined the evidence. In fact, the reverse is true. It is writers like Griffin who have carefully examined the evidence and based their conclusions on this analysis. Initial problems for the official explanation include the fact that there were no Arab names on the flight manifests of the four flights involved, that one of the named hijackers had died the year before, and another one was still alive. Then there are absurdities like the claim that a hijacker's passport was found in the street below World Trade Center. Griffin concludes that 9/11 is an elaborate example of a false-flag attack, as he had also argued in more detail in earlier books.

Griffin summarises and reiterates his case from an earlier extensive work that the collapse of WTC7 was a textbook example of controlled demolition, a theory that has been extensively supported by many qualified professionals. A number of journalists have said that the 9/11 conspiracy theory (one needs to remember that the official explanation is also a conspiracy theory) is in danger of discrediting the journalist who supports it or serving as a distraction from more important matters. Griffin refutes both of these charges, showing the *prima facie* absurdity of the official conspiracy theory (p. 54) and that among scientists and professionals in the relevant fields who have studied the evidence, the weight of scientific and professional opinion is now overwhelmingly on the side of the 9/11 Truth Movement. And it is

easy to see that the war on terror resulting from 9/11 has been the most enormous distraction from pressing global challenges.

Griffin addresses the particular cases of Bill Moyers and Robert Parry who claim that there are no anomalies to explain in the official explanation. This is manifest nonsense, as each of Griffin's claims is carefully argued and substantiated. Here he brings in the Big Lie (state crimes against democracy can be hidden in plain sight) and the argument that the very idea that 9/11 could have been an inside job is preposterous to any right-thinking person. This reaction, shared by many before they examine the evidence, is quite understandable in the light of what Griffin calls the nationalist faith, often closely aligned with Christian faith - the idea that the US government is fundamentally virtuous. It is therefore outrageous to think that the US government could have been complicit in 9/11, despite the fact that it has initiated and supported other false-flag operations. Griffin's arguments make such people feel very uneasy and fosters a reluctance to look at the evidence in case this belief is undermined. This syndrome has clearly affected mainstream publishers previously associated with Griffin's work, as well as journalism. Some people like to think that his arguments have been debunked, but he himself has thoroughly debunked the debunkers.

The final chapter summarises the evidence for 9/11 being a false-flag attack, giving details of the many professionals who have become involved in the 9/11 Truth Movement, including some former intelligence officers. In asking why the crime succeeded, Griffin gives a number of psychological and sociological reasons, including rallying round the flag and the instinct to trust the President and the government. His analysis extends to the reactions of the press and the academy, and the fact that the attacks were used to for an assault on the US Constitution with the implementation of the Patriot Act. Griffin concludes that getting the 9/11 lie exposed is still a critical mission, even if only to prevent further events of a similar nature – 'unless we want to continue false-flag attacks, we should do our best to uncover the truth about 9/11.' Griffin has courageously staked his

DO YOU HAVE ANY PHOTOGRAPHS OF A NETWORK GROUP, WORKSHOP OR CONFERENCE? If so, please send them to Olly Robinson at olly@scimednet.org for publication in the Network Review

reputation as a leading process philosophy and theologian on the books he has written in the last 10 years. The call for a proper investigation should continue, and it is one that most readers would support having read this book. So if you are interested in this issue and have still not read any of Griffin's books on the subject, this is a good place to start.

Growing Wisdom

David Lorimer

THE ART OF AGEING

John Lane

Green Books, 2010, 127 pp., £10.95, h/b - ISBN 978-1-900322-73-7

Dr Sheila Cassidy writes about this new book by John Lane that it is a delightful source of practical and spiritual wisdom distilled from a life well lived. I could not agree more. It follows his earlier books, which I also reviewed, *Timeless Simplicity*, *Timeless Beauty* and *The Spirit of Silence*. John begins by observing that life's impermanence renders it precious, encouraging us to appreciate each moment of beauty and 'waste no opportunity for learning and love', quoting in this context a beautiful poem by A.E. Housman about cherry blossom. There is much to celebrate about old age. John tells the story of Pablo Casals continuing to practise the cello for three hours a day at the age of 93. When asked why he did this, he replied, 'I'm beginning to notice some improvement.' John himself remarks on the shift from outer to inner concerns, so that joy, silence, stillness and contemplation become

more important. One also becomes more free inwardly, even if old age presents inevitable physical and psychological challenges.

It is commonplace to observe that we have an ageing population. Even so it is quite startling to learn that the Queen sent 255 telegrams congratulating people on reaching the age of 100 in 1952, a figure that has risen to over 12,000 today. While traditional societies revere elders for their wisdom, modern society tends to regard older people as a burden rather than a resource. We will all eventually need to know how best to cope with ageing, and here John has some excellent advice for coping with stress and negative feelings. I was delighted to see Henri-Frederic Amiel quoted as saying, 'to know how to grow old is the masterwork of wisdom and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living.' We can delay the advent of debilitating old age through basic healthy living and by maintaining an interest in life and a sense of humour. John also recommends the daily practice of an activity that energises you whether it be walking, reading, music or gardening. This helps one remain adaptable and creative.

John rightly insists that we get from life in the measure with which we give to it, and that our growth demands imagination, selective choice and effort. Many artists have remained creative in their old age, such as Monet, Vaughan Williams, Bonnard, Handel and Goethe. Fanny Waterman, still active at the age of 90, remarked that 'you don't stop working because you grow old; you grow old because you stop working.' Old age is also a time of reflection on what might come next. John's own view is that we should focus on how best to live our current life rather than being obsessed with a hereafter. Attending other people's funerals gives one pause for thought and an occasion for celebration of lives well lived. Proust wrote that we do not receive wisdom, but must rather discover it for ourselves after a long journey that no one can take for us or spare us. I also liked the quotation from Eleanor Roosevelt, who said that 'beautiful young people are accidents of nature, beautiful old people are works of art.'

The last section of the book introduces a number of old people who have made good and inspiring use of their lives. These contain some simple but profound nuggets of advice, such as savouring the moment, safeguarding your health, trying something new, and having an attitude of gratitude. I had not realised that James Lovelock, now aged 92, had severe angina at the age of 50,

but resolved that he was going to climb neighbouring hill. Now he can still climb over fences by himself. In this way, he helped rebuild a new set of arteries. This put me in mind of the chestnut trees we have in Scotland, which were blasted by strong gales in May this year. The leaves turned brown, and it looked like the end of September. However, these same trees actually grew a new set of leaves to replace those that had been scorched. It is a wonderful parable of life's capacity for renewal, which we should never lose at any time of life. Inspire and renew yourself by reading this gem of a book.

Maltese Megaliths and Mystery

Paul Devereux

ANCESTRAL VISIONS

Marlene Saliba

Fotografija Principali/Daniel Cilia, 2011, 300pp. p/b - ISBN 978-99932-0-572-2

This is a physically substantial, handsome volume. Its contents are divided into two sections: the first has Saliba's poems in Maltese, the second has them in English language, but each section has its own selection of superb colour plates. And there are dozens of them, not only of Malta's many ancient and truly mysterious temples, some shown with the sun shining through at key astronomical times, but also of the smaller artefacts that have been unearthed: here a decorated pot, there a spiral-incised plaque, and, above all, statues and figurines, many never seen previously by this reviewer (and doubtless most readers). One among numerous powerful images is that of a set of nine figurines found at the Xaghra Circle staring out across the millennia at the viewer: a glance of and from another time, another sensibility. Amidst the gallery of prehistoric spirals, mother goddess figures, and reliefs of fish, phalli and cattle, are sprinkled the works of modern artists inspired by the megalithic mystique of Malta.

Marlene Saliba is an intelligent, knowledgeable woman, immersed in the spirit of Malta and equally with its archaeology. Her poetry provides the interiority, if you will, of the material remains of the prehistoric Maltese civilisation. One of her poem ends:

*Peace of the reclining, seated,
and standing statues
sculpt serenity
in the sanctuary
of my soul*

The soul of ancient Malta is indeed captured in this book.

The Art of Ageing

Inspiration for a positive
and abundant later life



JOHN LANE