

book reviews

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science-philosophy of science

Beyond Dualism

Martin Lockley

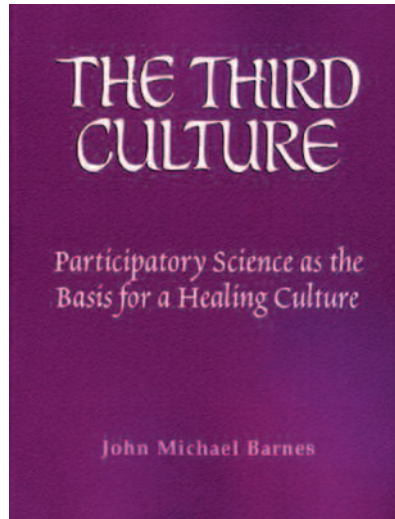
THE THIRD CULTURE

John Michael Barnes

Adonis Press, 2009, 138 pp.,
\$15.00, p/b -
ISBN 1 978 0 932776 40 2

John Barnes, author and moving force behind Adonis Press, writes: 'There is no greater satisfaction for the forces of the human soul than to participate in, to discover, the creative principles at work in nature. For they are of the same origin.' This succinctly tells the story of the Goethean approach to science and explains the book's subtitle: *Participatory Science as the basis for a Healing Culture*. Put another way 'Nature's laws *manifest* in the external physical world; but they *reveal* themselves to us only through our own inner capacities and individual efforts.' (Original italics). [As an aside, I wonder whether the Eureka moment of 'revelation' is always conscious. Are we not often drawn to certain teachers, paradigms, philosophies or spiritual traditions because of inner 'soul' stirrings because of a sense of knowing that we may not be able to articulate?]

My 'Eureka moment,' which later served as a doorway to Goethean Science and Anthroposophy, came from reading a biology text – *Man and Mammals*, by Wolfgang Schäd. Crudely I thought 'why don't they teach biology this way?'— which I now know they do in Waldorf Schools. More subtly, on reflection, this revelatory text awakened my inner capacities to 'know' that Schäd had revealed laws of nature as yet unknown (un-revealed) to most biologists. So Goethean thinking, developed by Rudolf Steiner into Anthroposophical thinking is a fine example of *The Third Culture* which seeks to integrate what C. P. Snow famously, in 1956, called *The Two Cultures*, a mindset which has artificially divided the western world into objective science and subjective art. Historically, whether we look at Plato's distinction between the ideal world of thought and the 'ephemeral word of the senses' or Francis



Bacon's claim that 'religion belongs to a realm apart from the purely objective world of scientific facts' it is not hard to see how Dualism has ruled western intellectual thought. Iain McGilchrist's masterful exposition on the brain's division into holistic right (master) and objectifying left (emissary) lobes highlights the psychological underpinning of historical cultural dichotomies.

Although Barnes' little book contains much which anthroposophically-inclined readers will find familiar, he enlists valuable input from other sources including former Czech Republic president Vaclav Havel who saw communism as a product of reductionist objective thinking that ultimately 'was not defeated by military force but by life, by the human spirit, by conscience, by the resistance of Being and of man to manipulation.' Havel also noted our dilemma as we try to find 'an objective way out of the crisis of objectivism.' Barnes also devotes much attention to Michael Polanyi and his concerns about the fallacy of objectivism, which can never be 'fully independent of our human experience.' Echoing previous statements Polanyi understood that 'Reality... is not something objectively given. It is only through our imaginative and intuitive vision that we begin to grasp it.' Put another way 'personal knowledge' involves 'two levels of awareness: the lower one for the clues or parts' given through sense perception... 'and the higher one' apprehended through our own cognitive activity.

These different levels of cognitive function resonate with different levels of organisation in nature. Thus the inorganic and organic worlds, the latter displaying morphogenetic fields, are fundamentally different, and 'biotic achievements cannot – *logically cannot* – be ever represented in terms of physics and chemistry.' With a living entity 'we *integrate mentally what living beings integrate practically* ... by dwelling in its motions in our efforts to understand their meaning.' (Original italics). [These ideas converge various hierarchical schemes of organisation proposed by Ervin Laszlo and Ken Wilber. For example, the Physiosphere, Biosphere and Noosphere have increasing 'depth' and complexity and decreasing 'span' as well as being subject to different organising principles.]

One of the best examples of the participatory process comes from the study of plant metamorphosis, pioneered by Goethe. Looking at the sequence of leaves on a plant we integrate mentally (the individual leaf morphology relationships) doing what the plant does practically, and so see the 'formative movements' (the metamorphosis of one form into another) which are not given directly to the senses. Schiller famously challenged Goethe with the abstract notion that 'This is not an observation from experience, it is an idea.' To which Goethe, frustrated at Schiller's lack of true understanding, replied 'Then I may rejoice that I have ideas without knowing it and can even see them with my own eyes.' As Arthur Zajonc says 'The light of the mind must flow into and marry with the light of nature to bring forth a world.' Steiner goes so far as to say that 'The outer world is, in the end, only a physiognomy of a spiritual world.' When Goethe's friend Jacobi said that 'Nature conceals God!' Goethe replied 'But not from everyone!' According to Barnes and many in the anthroposophical community 'in the broad context of the evolution of human consciousness Goethe takes his place as a pioneer of a scientific method that leads from the empirical observation of nature to a new grasp of the spiritual principles that work within it.' [Again this is not an abstraction].

For most of us it is probably impossible to understand Goethean Science in any depth without some help from Steiner who called Goethe 'the Galileo of the organic world.' Steiner understood that Goethe's idealism dealt not with some 'dreamed up [abstract] oneness of all things' but with the 'concrete idea-content of reality' – a 'transformed cognitive capacity capable of participating in the forces at work in organic nature.' According to Steiner these concrete capacities, include imagination (related to thinking), inspiration (related to feeling) and intuition (related to willing). As these capacities are realised through proper nurturing the human (soul) may experience a new birth or metamorphosis: but if development deviates from the natural organic formative stream these growth potentialities are not realised.

Steiner agreed with Goethe that in the past art, science and religion (beauty, truth and goodness) had been united through a dreamlike perception of the divine in all things, but that their separation had become necessary for the evolution of human consciousness. But 'Humanity has now reached the age when these three streams want to come together again. Further separation would deprive the human soul of its health.' This dynamic (of expansion and contraction) is seen in Barfield's cycle of participation, separation and final participation, and again owes much to Steiner's influence. So 'just as modern materialistic science developed during the Renaissance to satisfy the inner inclinations and realise the inner potential of western humanity, thus participatory science is arising today in response to the needs awakened by a further evolution of human consciousness.'

Barnes is effective in using anthroposophical language to delineate trends which often make good historical sense even without drawing on this spiritual science tradition. But we must give credit where it is due. Our struggles to overcome the 'crisis of objectivism' would be much tougher without these insights. As McGilchrist has stressed, abstraction, materialism and objectivism are still entrenched and it is only in recognising the true potential of our participatory consciousness that we can effect a healing and bring about third culture appropriate to the third millennium.

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How Life and Evolution Work

John Kapp

A NEW SCIENCE OF LIFE Rupert Sheldrake (SMN)

Icon books, 2009 (3rd edition),
370 pp., £9.99, p/b -
ISBN 978 184831042

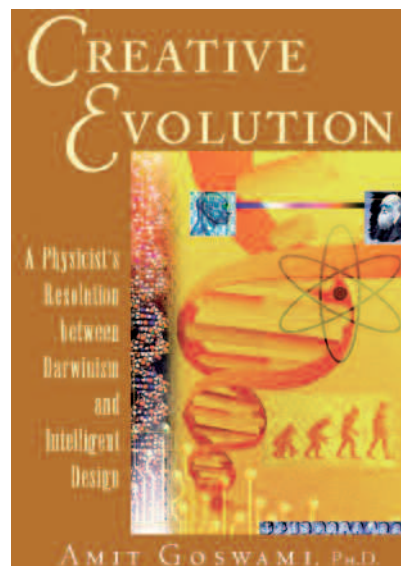
CREATIVE EVOLUTION – A PHYSICIST'S RESOLUTION BETWEEN DARWINISM AND INTELLIGENT DESIGN

Amit Goswami

Quest Books, 2008, 339 pp., \$26.95,
h/b – ISBN 978 0 8356 085 9

Both authors write that life is a non-material influence. They eschew political correctness, putting the search for truth above personal acclaim, and paid the price – ridicule and marginalisation. Sheldrake's book in 1981 got scathing reviews: 'A Book for Burning?' ... 'This infuriating tract' ... 'magic and heresy instead of science.' Despite working at the University of Oregon for 35 years, Prof Goswami was never allowed to present his views there.

Both books expose the empty promises of materialist science and its sterile, depressing philosophy of genetic determinism. 'Can you really believe that all your thoughts and meanings, your feelings and struggles with values, and indeed your consciousness itself, are just the result of a random dance of elementary particles?' (p. 14) The authors develop a theoretical mechanism by which life and evolution works, namely by morphic resonance, in which genes play no part. Creatures are tuned like radios, or ships guided by radar by what Sheldrake calls 'formative causation', and Goswami calls 'downward causation from consciousness'.



According to Sheldrake, morphic fields are subtle energy beaming down on us from the universe. They contain intelligent in-form-ation, and create life, form, behaviour, and memory. 'Morphic' fields determine the form of the creature. 'Morpho-genetic' fields create the evolution of form. 'Behavioural' fields determine behaviour. Morphic resonance recalls memory when tuned to the right frequency.

Like electromotive and gravitational fields, morphic fields cannot be observed directly. They traverse empty space, (or may even actually constitute it) and are capable of influencing physical changes to create order at a distance without any material connection between them, (called 'non-locality' in quantum physics) They apply at *all* levels of complexity, influencing such things as protons, nitrogen atoms, water molecules, sodium chloride crystals, muscle cells of earthworms, kidneys of sheep, elephants, beech trees, etc.

Cosmic evolution involves an interplay of habit and creativity, as manifestations of an eternal, timeless set of archetypes. Morphic fields evolved causally (upward causation) from what habitually happened before. All animals and plants draw upon and contribute to a collective memory of their species. This is learned telepathically, (by downward causation) so it becomes easier for others to learn, no matter where they are in the world. Crystals and molecules also follow the habits of their kind in a similar way. Sheldrake posits the following four alternative metaphysical theories of creation, but leaves the choice between them open to the reader to decide for himself:

a) Modified materialism, in which consciousness is either an aspect of, or runs parallel to the morphic fields acting on the brain. All human creativity must ultimately ascribed to chance... human life has no purpose beyond the satisfaction of biological and social needs; nor has the evolution of life, nor the universe as a whole, any purpose or direction.

b) The conscious self, which acts on the morphic fields, remaining over and above them, as the formative cause of formative causes.

c) The creative universe, which is capable of giving rise to new forms, and new patterns of behaviour, imminent in life as a whole (what Bergson called 'élan vital') .It could be imminent in the planet as a whole, the solar system, or the entire universe. There could indeed be a hierarchy of imminent creativities at all these levels.

d) Transcendent reality, in which the universe as a whole could have a

cause and a purpose only if it were itself created by a conscious agent or being that transcended it as its source. All created things would then in some sense participate in its nature. The more or less limited wholeness of organisations at all levels of complexity could then be seen as a reflection of the transcendent unity on which they depended, and from which they were ultimately derived. (p237)

Goswami goes further, opting for d) above in his use of 'God' as synonymous with consciousness. His mission is to integrate science and spirituality within consciousness, and in this latest book he integrates biology with evolution by intelligent design, created by a purposive designer. The following abyss of unexplained phenomena in biology can only be bridged by introducing the organising principles of vitalism and consciousness:

- (a) Biologists know much about the molecules and their attendant processes, but next to nothing about the blueprints for how life places them in the right place at the right time. It does so, not by genes, but by downloaded memory in morphic resonance, tuned to the right frequency.
- (b) The fast tempo of macro-evolution in the fossil gaps. These are acts of creation by the quantum leaps of downward causation which operates alongside upward causation (linear development).
- (c) What we experience inside us – feeling, thinking, intuition, qualia, self. These are explained by non-material consciousness in the vital body of the aura and chakra system.
- (d) Mind cannot be an epiphenomenon of the brain because matter cannot process meaning. Brain is matter substance and mind is meaning-giver substance. Both need a mediator - consciousness - to mediate their interaction. They both consist of quantum possibilities of consciousness, brain being matter-possibility and mind being meaning-possibility. Quantum consciousness collapses the possibility waves of both brain and mind to create an experience of mental meaning, (called a thought), and at the same time create a memory of that meaning. The evidence for this is our everyday experience, such as triggering memory to replay meaning, creativity, synchronicity, dreams in which meaning unfolds,

wrongness in meaning producing illness (such as cancer) which can be healed by a quantum leap in meaning that unblocks the vital energy (pp. 252-5)

What should we do about the new meaning from these books?

Our destructive tendency comes from our psycho-social conditioning. When we rise above this even temporarily, we can change. We can be harmonious with our ecosystem, with our whole planet, with Gaia, not by wishing, nor by philosophy, but only through intention and the creative process, that is by taking a discontinuous quantum leap. We then realise one astounding thing. I choose, therefore I am, and my world is. The world is not separate from us. When we do this en masse, we leap into a truly Gaia consciousness. (p. 295)

Ambassadors from Akashic Adventureland Martin Lockley

THE AKASHIC EXPERIENCE: SCIENCE AND THE COSMIC MEMORY FIELD Ervin Laszlo (SMN)

Inner Traditions, 2009, 278 pp.,
\$16.95 p/b -
ISBN 1 978 159477298 6

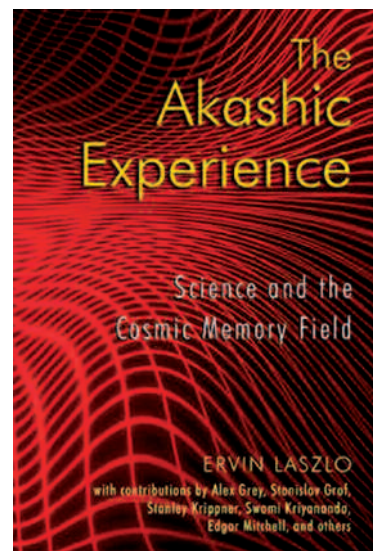
It does not seem that long ago that Laszlo's 75th book – *Science and the Akashic Field* was reviewed in the Network (90: 2005). In the meantime he's been busy as his latest contribution – *The Akashic Experience* – brings his total up to a mere 83 books! To Laszlo's credit there is little repetition in this latest oeuvre. Unlike book 75 which was a scientific exposition on such exotic topics as the quantum vacuum, holographic and zero point fields, and Bose-Einstein condensates, book 83 is mostly a compilation of reports of personal experiences from a number of well known pioneers in disciplines that we might loosely characterise as alternative, transpersonal psychology, medicine and consciousness studies. Well-known contributors include psychologists like Stanislav Grof, David Loye, and Maria Sági, the visionary artist Alex Grey, the celebrated physician Larry Dossey and the astronaut Edgar Mitchell. Like Laszlo, Dossey, Mitchell and Sági are SMN members, and the book's later chapters refer to the work of Peter Fenwick and David Lorimer.

Largely leaving aside detailed scientific exposition Laszlo explains

that 'the Akashic Experience is a lived experience in the extra- or non-sensory mode' in which the subject no longer feels separate from the objects of experience. This, according to Laszlo, is 'clear testimony that we are connected to an information and memory field objectively present in nature.' This in turn leads to the conclusion that 'The primary stuff of the universe is energy and not matter, and space is neither empty or passive— it's filled with virtual energies and information. The universe is an evolving integral system, staggeringly coherent and interconnected.'

The proof of these interpretations is in the experiential pudding – the varied and sometimes remarkable testimony of Laszlo's 20 contributors whose Akashic Experiences could be categorised as various types of spiritual or religious experience. Several of these people, including C. J. Martes (Chapter 1) and Jude Currivan (Chapter 5) learned of their spiritual sensitivity at a young age when seeing, hearing or sensing divine or spiritual beings. Currivan reports one spiritual guardian 'so energetic that I felt my whole body vibrating.' [This sounds like certain kundalini experience reports]. Others like David Loye report insights into past lives that were compellingly verified by subsequent research and coincidences that brought them to key locations never previously visited, but somehow known through extra-sensory *deja-vu* experience.

Beyond the realm of personal experience several of Laszlo's Akashic Ambassadors have applied their intuitions in education and healing. Christopher Bache relates that his resonant, group-mind teaching experiences at the California Institute of Integral Studies convinced him that '*Clarified states of consciousness are contagious*' (his emphasis) and that 'our spiritual ecology simply does not



permit private awakening.' Maria Sági recounts how she came to understand and practice remote healing ultimately concluding that 'the Akashic field is not an abstract theoretical concept but a working reality.' However, as Eric Pearl (Chapter 13) notes, his experience of 'reconnecting' with the Akashic field was facilitated by his patients recounting some of the same bizarre and quite unexpected experiences he himself had undergone. This unexpected resonance snowballed as they were suddenly and unusually responsive to his healing touch when his hands were nowhere making direct contact. The patients felt cool breezes while his hands often blistered, and even bled, — 'not like stigmata' but with little pin prick drops. Some patients even acquired the ability to heal their relatives instinctively with 'hands near' not actual 'hands on' touch. In one remarkable three month period many patients had the same experience of hearing distinct phrases about 'bringing light and information to the planet' and the need to continue this work.

The lessons learned by Pearl and his patients were that 'A doorway opened' that allowed them to open doors for others. Moreover they felt that healing and 'field interaction' could not really be taught: rather it 'comes about' when one opens one's awareness to it — when one gives oneself 'permission to acknowledge' it. On a related note Masami Saionji (Chapter 14) makes a particularly powerful statement about the negative and positive power of intention, declaring that 'the energy of our every word ...flies into the creative fields that are forming around us, greatly intensifying their activity. Not only do these creative fields generate our individual happiness or unhappiness, but they also give rise to world conditions of poverty or abundance, respect or discrimination, environmental destruction or rebirth, war or peace.'

The final section of the book deals with experimental effort to understand the Akashic Field with psi experiments and the like. Grof also gives fascinating clinical examples of past life and reports one patient who claimed that 'emotionally charged memories could be imprinted in the genetic code and transmitted...to future generations.' Whether this Lamarckian 'mechanism' can be evoked rather than Akashic field energy is, I suspect, highly debatable. However, the suggestion that traumatic past life experiences are more readily remembered, or that what David Lorimer calls 'empathetic resonance' between emotionally connected friends and relatives

(especially twins) is strong, certainly rings true as countless examples attest. So, it is unfortunate if the powerful reactions that often attend such psychospiritual sensitivity are misread by clinicians as psychotic episodes (or by sceptics as nonsense). Dossey calls such resonances 'non local mind' connections and others note that they may convey influence and intentions not just in the present but in the past and future also.

The bottom line is that consciousness remains a mystery: as Jerry Fodor says 'Nobody has the slightest idea how anything material could be conscious... so much for a philosophy of consciousness.' In conclusion Laszlo summarises his take on some fifteen years investigating the Akashic field with a summary, scientific exposition touching on non-locality and other quantum phenomena which allow particles to cohere or de-cohere as a result of their interactions. This seems to suggest that, like people, no entity has permanent intrinsic properties of self independent of the other. Thus 'the Akashic field is a field of quantum holograms, a kind of superconducting cosmic medium.' Simply put, perhaps for those unable to assess quantum arguments unequivocally, the universe is only 'one kind of thing.' This four word summary (my emphasis) may not be a literary masterpiece, but if true the conclusion resonates with perennial wisdom that sees the universe holistically as a unified and coherent flux of energy matter of which we are a conscious organ 'blessed — or cursed — with the consummate passion to find out'... [and even in Laszlo's case enjoy] '...the intuitive certainly that the world of life, mind, and universe is dynamic and whole, and intrinsically knowable.' I predict that sceptics will dismiss many claims and interpretations as speculative, or worse, but for me Laszlo remains an intriguing and inspiring ambassador from the domain of Akashic adventureland.

Virtue is a Weak Force

Mike King

SOLAR

Ian McEwan

Jonathan Cape Ltd, 2010, 304 pp., £8.89, h/b, ISBN 9780224090490

I read *Solar* on the Eurostar on the way to a conference in Luxembourg on integral studies. Two of the opening keynote speakers made reference to it, one quoting a passage I had just read. How's that for synchronicity? But *Solar's*

unlikeable womanising protagonist, Michael Beard, would have had only scorn for such a term. He is the scientist that the SMN despairs of: an unremitting hardboiled positivist. He is also a man that feminists would despair of, taking no interest in children, or sharing the housework, or expressing his emotions bar lust. But he is very bright, and when he sets out to woo his first love at Oxford, a humanities student, he bones up on Milton and wins her with his recitation — though he suspects the poem is a 'monstrous bluff'. This in fact is at the core of the novel: a Two Cultures clash, a little reminiscent of David Lodge's *Thinks...* Where Lodge's novel places the emerging science of consciousness at its heart — and is almost a primer of the discipline — *Solar* is concerned with the science of global warming.

Beard is a Nobel Laureate coasting on his former success, now overweight and uninspired until a young PhD leaves him notes on artificial photosynthesis. He heads up a Government effort to find new energy sources, and shares out amongst the young PhDs the task of reading crank submissions by the hundred, most of them variations on perpetual motion machines (or what are now euphemistically called 'over-unity devices'). This gives us an early insight into Beard's scientific philosophy when he dismisses zero-point energy and then reflects on quantum theory. 'What a repository, a dump, of human aspiration it was, the borderland where mathematical rigour defeated common sense, and reason and fantasy irrationally merged. Here, the mystically inclined could find whatever they required, and claim science as their proof.' This is not the first time McEwan has targeted mysticism: in *Enduring Love* the protagonist, a science writer, is



stalked by a mystic. McEwan has Beard reflect later on about Einstein's discomfort with quantum theory – about 'long-range spooky correlations' – and Beard's own lost hopes to be the scientist to resolve the paradox.

Beard is a 'realist' in the philosophy of science, and this gets interesting when he first encounters serious academics who claim, for example, that the gene is a human construct. This is where the two cultures become more specifically physics on one side and the social sciences on the other, in this instance the discipline of social anthropology. Beard had learned that 'humanities students were routinely taught that science was just one more belief system, no more or less truthful than religion or astrology.' McEwan's brilliance here is to understand these two cultures as almost hermetically sealed from each other, yet be able to paint convincing portraits on either side. We learn this about Beard, a perfect little detail: 'He has always thought this must be a slur against his colleagues on the arts side.' It is quite credible that a physics graduate with a stellar career in the subject should have a mindset so far removed from the arts as to find the notion that they think science a social construct a slur on them. Nor do we find it surprising that Beard hasn't often encountered the term 'hegemony' in his discipline.

While McEwan's humanities professors are no more likeable than Beard, McEwan appears to take the realist position in science. When it comes to climate change one could argue that this is perhaps a vital message to get over. Beard encounters a lecturer in urban studies and folklore attending one of his presentations on solar panel technology and is alarmed to hear: 'I'm interested in the forms of narrative that climate science has generated. It's an epic story, of course, with a million authors.' The degree to which humanities graduates genuinely believe that science is a construct or social narrative and nothing else, is the degree to which the findings of climate change science will be shrugged off by humankind. But McEwan has Beard reflect on another human dynamic in the response to global warming: that 'virtue' is too weak a force: just 'going to the bottle bank and turning down the thermostat and buying a smaller car' will only delay the catastrophe.

The novel is not all science of course: Beard's utter caddishness propels him towards his own catastrophe in a drama that is filled with women who inexplicably love him and want to have his babies, and

filled with antagonists he has trampled over in his rise to eminence. The novel also includes some extremely funny moments: I laughed aloud on the Eurostar at one point over an encounter Beard has on a train involving a packet of crisps and a bottle of mineral water. But most of all this is a novel where science – real serious science – is the backdrop to the drama, and at the same time the subject of thoughtful presentation. The climate change science itself does not get a great deal of airing – which is probably a good strategy given its complexity – but the broader questions of the nature of science do. The kind of realism that it takes to work in the hard sciences is an almost invisible metier for its practitioners, so there is a very real jolt when such practitioners encounter the doctrines of the humanities. The Sokal incident some years ago is a good example of the gulf of comprehension across these two communities.

Another contentious point raised by *Solar* is the idea that a scientist can master the humanities more easily than the other way round. Richard Dawkins for example appears to speak eloquently about poetry, but it is rare for an arts person to make much progress in physics: the maths is too hard. The physicist Richard Feynman once made a deal with a painter friend to exchange skillsets, but the artist gave up before long. Feynman however continued to paint and even get regular exhibitions long after. Is this imbalance inevitable?

Top marks to McEwan for pursuing such questions in a highly entertaining form.

The Surprising Spiritual Truth about Evolution

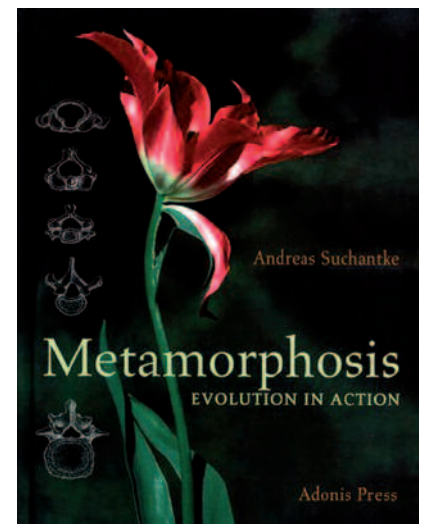
Martin Lockley

METAMORPHOSIS: EVOLUTION IN ACTION

Andreas Suchantke

Adonis Press, 2009, 429 pp., \$50.00, h/b - ISBN 978 0932776 396 5

Metamorphosis is a truly exceptional and beautiful book which imparts extraordinary insight into the mysterious but highly ordered processes of evolution. Andreas Suchantke comes very much from the same Rudolph Steiner tradition as a number of other authors like Jos Verhulst and Johannes Rohen who have recently produced remarkable works on evolutionary biology through Adonis Press (Network 82 and 99). Like the Rohen book, *Metamorphosis* has the format of a large textbook,



but even more beautifully illustrated with stunning photographs as well as many of the author's own high quality illustrations. Although Suchantke has an extraordinarily wide-ranging and in-depth knowledge of plants, insects and other animal groups, he explains the significance of his remarkable insights in lyrical and comparatively simple language, thanks in part to the skill of aptly named translator Norman Skillen.

Conceptually *Metamorphosis* is in many ways a synonym for evolution, originating with the German school of *Naturphilosophie* which owes so much to the genius of Wolfgang Goethe. Long neglected in the English speaking world in favour of Darwinism, and the idea that evolution is driven by the survival of the fittest mechanism of natural selection, which tends to treat organisms as material entities that passively suffer random fates depending on the vagaries of the environment, including the ravages of competitive predators, what we may call the 'metamorphosis paradigm' is finally making a comeback, thanks to slow but inexorable shifts in biological understanding.

Much of this shift comes from the increasingly specialised and arcane world of genetics and the relatively new subdiscipline of Evo-Devo (The Evolution of Development), which represents, among other things, a new look at the dynamics of embryology and development, and increasing dissatisfaction with various aspects of the Darwinian paradigm. The reader of *Metamorphosis* could quickly glean much that the mainstream genetics literature will continue to miss: namely a profound insight into the far from passive, and highly-organised, intrinsic, dynamics of evolution, which have played out with incredible consistency, one can even say 'purpose,' throughout the history of the biosphere. Suchantke calls these

dynamics 'higher-level evolutionary impulses' Thus, evolution is 'a hierarchically ordered field of activities ...building up the physical organism at the behest of the superordinate organiser.'

Beginning with several chapters on plants Suchantke shows how they have evolved from spore- and seed-bearers to the flowering and fruit-bearing variety through the well known process of juvenilisation or neotony. If you have ever wondered why a beech tree is so big, a fruit tree a blossoming delight, or a garden of herbaceous plants a riot of flowers, the answer is comparatively simple. The large tree grows continuously and conservatively, never having its growth obstructed by counter forces, namely the flowering impulse, until it is decades old. The fruit tree's growth is suppressed by the flowering impulse much earlier, and the herbaceous flower receives the impulse so early that it never grows into a large plant, consisting in large part of dead wood. The flower therefore is a way of keeping lines of plant evolution forever young. The flowering impulse is not a measured, electromagnetic field hovering over individual plants ready to censure their growth, but still its morphogenetic influences are very real and far-reaching.

The anti-growth effects bring about a transformation or metamorphosis, as each leaf approaches the yet-to-be-manifest flower, it manifests a more and more juvenile stage, and out of this growth retardation brings forth entirely new and novel structures, such as petals and stamens. These in turn are accompanied by complex new colors and scents. The plant develops a new time body or *time gestalt*, as the flower reaches out beyond the capabilities of most primitive plants into the sensory world, taking steps towards a future potential. Here, by creating exact vegetative and floral replicas of insects, as in the orchids, it communes proactively and purposefully with the animal world, in a way difficult to explain by natural selection.

Suchantke makes much of the 'biological compensation principle' inherent in this dynamic. He also stresses the polarity between axial and spherical forces: the former raying out peripherally like limbs (plant or animal) the latter intensified or turned inward into enclosed bud, flower and seed-like forms. These polarities and compensations are rife in the organic world – an intrinsic part of the biological-evolutionary dynamic. Among invertebrates we have the insect polarity between colorful butterflies given over to the airy, external environment of flowers and light and the enclosed, often dark, sometimes ball-shaped ground-

and underground-oriented beetle. (Among insects, the ants and social insects occupy a middle, mediating position, where their avoidance of developmental extremes allow for new levels of behavioral complexity).

Likewise, among the molluscs the highly sensitive squid and shell-less octopi have outward world orientations, while clams (bivalves) are enclosed in sphere-like shells. In between, the in-and-out snails are the only group flexible (unspecialised) enough to occupy almost all marine and terrestrial habitats. Such insect-like polarity occurs in birds, distinguishing the colorful humming bird, from drab, flightless forms like the nocturnal Kiwi of the forest gloom. Amazingly, while butterfly wings and bird feathers develop as quite different organs, they still have perfect color and pattern matching, though only on visible surfaces. Such phenomena reveal 'the existence of a trans-temporal morphic gestalt active in the formative process of the organism and present as a Whole in all aspects of its living form.'

Despite some outdated comments (errors) about dinosaurs, Suchantke otherwise illustrates vertebrate evolution with beautiful images. We see the famous coelacanth fish, a living fossil deep in the waters off east Africa, rotating its fins in counter-lateral movements (i.e. left front with right rear and vice versa) that anticipate the limb locomotion of early, salamander-like land dwellers. Could a fish really rehearse such unconscious movements before developing walking limbs? Equally fascinating is the fact that the early fish were encased in armor (the inward gesture), especially around the head, and that they slowly emancipated themselves from these restrictions by growing more flexible bodies and limbs. Humans still bear distinct traces of this heritage. The infant has a huge head and dysfunctional torso and limbs that it has to develop peripherally in order to free itself from the forces of gravity.

The implications are remarkable. Give and take impulses engage with compensating counter impulses to hold back development and metamorphose it into new forms. Thus, the plant holds back its growth to internalise the environment (its incipient sensory relationship with the world) and produce insect-like flowers. This internalisation of the environment 'lights up as the inner content of consciousness.' Thus the 'spiritual content of nature...[is]... internalised and raised to the level of consciousness.' This is particularly obvious in humans who only became self-conscious in the process of internalising knowledge of the natural environment (mainly through language

and naming the objects that create a world of meaning). But as Suchantke sagely notes, the fundamental evolutionary message is not about the products of consciousness (e.g., thinking), 'but about the producer, about consciousness itself.'

'When human consciousness becomes an agent of evolution, the question of the continuity of individual human consciousness arises.' What then is the significance of the discrepancy between our goals, attainable in principle, our actual achievements, and the subtle feeling we can do better? We must not underestimate this experience of wanting to induce a better future. It only makes sense if future development is unlimited 'and not condemned by the absurdity of the demise of life' (which does not happen in the big evolutionary scheme)! We may see that 'the self as the bearer of developmental resolve, has the possibility of further existence beyond its present life.' Herein is the surprising, spiritual component of evolution made apparent in our own species, and compellingly made part of the evolutionary story by Suchantke's exposition. May the message be more widely understood as biology matures and evolution becomes more conscious of superordinate processes!

A Light in the Bleak Future Scenario

Gunnel Minett

SPONTANEOUS EVOLUTION, OUR POSITIVE FUTURE (AND A WAY TO GET THERE FROM HERE)

Bruce H. Lipton, PhD and Steve Bhaerman,

Hay House Ltd. London, 2009, 480 pp., £13.99, p/b - ISBN 978 1 4019 2580 2

Bruce Lipton is a cellular biologist and author of the book *The Biology of Belief* which has become a popular book among many concerned with inner and outer harmony. In this book he has joined forces with Steve Bhaerman, a political scientist and social activist as well as comedian, who performs under the name Swami Beyondananda.

Together they offer a perspective for the future based on biology as well as political science. Their (perhaps surprising) conclusion is that we are exactly where we ought to be in our evolutionary process and that the future is much brighter than many would argue.

Drawing on epigenetics, quantum biophysics, fractal geometry and

other cutting edge sciences, their conclusion is that each human being is like a cell in the gigantic super-organism that is our universe. And because of this we are part of the evolutionary process and will (just like all other cells) develop and adapt to our environment.

Because our beliefs shape us to a large extent, all we need to do is to change our beliefs to initiate a spontaneous evolution. However, this (for most of us) is easier said than done. In order to change our beliefs, we first need to identify them, to understand our part in the world and how we can change this.

This book offers a number of explanations that together set out a very reassuring contrast to many of the much darker future scenarios usually presented by media these days. The important part is of course to distinguish between being complacent and being assured of our inner potential for change, which the book also helps to explain. Being co-written by a comedian, the tone and style is very light and entertaining, which does not prevent it from addressing a very urgent and important issue that concerns us all.

medicine-health

Mental Health and Spirituality

Julian Candy

SPIRITUALITY AND PSYCHIATRY CHRIS COOK, ANDREW POWELL (SMN), Andrew Sims (eds)

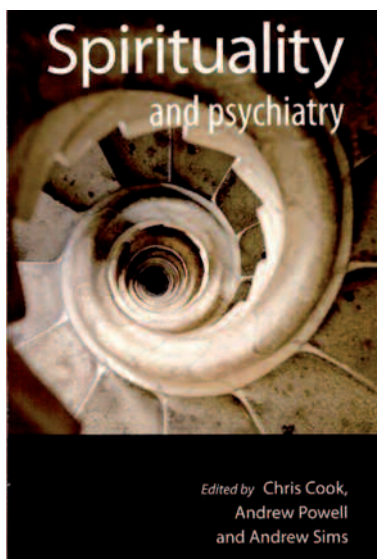
RCPsych Publications, 2009, 300 pp., £25.00, p/b – ISBN 978 1 904671 71 8

RELIGION AND PSYCHIATRY

Peter J Verhagen, Herman M van Praag, Juan J Lopez-Ibor Jn, John L Cox, Driss Moussaoui (eds)

Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, 667 pp., £120, h/b – ISBN 978 0 470 69471 8

The relationship between the spiritual impulse, whether expressed within a formal religious framework or independently of such, and the emergent medical speciality of psychiatry has been characterised by unease, misunderstanding and sometimes outright hostility and rejection. Freud provocatively wrote of *The Future of an Illusion*, and psychiatric training has tended until very recently to ignore or pathologise



spiritual elements in patients' accounts. Unsurprisingly, theologians and churchmen have resisted attempts to explain away faith, doctrine and transcendent experiences as merely the expression of psychological defence mechanisms or frank psychiatric disorder.

Yet ample evidence confirms clinical experience that people's spiritual lives and belief structure exert a significant, sometimes profound, influence on their continuing health and on their capacity to recover from illness, both mental and physical. For the most part that influence is benign. However, while spiritual epiphanies may indeed strike those of us in robust mental health, we know that religious conviction may sometimes be intimately associated with psychopathology, particularly delusions, and occasionally with devastating mass violence. Thus a psychiatrist must be able to distinguish between an expression of healthy spirituality or religious belief and its pathological counterpart.

Spirituality and Psychiatry (S&P) was published to mark the first ten years of the Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, of which all three editors have served as Chairperson. *Religion and Psychiatry* (R&P), subtitled *Beyond Boundaries*, is published under the auspices of the Religion, Spirituality and Psychiatry Section of the World Psychiatric Association. S&P has 23 contributors; R&P no less than 56. Two co-editors of and contributors to S&P also contribute to R&P, among other overlaps. Neither volume is a textbook, so comprehensiveness is not to be expected – the field is too young for that. Rather, each book comprises a series of personal accounts and reflections on the theme from many and sometimes

widely different vantage points within psychiatric practice.

Unsurprisingly, the contributions in S&P show a certain unity of style and content, coming as they do almost exclusively from British psychiatry. After an introductory chapter, contributors discuss spirituality in relation to assessment, psychosis, suicide, children and adolescents, psychotherapy, intellectual disability, substance misuse, neuroscience, the NHS, the transpersonal, religion, the pathology of spirituality, and ageing. Many of the accounts introduce personal elements, though all are able to cite relevant research from the rapidly growing world literature. I particularly enjoyed the two pieces relating to the extremes of life: Mike Shooter on children and adolescence, and Robert Lawrence and Julia Head on ageing. Perhaps a future edition will include a chapter on forensic psychiatry and the spiritual aspects of the use of the Mental Health Act, including compulsory treatment.

R&P displays a remarkable spread of topics, illustrating the importance and pervasiveness of the matters discussed. Just as impressive is the variety of countries and cultures represented by the authors: not only the USA, UK and the Netherlands, but also Belgium, Canada, Egypt, Greece, India, Iran, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Morocco, Spain and Thailand. The contributions are grouped, not entirely happily, into seven parts: First Issues (history, philosophy, science, culture), Main Issues (interface between psychiatry and the major religions), Core Issues (religion and psychopathology), Research Issues, Interdisciplinary Issues (psychotherapy, pastoral care, meaning giving), Controversial Issues (religion and the brain), and Training Issues. These somewhat arbitrary groupings illustrate the difficulty of devising an appropriate and consistent framework for the very diverse contributions that almost without exception appear to have been written without reference to each other, and given their diverse backgrounds in contrasting styles.

Both volumes discuss the issues of definition around the term 'spirituality' and its relationship to religion. R&P announces in its title that it is mainly concerned with what might be termed 'institutionalised spirituality', in contrast to S&P's chief (but not exclusive) focus on the spiritual impulse unfettered by authority and dogma. This means that the former must deal with the contentious and still sadly contemporary issue of the psychology of religious fundamentalism and its relation to extremism and mass violence. John Alderdice, from a background in psychoanalysis and extensive

experience in Northern Ireland as leader of the Alliance Party, provides a sensitive and constructive analysis under the title 'On the Psychology of Religious Fundamentalism.' By contrast, and towards the spiritual end of the extensive spectrum, Professor Ahmad Mohit of Tehran University writes on 'Psychiatry of the Whole Person – Contribution of Spirituality in form of Mystic (Sufi) Thinking.' Within Part Six, Controversial Issues, we may read Van Praag on 'Seat of the Divine: a Biological Proof of God's Existence' directly followed by 'Neuro-Theology: Demasqué of Religions' by Swaab and Verweij.

In an epilogue to R&P Verhagen and Cook (co-editor of S&P, and currently chair of the SIG) describe a joint initiative of the two sponsoring organisations (World Psychiatric Association (WPA) and Royal College of Psychiatrists) to produce a position paper on the theme religion, spirituality and psychiatry. A Consensus Statement (CS) was prepared, but some members of the WPA have raised unforeseen and unexpected difficulties. Their important and significant objections to the wording of the CS centre round two main issues: the relationship between religion and spirituality; and taking a spiritual history. Matters are, I understand, still at an impasse. Do read the epilogue if you want more detail about this issue.

These two volumes are welcome for their contribution to the current impetus for rapprochement between theology and psychiatry, and to the fostering of skilful and sympathetic understanding of 'spiritual phenomenology'.

Dr. Julian Candy is a retired psychiatrist who took an active part in setting up the Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Dislocation of the Spirit

David Lorimer

THE GLOBALISATION OF ADDICTION

Bruce Alexander

Oxford, 2010, 470 pp., £20, h/b – ISBN 978 0 19 923012 9

This immensely important and original book will completely reframe your understanding of the wider social, historical, economic and cultural context of addiction. We normally treat addiction as an individual or possibly a social issue, but Bruce Alexander from Simon Fraser University in Vancouver argues that this is much too narrow a framework of reference. Addressing addiction as an individual problem

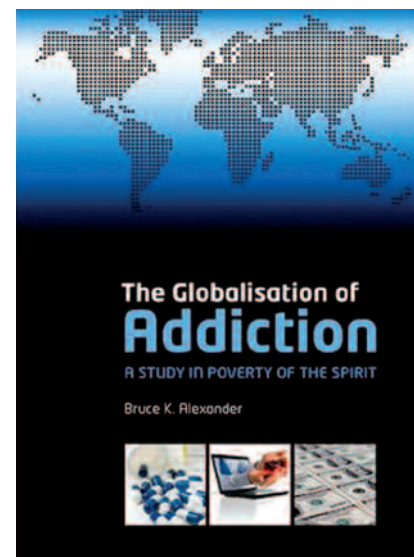
with palliative medical measures or psychological interventions will not tackle the root of the problem, which Alexander analyses as social dislocation, now occurring on a worldwide scale. He pertinently asks why so many people are dangerously addicted in the globalising world of the 21st century where addiction 'extends far beyond drugs and alcohol to gambling, shopping, romantic love, video games, religious zealotry, television viewing, Internet surfing and even an emaciated body shape.' The historical perspective views addiction as a societal problem and the propensity to become addicted as a latent human potential appearing under certain circumstances in especially vulnerable individuals and communities.

Alexander's main target is the fallout of global free market hypercapitalism, which is producing dislocation on a vast scale, especially in places like China. Free market society 'subjects people to unrelenting pressures towards individualism, competition, and rapid change, dislocating them from social life.' In these circumstances, addiction can be seen as a form of adaptation and an attempt to compensate for what the author calls a poverty of spirit arising from vain attempts to fill the void of dislocation with consumer products or exotic experiences. Ironically, the bloated world economy requires a continuation of wasteful expenditure in order to maintain economic growth, a topic addressed in my extensive review of new economic spokes in the last issue.

The book falls into two parts: the roots of addiction in a free market society and the interaction of addiction and society. Alexander begins with Vancouver as a prototype exhibiting all the symptoms he analyses, arguing that alcoholism and other addictions continue to plague the city because they are unavoidable by-products of modernity. The next chapter introduces a key set of definitions distinguishing what he calls addiction1, addiction2, addiction3 and addiction4: these are defined respectively as 1) overwhelming involvement with drugs or alcohol with harmful effects, 2) encompasses addiction1 and non-overwhelming involvement with drugs or alcohol that are problematic individually and/or socially 3) overwhelming involvement with any pursuit (not limited to drugs and alcohol) that is harmful individually and/or socially and 4) overwhelming involvement with any pursuit whatever that is not harmful individually or socially. These definitions immediately widen and refine the

topic and highlight the importance of addiction3 in the 21st century. One study found that alcohol or drug addiction is comprised just under 20% of the most severe instances. In addition, depression and addiction have been found to be closely intertwined problems. A further refinement introduced at this stage is the distinction between dependency and addiction. Much of the rest of the book is devoted to an analysis of addiction3.

The next chapter explains in more detail the dislocation theory of addiction, explaining that psychosocial integration is a human necessity and arguing that it is undermined by global free market society in which every aspect of human existence is embedded in and shaped by regulated competitive markets. Addiction3 is then explained as a way of adapting to such sustained dislocation. A corollary of this view is that free market society can no more be addiction-free than it can be free of intense competition; addiction goes with the territory. Having said this, Alexander highlights the limits of dislocation theory in that it cannot explain why individuals do or do not become addicted. However, he does later propose a series of predictions about degrees of individual susceptibility. As a way of clearing the decks, Alexander analyses four false dichotomies: medical problem or criminal problem, out of control or acting out of free will, psychological or physical addiction, and drug prohibition or legalisation. The next three chapters fill out the main argument in more detail, providing a series of historical cases (for example, the Highland clearances) and clinical research reports. It is part of the human condition to balance the needs for autonomy and belonging, and it is



interesting to see in the rise of social networking a compensation for the loss of immediate community involvement and an overemphasis on individualism, a point picked up in the work of Richard Layard and others on happiness.

The first chapter of the second part explores complex interrelationships of addiction and dislocated society is using five addicted people in three different societies. Interestingly, one of these is St. Augustine, who also crops up later in the context of conversion psychology. The multiple addictions of the Scottish writer James Barrie are analysed, along with three other ex-addicts, whose testimony makes fascinating reading. The following chapter looks at some social patterns including bureaucratic madness and collective environmental insanity before moving on to various forms of religious fanaticism, both Christian and Muslim. Alexander argues that millions of people are also addicted to free-market orthodoxy, and that America exhibits a heady amalgam of Christian moralism, the Market God and American power. We have seen only too clearly how this amalgam has been exported through war and foreign policy.

Various means of coping with a dislocated society are chronicled in the next chapter, including degrees of conventionality and unconventionality, and political activism. This paves the way for an extensive discussion of spiritual treatment for addiction which, while laudable, is not seen to be capable of bringing addiction under control in free-market society. However, by reframing addiction as a spiritual story with a deeper meaning, many people are immeasurably helped and often channel their addictive tendencies into more constructive outlets as represented by addiction4. Again, Augustine forms an interesting case in point. Alcoholics Anonymous is featured as a modernisation of Christianity, and the author also refers to the role of eclectic spirituality such as *vipassana* meditation. He might also have mentioned new religious movements in general, which offer their own kind of frequently countercultural psychosocial integration; at another level, their emergence might be seen as a consequence of the decline of Christianity leading to a sense of spiritual dislocation.

Before coming to his own proposals about how we can best tackle the addictions created by dislocation, Alexander returns to ancient Greece and the Socratic dialogues of Plato, with their discussion of various forms of imperfect society, including tyranny and anarchic democracy. He admires

Socrates' 'powerful combination of rationality, naturalism, compassion and psychological insight.' The author sees three main avenues of practical action: personal, professional and social, commenting that the third level is the most difficult. First we need to overcome what he calls civilised blindness and civilised paralysis that prevent us from understanding and acting on the root causes of addiction. The best thing is to find a secure place in a real community. Ultimately, however, we need political action from an aroused citizenry such as was the case with the antislavery and women's emancipation movement. Alexander sets out his vision for a form of global society where market autonomy is subordinated to the needs for psychological integration, social justice, planetary ecology and peace. He argues that we have a stark choice between structural change and global cataclysm and that our collective survival requires a radical rebalancing of social institutions. Equally, he recognises that the distinction between 'us' and 'them' is blurred, since we are often implicated in perpetuating problems as well as implementing solutions. (Robert Reich's book *Supercapitalism* highlights the tensions between our roles as consumers, investors and citizens). The final chapter gives examples of what has been done and what can be done, including questioning free-market indoctrination through the media, regaining native land, reviving community art, and reclaiming Christianity from the right wing in the US. Last but not least, the community of scholars and the spirit of learning needs to be protected from the encroachment of market philosophy and accounting mentality in universities. Finally, on the last page, Alexander contends that we need to go beyond the first steps of social action and require a global transformation in worldview. This, of course, has been one of the core agendas of the Network. However, the alternative philosophy is not yet sufficiently galvanising; it is and will be resisted by those with vested interests in the current system.

Alexander has made a seminal contribution by writing this remarkable book as a way of awakening people to a root cause behind our current addictive patterns of behaviour. I say 'a' root cause, because he might also have mentioned the mechanistic worldview and the corresponding influence of architecture on social dislocation, a view explored in great detail in the work of Christopher Alexander. The tone of the book is polemical and the thesis is vigorously explained and defended. It is also

immensely well referenced both in terms of notes and bibliography. Interestingly, David Cameron's idea of the Big Society is aimed at creating the kind of community involvement and psychosocial integration suggested as remedies by this book. However, it is undeniable that the reach of global hypercapitalism is now so great that other forms of action will also be necessary, although they are unlikely to occur until we have experienced a much greater shake-up of the system, such is the power of inertia allied to the sheer pace of modern life. Only other hand, the power of the Internet creates unprecedented opportunities for collective social action.

'The most powerful weapon on earth is the human soul on fire'

Yvonneke Roe

OPENING THE DOOR TO THE WORLDS

Dr. Annie Paxton (SMN)

Basidian, 2009, 344 pp., €15.75, p/b
– ISBN 978 0 9562290 0 7

This book is subtitled 'A handbook for the future'. Dr Annie Paxton was a retired medical doctor (she died just recently), and she describes a powerful method of healing using energy. She received this information from the 'Basidian' via a medium and the book outlines many of their conversations. They go on to discuss the nature of the universe, upcoming earth changes and soul development.

The book contains some themes familiar to those of you who have read widely in this field. A burnt-out disillusioned doctor, channelled information; the link between emotion and disease, our custody of ourselves and the planet, soul groups and soul journeys.

Dr Paxton starts with a candid account of her own experiences of being a medical practitioner in the NHS and eventual early retirement from it. She describes how she 'disliked her job and her life had no meaning' and spirals out of the NHS via drink, depression and anger ending up retired at 50. Here we can all heave a collective sigh of relief for Dr Paxton, and maybe a slight twinge of envy notwithstanding the pain of the journey there.

Dr Paxton had previously been aware of a presence speaking to her and eventually receives information via a medium from The Basidian. A large section of the book describes her conversations with the Basidian - a highly evolved group of teachers from the star system Sirius. She

outlines their healing system. This is described as a new system of medicine using the manipulation of energy alone. The Basidian are amazed by the human habit of storing negative emotions in the body and this is considered to be the source of disease. In their system of healing the universal energy is directed by intention to the spaces in between the cells. The cells can then use this energy to effect healing. However humans must be truly willing to partake in their own healing - less common than one would believe. (The Basidian are also amazed at our ability to disassemble.)

This part of the book was the most interesting for me although I am sure others will be entranced by the chapters on forthcoming earth changes, the nature of the universe and the soul's journey. There is a clear emphasis that no power can interfere with a soul's journey without its willingness and that healing can only be effected when the soul is truly engaged. An interesting book with much to ponder on I wonder what the psychotherapists will make of the psychosomatic connection and also how they would interpret the significance of the Basidian and Dr Paxton's uncle and father who guide her at times from the spirit world too.

Yvonneke Roe is an NHS GP in south London with an interest in all forms of Healing. The title is a quotation from the French Field Marshal Foch.

Healing Environments

Gunnel Minett

THERAPEUTIC LANDSCAPES

Edited by Allison Williams

Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007,
373 pp., £55.00, h/b -
ISBN 978 0 7546 7331 6

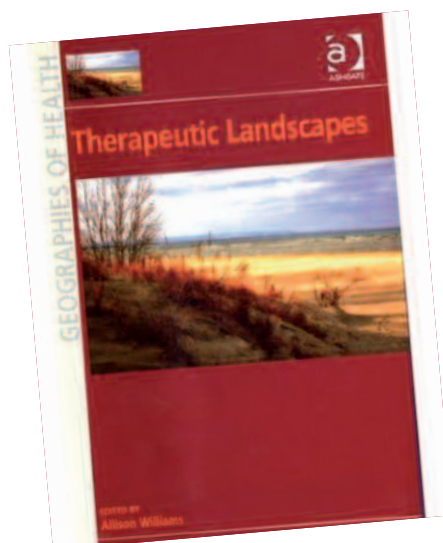
The concept of therapeutic landscapes, which deals with the dynamic between wellness and place and how this can be effectively used in healthcare maintenance, was first introduced in the 1990's by Wilbert Gesler, Department of Geography at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Visiting Professor at Queen Mary College, University of London. He first looked at traditional healing landscapes such as Epidauras in Greece, Lourdes in France and Bath in England. Since then the concept has developed. One early critique was that healing places should not be limited to landscapes already believed to have healing qualities. This critique has opened up the subject area in a

number of ways with this current collection of 22 papers focusing on many different perspectives.

The papers in the first chapter deal with traditional landscapes and review the concept which has its basis in cultural ecology, structuralism and humanism. Part 2 looks at therapeutic geographies for special populations including substance abuse treatment and the UK National Phobias Society. Part 3 focuses on applications in health care sites and includes papers on a mental health facility in London, a hospital waiting room assisted living residences in the US and palliative care in the home.

Part 4 addresses contesting landscapes such as gay bathhouses, landscapes in a third world society where poverty and violence are a way of life and a profoundly unhealthy landscape – the Soviet Gulag. And the final chapters in Part 5 looks at therapeutic landscapes from the perspectives of medical anthropology and environmental psychology.

From the perspective of this reviewer, it is the contributions that relate closest to Gesler's original ideas about therapeutic landscapes that are the most interesting and relevant – too many of the chapters stray into too narrow definitions of medical contexts. While these are valid in themselves they strain the overriding concept behind this anthology. It appears that the general idea of therapeutic landscapes is moving in the direction of such broad inclusiveness, but in fact takes us away from the possible healing potential of natural landscapes and somewhat muddies the whole issue. If anything, this book inadvertently points the need for more research into this core aspect.



philosophy-religion

One Answer and Two Questions

Max Payne

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCIENCE & SPIRITUALITY

ed. Pranab Das

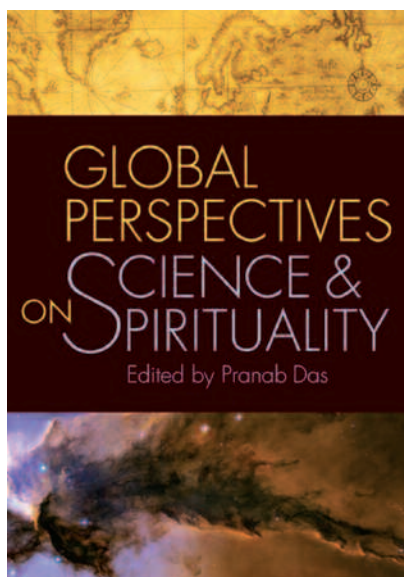
Templeton Press, 2009, 224 pp.,
£19.99, p/b
ISBN 10 1 59947 339 9

This is an interesting collection of essays on Science and Spirituality from Asian or Eastern European authors, but it promises somewhat more than it delivers. It offers a valuable alternative perspective, but raises two questions that it fails to address.

Sangeetha Menon argues that Indian philosophy is holistic and treats experience as a total unity, thereby bridging the abyss which the Western intellectual tradition has created between mind and matter. It is rather like the way in which, in colonial days, men in London or Berlin armed with nothing but a ruler and a small scale map, divided up Africa without regard to geographical realities or ethnic unities. Once created the artificial frontiers became the cause of political, economic and military conflict. So perhaps it is with mind and matter. After all what is stomach ache? Is it something in the external physical world, or is it an inner mental experience? The answer has to be both.

Makarand Paranjape continues the same argument with science and religion. Again it is pointed out that in Indian thought they are both unified in one search for truth. The conflict between them is a product of Western styles of analysis. His argument is partially wrapped up in politically correct sociology which analyses the question in terms of the colonial and post-colonial cultural experience of India. This does not seem a helpful way into the deeper issues.

Surprisingly he makes no use of the work of Radhakrishnan who was probably India's greatest 20th century philosopher who also ended up as President. Radhakrishnan saw Western science as the best and most universal way of exploring the material dimension of existence and the Advaita Vedanta as the best and most universal way of exploring the spiritual dimension, the latter finally including the former. He does, however, mention in passing two famous Indians, Sri Aurobindo and Gandhi, but they raise a problem. Aurobindo was a mystical activist who synthesised Darwinian



evolution with the Bhagavad Gita, but after his death his ashram imploded into sectarian irrelevance. Gandhi was a heroic historical figure whose non-violent resistance to British rule brought about an almost painless transition from the Raj to independence - as far at least as Britain was concerned. But he was a celibate, vegetarian pacifist who wanted to return India to a simple pre-industrial peasant economy. The India he helped to create is a nuclear armed superpower. Indian spirituality and the modern world have yet to mesh.

Jiang Sheng points out that Daoism's flexible equation between existence and non-existence offers a more hospitable mind set to the Heisenberg Indeterminacy Principle than the rigid logical rationality of strict causality and either/or logic of the West. This is true, but it was Western rationality that actually discovered the Uncertainty Principle, and the quark, and the statistical randomness of the radioactive disintegration of the atom. In the same way Indian spirituality claims insight into the inner energies of the human body through the idea of the chakras and kundalini energy, but it is Western sanitation and vaccination that has dramatically increased the life expectancy of the average Indian. Again the full mesh between Eastern spirituality and Western science has not been traced.

A second unanswered question arises from the contributions from Eastern Europe. Just what is open theology? Coming from an intellectual generation that has only recently escaped the restrictions of Soviet rule, it is understandable that several should assert the virtues of an open system of thought as proclaimed by Popper and Polanyi - a previous generation of refugees from Central

Europe. They all see a harmony between the open inquiries of science and theology. However the title of the book is 'Science & Spirituality', while for these contributors spirituality means religion, and religion means Christian theology. To revert to Radhakrishnan again, he interpreted religions such as Hinduism and Christianity as crystallisations of a higher spirituality into limited local dogma and ritual. There is a problem here on the relation between religion and spirituality. Furthermore what does open theology actually mean? The open system of science forces it to be dynamic, and the consensus on its central paradigms evolve and change. Newtonian mechanics give way to Einstein's relativity. Regardless of heresies and maverick theologians, the consensus of the Churches' theology has remained fixed in the declaration of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., that Jesus Christ was the 2nd person of the Trinity and Perfect Man and Perfect God. It is proud to proclaim the fact. Would open theology self destruct in the manner of John Hick's *The Myth of God Incarnate*? Would it offer a new spiritual vision for the 21st century? The question is left in the air.

This collection of essays is as interesting for what they do not say, as for what they do.

A Deeper Connection

David Lorimer

AN INTRODUCTION TO RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

Marianne Rankin (SMN)

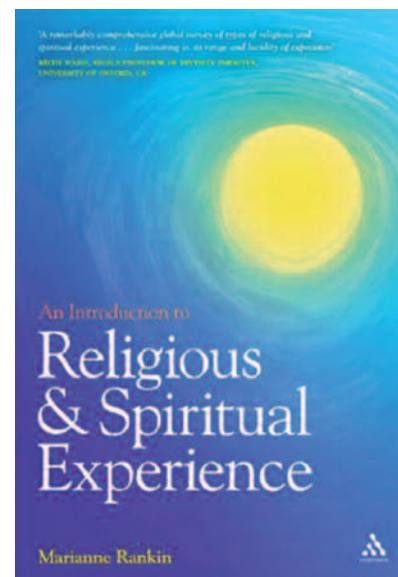
Continuum, 2008, 286 pp., £24.99, p/b - ISBN 978 0 8264 9821 2

Marianne Rankin is Chair of the Alister Hardy Society, with which many readers will be familiar. Sir Alister Hardy, FRS (1896-1985) was professor of zoology at Oxford and was advised by his FRS father-in-law early in his career (I remember him telling this story) not to pursue his interest in spiritual and religious experience until he had established his scientific reputation. Accordingly, having given the Gifford Lectures during the 1960s, he retired from Oxford in 1969 and set up the Religious Experience Research Unit, now a centre in the University of Wales, Lampeter, with records of over 6,000 experiences. Marianne draws on these and many other sources in this extraordinarily wide-ranging study. Hardy himself defined religious experience as 'a deep awareness of

a benevolent non-physical power which appears to be partly or wholly beyond, and far greater than, the individual self.' The 'Hardy question' put out to newspapers was: 'Have you ever been aware of or influenced by a presence or power, whether you call it God or not, which is different from your everyday self?' He himself had experiences where he 'was overcome with the glory of the natural scene' and falls on his knees in a prayer of gratitude.

The point of these experiences lies in their implications for our understanding of the nature of consciousness and human life. Many people, including myself and the author of this book, take them as an indication of transcendent levels of reality, and it is certainly true to say that whatever the interpretation, 'for those who have them, their experiences serve to deepen their apprehension of the mystery of life and intensify their appreciation of its intricate complexity.' (p. 256) They also strengthen the case for belief in the Divine without of course offering conclusive proof.

A notable feature of the book is its comprehensive and systematic coverage of the field. It begins with an overview of terminology ranging through religious, spiritual, paranormal, NDEs, OBEs and more specialised terms associated with particular individuals such as Exceptional Human Experience (Rhea White) and Peak Experience (Abraham Maslow). It then covers spiritual experiences in relation to religions, including new religious movements and even quasi-religions like Marxism. Two chapters on experiences of founders of religions follow, the first on major religious traditions and the second on less well-known traditions including the



Brahma Kumaris, Baha'is, Theosophists and various gurus such as Sai Baba, Ramana Maharshi, Mother Meera and even Neale Donald Walsch and Deepak Chopra. This range of coverage is both refreshing and stimulating (and could have included Peter Deunov).

Next come chapters on religious and non-religious triggers of spiritual experience such as prayer, meditation, silence, darshan, pilgrimage and fasting, then places, illness, accidents, depression, nature and music. All these are illustrated with fascinating first-hand accounts, as are the descriptions of types of spiritual experience such as light and love, which will be familiar to researchers in mystical and near-death experiences. Negative spiritual experiences and the dangerous aspects of spiritual movements are also covered. There is a separate section on death and dying, then accounts from well-known mystics and spiritual and mystical experiences of well-known people; occasionally, these put more emphasis on the life than the experience, and include Jung, Wilberforce, Gandhi, Bonhoeffer, Chad Varah (Founder of the Samaritans), Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Cicely Saunders, the Dalai Lama and Aung San Suu Kyi. Some fruits of spiritual experience are described – orphanages, the Prison Phoenix Trust, religious orders and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The final chapters survey contemporary spiritual experience research and interpretations of spiritual, religious and mystical experience from Schleiermacher to the present day. Many names will be familiar such as William James, Ninian Smart, Aldous Huxley, John Hick and Keith Ward, but there are also sections on A.J. Ayer, Don Cupitt, Daniel Dennett and Richard Dawkins. This serves to convey what I said at the beginning of the review, namely that this is a book of unusual scope, providing a kaleidoscope of material and an eclectic range of sources. As such it is a primer for the beginner as well as a mind-stretcher for those more familiar with the field. The message is one of depth and transformation: we live within deeper orders of reality of which we occasionally become aware, but the experiences of others, as set out in this book, can serve as powerful reminders of an underlying purpose and meaning in our lives.

Not Deep Enough

Max Payne

VARIETIES OF SECULARISM IN A SECULAR AGE

ed. Michael Warner

Harvard U.P., 2010, 337 pp., £33.95,
h/b - ISBN 978 0 674 04857 7

The transition from Western Christendom to the modern post-Christian secular West is a significant cultural shift in world history. Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* is a detailed academic study of what has happened, and this book is a collection of 12 essays and a postscript by Taylor commenting on it. Alas this would-be magisterial study does not get to the bottom of the issue.

Though a committed Catholic, Taylor is not concerned to condemn the rise of secularism or to applaud it: the intention is to understand it. His concern is deliberately limited to the interplay of secularism and Western Christianity. One contributor points out that it would have helped the understanding of secularism if its impact on a Moslem society such as Turkey had been considered. It would indeed have been a good idea to examine why Kemal Atatürk thought the Moslem Ottoman Empire had to be converted to a secular society in order to make it into a modern state. Unfortunately the rest of the essay is concerned with a comparative study of the problems of banning the headscarf in France and Turkey.

The central argument of *A Secular Age* is that two developments have been crucial in turning the West into a secular society – individualism and disenchantment. Individualism has meant a shift in European psychology such that a person today is expected to make up their own mind about the world, and their beliefs about it, whereas in the Middle Ages they saw themselves as primarily a member of the community of the Christian church. Disenchantment is the way in which all the magical, spiritual, and occult forces which once surrounded Mediaeval man have all been exorcised. Modern man lives in a universe of totally material forces. Yet, as Taylor observes, religion survives even in that most modern of societies – the USA. He suggests that the reason is that science cannot explain some of the most valuable parts of human experience. Love, music, tragedy and humour cannot be explained in terms of the four fundamental forces of nature. Secularism is therefore not necessarily the inevitable end point of Western culture.

The mediaeval world view was of a universal church teaching a universal truth. The breakdown of this world view could have been more clearly analysed in terms of three overlapping movements, anti-clericalism, secularism, and modernity. The Cathars, the Hussites and the Protestant reformers were not anti-religious – far from it – but they were hostile to the overweening authority of the Catholic church. Later anti-clericalism in the French revolution, the Russian revolution, and the Spanish civil war was much more extreme. Again the demand for a secular space outside the authority of the church is not necessarily anti-religious, as the mediaeval struggles between Pope and Emperor showed, but this space has expanded until religion has been pushed out into the fringes. On the evidence of the essays in this book, these processes do not have appeared to have been set out in sufficiently forceful clarity. The key process in producing contemporary secularism is 'modernity', or the triumph of science and its attendant technology.

Taylor and his commentators seem to take this for granted, but rather underestimate its force. It is much more than mere disenchantment. Once men prayed to God to help them against plague and famine: now we demand vaccination, better agricultural management and food aid. The way to a better life is through electric power not piety. Above all Western Christianity was based on the Bible, and the Bible saw the Earth as midway between Heaven and Hell. Modern astronomy puts the Earth as a planet circling one star of billions in just one galaxy in a universe of billions of galaxies. This conflict between the scientific and religious world views is particularly acute for Christianity. This is not merely because the Church unwisely adopted Aristotelian science. Christianity is a religion based on history. Its central dogma as pronounced by Paul of Tarsus is that Adam and Eve were separately created by God and placed in the Garden of Eden. They and all their descendants were punished by a vengeful God for the sin of disobedience until it was atoned for by Jesus Christ on the cross. All Christian theology hinges on this belief and all the evidence of geology and evolutionary biology contradict it.

Few of those who wash their cars on a Sunday instead of going to church have given much thought to the theology of the Atonement, but Christianity's lack of ultimate intellectual justification has echoed down into a popular feeling of its irrelevance. Yet Taylor is right.

Distinguished scientists are Christians. They feel that there is something transcendent beyond the material universe they study. Important human feelings such as love, forgiveness and self-sacrifice are given meaning by religious belief, and the easiest way to affirm these deep insights is through our civilisation's ancestral culture.

Religious belief may be a psychological necessity, but is it true in ultimate reality? Fairy tales, fantasy, science fiction are all exercises in human imagination, and we would be poorer without them, but they are not necessarily true. Is there anyone there? Is there a dimension of consciousness higher and beyond the neuronal activities of our brains. Mystical experience, the logical limits of materialistic science, paranormal phenomena all suggest that this is so. It is unfair to criticise a book for not dealing with a question it has not chosen to address. If there is no transcendent reality then secularism in some form is the fate of all human civilisation. If there is such a reality, then in a profound sense the most superstitious primitive religion is right, and the most scientifically sophisticated secular materialist is wrong. This is the fundamental question about secularism, and those who are interested in it will find this book of only marginal relevance.

The Road Less Travelled

David Lorimer

HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT OF MIND – VOLUME 2

Paul S. Macdonald

Ashgate, 2007, 478 pp., £18.95, p/b
– ISBN 978 0 7546 3992 3

The first volume of this magisterial work concerned the history of the concept of mind within the recognised Western philosophical tradition. Here Paul Macdonald tackles the heterodox and occult tradition with the same thoroughness of scholarship and staggering erudition as was apparent in his earlier book. While most Western philosophy travels along Platonic, Aristotelian and Epicurean (materialist) lines, there are other less well-known heterodox ('other-belief') ideas that only surface in the few universities where there is a chair in Esotericism like Paris, Amsterdam and Exeter (Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke). We are accordingly familiar with mainstream ideas. And as Macdonald points out, there are other distinctive features of heterodox ideas of mind, soul and spirit: they are arcane and esoteric (occult means hidden); they explain techniques for the soul's ascent; they are closely related to magical ideas

and their effects are achieved through corresponding techniques. One results in the learning of the philosopher, the other culminates in the wisdom of the magus, initiated into the inner laws of the cosmos and its symbolic correspondences. In modern terms it is the difference between Bertrand Russell and G.E. Moore on the one hand and Rudolf Steiner, C.G Jung and Peter Deunov on the other. Philosophy is not inherently transformative; philosophers do not normally 'work on themselves', whereas the mystical process is an alchemical transmutation.

The book begins with an account of life, death and the soul in the Ancient Near East – Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Zoroastrian religion – moving on to shamanic traditions and secret teachings about the soul in the Hermetica, Gnosticism, Manichean ideas and teachings about the soul's ascent. There is a chapter on Byzantine teachings followed an extensive treatment of Christian mystical ideas about the soul's ascent from the neo-Platonic era to the late Middle Ages. Magical ideas about the soul from the mediaeval period to Goethe come next, with a concluding chapter on a plurality of dualisms and the duality of life. All the great names and a good many obscure ones besides are treated in the course of the book. To name but a few: Plotinus, Iamblichus, Porphyry, Dionysus, Eriugena, Eckhart, Bernard of Clairvaux, Mechtilde of Magdeburg, St. John of the Cross, Roger Bacon, Francis Bacon, Raimon Lull, Cornelius Agrippa, John Dee, Paracelsus and Robert Fludd. There is an interesting section on mediaeval women mystics including such lesser known names as Hadewijch of Antwerp, Angela of Foligno and Marguerite Porette, who was executed through the Inquisition in 1310. Her *Mirror of Simple Souls* nevertheless survived in six different versions in four languages, making it one of the most widely read texts of the Middle Ages.

It is appropriate that the main body of the book concludes with Goethe 'in whose long life's work many of the heterodox lines of thought come to life again: Egyptian wisdom, Manicheism, Hermetica, Gnostica, alchemy and high magic.' There is a long analysis of Faust in relation to polarities and the reconciliation of opposites, with what Martin Bidney calls a process of selving and unselving, falling away from and returning to the Source. This is 'a regular oscillation between the creative contraries of contraction and expansion, inhaling and exhaling, opacity and lightness, are the inner law of our human life.' What Macdonald does not say, however, is how this process also relates to Goethe's understanding and methodology in science, which I mention in my review of Arthur Zajonc's book in this issue.

The last chapter provides a fascinating discussion of the different kinds of dualism in Western thought. Cartesian mind-body dualism is the most familiar in philosophy departments but it is a sub-category in relation to cosmic dualism, anthropic dualism (a double nature in humans) and axial dualism (good and evil). There is a variety of dualist worldview ranging from radical (Manichean and Gnostic) to moderate (some variants of Catharism) where the second principle derives from the first. In the West, the world-machine took over from the world-spirit in the 17th century but there are signs that the world-spirit and an esoteric worldview are making a comeback in order to redress the imbalance in our culture. In this context, Macdonald's book can serve as an encyclopaedic point of reference to a relatively neglected aspect of the history of ideas sitting alongside his earlier work. Together these books represent a massive intellectual achievement that deserve a wide readership in the academic community while at the same time being accessible to the informed general reader.

Interspecies Ethics – A New Moral Frontier?

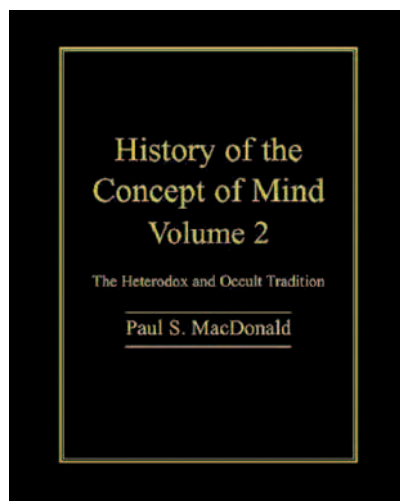
David Lorimer

IN DEFENSE OF DOLPHINS

Thomas I. White

Blackwell, 2010, 229 pp., £16.99,
p/b – ISBN 978 1 4051 5779 7

This powerful book challenges readers to redefine their understanding of dolphins as 'non-human persons' with ethical rights, and is based on a thorough review of the research literature as well as



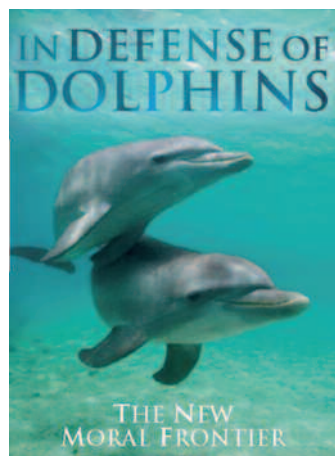
fifteen years of personal experience. Many readers will have read anecdotes indicating the special capacities of dolphins, but this book provides enough evidence to begin to draw philosophical and ethical conclusions about the status of dolphins. It boils down to two ultimate questions: what kind of beings are dolphins? And, what does our answer to the first question say about the ethical character of human/dolphin contact, specifically in terms of fishing practices involving the death of thousands of dolphins a year and their use in captivity as entertainers? In this context, philosophers distinguish between human as a scientific concept and person as a philosophical concept implying self-consciousness, intelligence and a measure of free will. So is a dolphin effectively a non-human person?

The chapters cover a number of key areas: the anatomy and physiology of living in the water, including a comparative analysis of the capacities of human and dolphin brains; do dolphins think and feel, and can they solve problems and understand language? What is the nature of dolphin social intelligence? When these questions are analysed and broken down, it becomes apparent that dolphins do have remarkable capacities. Anatomically, the surface of the dolphin brain is more convoluted, it has a bigger cerebral cortex than humans, a substantial associational neocortex and the structure of the limbic system is different. All this makes it the second most complicated and powerful brain on the planet.

This capacity is borne out in the experimental findings discussed in subsequent chapters. Dolphins pass the standard mirror test for self-awareness used in humans and they do not treat their reflection as if it were another dolphin. The evidence supports conclusions that dolphins are aware of themselves and others, they experience basic emotions, they engage in thinking processes and can choose their actions. These questions are explored in greater detail in the next chapter reporting on problem-solving and language capacity. Lou Herman's research shows that dolphins can follow instructions in basic artificial languages, both acoustic and gestural, and can even understand simple new sentences using the familiar components.

Having considered the experimental evidence, White returns to the philosophical implications of the findings with an eight-part definition of a person, which he uses to evaluate dolphin intelligence. Dolphins measure up on all counts, which

sounds amazing until one has read through the analysis for oneself. One can argue that the notion of personhood is flawed, anthropocentric and dependent on language, but it does provide one measure that can also be applied to other species. Accordingly, White refines his own definitions, concluding that dolphins appear to be a 'who' rather than a 'what'. This naturally leads on to a consideration of interspecies ethics with highly practical implications for, in the first instance, tuna fishing practices such as purse seining, which has resulted in the deaths of 6-7 million dolphins. In spite of preventive action, dolphins are regularly chased and trapped. In addition, thousands of dolphins are killed every year in drift nets. The ethical status of our actions harming dolphins is clear. The argument relating to benefits and harms to captive dolphins is different and more complex, but some analogy to slavery can be made when considering their basic wellbeing and needs. Other issues arise in relation to their use in healing and, more controversially, for military purposes in detecting mines. Ironically, dolphins seem to treat us better than we treat them, lending weight to White's argument. Even reading this review may have modified your understanding of the ethical status of dolphins, but reading the book itself will certainly do so.



A Prophet for our Time?
Max Payne

WORLD AS SANCTUARY
The Cosmic Philosophy
of Henryk Skolimowski
ed. David Skrbina & Juanita Skolimowski

Creative Fire Press 2010, 229 pp.
Available from David Skrbina –
skrbina@umd.umich.edu for \$20 in
US and \$25 outside. See also
www.ecophilosophy.org

This is a collection of essays by some of those who have been inspired by Henryk Skolimowski's

philosophy ending with a postscript by Henryk himself. In the perspective of the 20th century Henryk Skolimowski was an obscure maverick philosopher, in the 21st century he may become one of the prophets of our time. In total world history he may become one of the great spirits who have inspired the upward evolution of mankind.

Skolimowski's philosophy starts with the diagnosis of a deep wound in Western culture. Philosophy since the 18th century has combined with the rise of science to produce a dominant empiricism which has separated facts from values. The nature of the outside world gives us no clue as to the meaning of our lives, or the way in which we should live them. It also produces the total split between mind and matter. This has produced the many ills of our time, social alienation, environmental degradation and cultural anomie. In total contrast his eco-philosophy recognises that our minds and our bodies are part of nature, and we should play our role in it with reverence and joy. We are not something separate from the rest of nature. We should not dominate or destroy as we will. We must act with reverence and respect as a part of nature. Above all we must act responsibly as self-aware agents in the upswing of the evolution of life on this planet. This positive moral vision is something beyond the fashionable pragmatic 'greenery' of politicians who perceive the economic and political dangers of possible climate change. It is the proclamation of a positive and optimistic identification with the planetary life force.

Such a philosophy has disturbing unconventional consequences. The first is that the whole rational analytic process of modern Western thought including the triumph of modern science is, all of it, on the wrong track. It separates man from Reality instead of inviting him to participate in it. The second consequence is that it demands that the philosopher himself should seek not merely understanding but wisdom, and wisdom implies knowing oneself and seeking further enlightenment for one's own mind. The whole fashion of 20th century Anglo-Saxon philosophy for positivism and linguistic analysis is thus dismissed into irrelevance by this requirement.

Two questions immediately arise from Skolimowski's philosophy. The first is how is it possible for him to be so optimistic? The second is exactly what role does science play in his total vision? In his youth he lived through the horrors of Poland in the 1940's – devastation, death and oppression. He embraces the life force, but nature is red in tooth, claw and parasitical

torture. How can he be so joyful ? The answer is that he is a mystic. The term is not used lightly. For him the veil has been rent, and he has sensed the transpersonal light beyond skull bound everyday experience. He knows that everything shall be well, and all manner of things are well.

There remains the problem of science. In his vision of the 'Light' Henryk Skolimowski wants a new cosmology in which science, the meaning and purpose of life, and the upswing of spiritual evolution all are one. In this perspective modern science appears inadequate and limited. Our knowledge of cosmology and the atom may be as limited as he says, but it is aware of its own limitations and is part of an open self-correcting system. However imperfect, it is still knowledge with tremendous power for good and evil. It is surely not without some significance that medical science has nearly doubled the life expectancy of mankind during the last century. Does his vision merely dismiss science, or does it transcend it ? The vision of a great spiritual teacher cannot be subject to rational analysis, but teachers have disciples, and disciples have followers, and followers create sects. The history of religion shows how much sects need the process of open self critical analysis which is the bench mark of the scientific attitude.

Henryk Skolimowski gives us an inspiring vision of the future, and leaves us with the problem of how we get there from our present. This book should encourage those who have not read his works to delve further and acquire greater inspiration.

Self-Realisation

Sharon Barkatullah

THE PATH SUPREME – CONVERSATIONS WITH SHRI BABAJI AT THE DEHRADUN ASHRAM, HOME OF HIS TAPAS

Transcribed from
conversations with Shri Shiva
Rudra Balayogi Maharaj

SRBY (UK), 2010, 277 pp., £14.99,
h/b - ISBN 978 0 9564479 0 6

The Path Supreme is a rare and unique opportunity to read the higher teachings of a Yogi that have traditionally only been revealed to the closest disciples. Shri Shiva Rudra Balayogi, affectionately known as Babaji, has allowed His deep conversations at the Dehradun Ashram located at the foothills of the Himalayas to be transcribed and edited to illuminate the path to Self Realization.

Babaji is a Self-Realised Yogi - one who has completed the path of Yoga and attained union with the Self. For twenty years Babaji devoted himself to *sadhana* (spiritual practice) and served His Guru, Shri Shivabalayogi, being initiated into a monastic life of meditation, devotion and service. Following His Guru's physical passing from the world in 1994, Babaji entered into the spiritual state of Tapas, in which he maintained the mind in complete stillness during meditation for twenty hours a day. Five years of Tapas culminated in the attainment of the goal of all spirituality - self realisation, the permanent union of the mind with the supreme peace of infinite pure consciousness.

The book is divided into three parts and consists primarily of a dialogue of question and answers between serious spiritual aspirants and Babaji. Babaji answers clearly and concisely drawing from his own deep personal experience and profound spiritual insight to unlock the secrets to spiritual progress and Self Realisation.

Part one details Babaji's teachings and questions most frequently asked by visitors to the Ashram. It focuses on the meditation technique and living spiritually in the world. As Babaji says, 'You can be in any way of life and still be perfectly spiritual. All you need to do is to adopt the methods. Whatever exercise you undertake, it must help your mind to recede, become more peaceful, quiet and composed.'

Babaji illuminates the unity of all spiritual traditions in one simple teaching 'All you have to achieve is that one hundred percent concentration of the mind. When the mind becomes totally concentrated without any resolution, without any thought, then it automatically goes inward toward the self and ultimately settles there with supreme peace, totally contented.'

Part two details the higher teachings. For these intimate talks Babaji again answers from deep personal experience of the ultimate truth rather than scriptural study. It is divided into almost thirty chapters with topics such as: The mind and its tricks, pure consciousness: the gap between thoughts, true peace lies within, the self is beyond all Imaginations, samadhi and realisation and beyond myths and illusions. Babaji clears misconceptions about spirituality, inspiring readers to take up *sadhana* seriously.

In one chapter Babaji enters into dialogue with a scientist. When questioned if everything exists in waves but when the mind focuses and positions itself sees the particle and the wave no more exists (Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle) Babaji replies: 'I would agree very

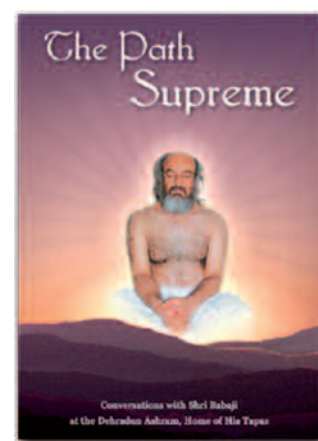
much with the physics concept, because it is very similar to the spiritual concept also. Ultimately, everything that is experienced as a scene, everything that is seen is an illusion. It is not a truth, only the existence of the self is truth.' Babaji expands on these concepts further during the dialogue making compelling reading.

When asked if it is possible to understand that state of Realisation from the faculties of mind Babaji replies: 'Impossible, because mind exists based on its own imaginations. Its only quality of existence is imagination. The moment it loses all of its imaginations, mind is no more a mind, it is Consciousness of Existence...' More probing questions relating to Samadhi and Realisation are asked which Babaji clearly answers.

When questioned if the brain's reflections get erased during *Tapas* and if they become purified Babaji explains: 'Yes, it is purified. The brain's reflections are very minimal; it does not affect the mind. Only if the consciousness wants it applies the brain. It does not allow the brain to go on playing on its own. Now the Self is the master. It is commanding both the brain and the mind's activities.'

The book concludes with a deeply inspirational set of aphorisms, known as the 'Golden Verses,' which were recited spontaneously by Babaji during a retreat.

As the pages are turned the wealth of knowledge from a great master starts to penetrate the inner layers of the mind bringing the reader closer along the path to Self Realisation. This book is truly unique in that it is not based on scriptural study but from profound, personal experience and is highly recommended.



psychology- consciousness studies

World Crisis and Buddhist Humanism

END GAMES: COLLAPSE OR RENEWAL OF CIVILISATION

John Crook

New Age Books New Delhi, 2009, 408
pp., £19.99, p/b
ISBN 978 81 7822 325 4

I recommend that you all pay attention to this book because it is written by John Crook, who is the first 'European Dharma Heir of the Master and Teacher of the Western Chan Fellowship.' He has done intensive Zen practice with the venerable Chan Master Sheng-Yen of Dharma Drum Mountain, Taiwan and New York. John is also a PhD and DSc and is Emeritus in the Department of Psychology, Bristol University, and a pioneer of socio-ecology and evolutionary psychology. Who better qualified to write a book on the contribution that Buddhist humanism could make to the current mess we have got ourselves into?

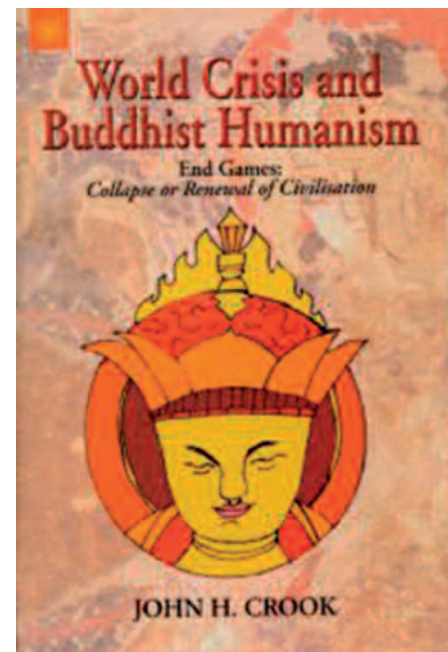
But that is not all. John is a wonderfully accessible person. He runs Zen sesshins (retreats) on the top of a Welsh mountain (not really on top of a mountain, just metaphorically so, actually at a wonderful retreat in the Welsh hills). The path to the hut in the winter is covered in snow and the heat is provided by a wood-burning stove. If any of you are interested in the delights of John's sesshins to hammer your Ego then see Sue Blackmore's *Ten Zen Questions*.

So what does John have to say? In the early part of the book he describes the origin of Buddhism in Asia and its spread through China to Japan. What I found most interesting, mainly because I had not fully understood it, were the social factors and religious pressures existing in India at the time the Buddha was enlightened. At that time the Brahmin class were the holders of the religious rights, ceremonies and priestly hierarchies. Those who were not born into the Brahmin class or who had rejected it, left society and went into the forest. These forest dwellers then set out to investigate and develop their own spirituality, practising, often intensively, the techniques of meditation that were available. The Buddha Siddhartha, who was the son of a king, brought up in the palace with little contact with the outside world, finally rejected

his upbringing and went out to seek his true nature. It is not surprising that he went through a phase of being an outcast, associated with forest dwellers and was taught by a number of highly experienced meditators, amongst whom was Arada Kalama.

Here he learned profound Yoga meditation which he studied with great vigour. The aim was to practise the purification of the self, elements of which transmigrate to merge with the greater self, the Absolute or Brahman. His teacher told him he had reached the meditative plane of nothingness but, having achieved this and pleased his teacher, Siddhartha did not feel that this led to an ending of desire and so left this teacher and journeyed on. His next teacher had reached the meditative plane of 'neither perception nor non-perception' and after periods of intensive meditation Siddhartha also achieved this plane but found that this too was unsatisfactory, as it did not lead to dispassion and the ending of desire. These were the planes of absorption. He argues that if this was not the way and these planes were dependent on states of mind then what was the mind doing? So he used the technique of passive watching of the mind, vipassana, a technique he is reputed to have used as a child in the palace. We have now to imagine Siddhartha wandering through the hills and forests of India, practising this technique, and John quotes a wonderful statement which may make us cancel our tickets to Northern India and remain in England, when he quotes the Buddha remembering 'It is hard to respond adequately to these remote abodes, the woods and hills of the forests. Solitude is hard. It is hard to enjoy being alone. It is as if the woods steal the mind of the monk who does not concentrate.' So back onto your zen cushion and your sitting practice right here in the unforested UK.

Siddhartha continued with his searches. There is short section on his difficulties with different techniques until, finally realising that through the forest practices and self-denial he was committing suicide, he came to a small village in a beautiful grove near a river. Here a young woman took pity on his condition and gave him rice and gruel as he sat on freshly spread grass beneath a large Bo tree (as can be seen in Kew gardens). For 49 days he sat there practising his focused watching. John says nothing in the book about the temptations of the Buddha, but it is now argued in some quarters that before the ego is destroyed and finally gives itself up, the seeker will encounter very vivid and strong



hallucinations, as did Jesus in his 40 days in the Wilderness. At the final break-through, when his ego disappeared and he came into enlightenment, the Buddha is said to have cried 'Ah! The morning star. When the morning star first shone, there was I,' a reference to his universal and timeless nature which he now perceived. Then, finally recognising that the ego was all illusion and had fallen away from him, he said 'Oh house builder, you have now been seen! You shall build a house no longer. All your rafters have been broken, your ridge pole shattered. My mind has attained unconditional freedom and the end of craving is achieved.'

Now I have spent some time on this, because the tensions that were present in the Buddha's time are still apparent today. Although it is not John's purpose in this book to look at modern tensions underlying the struggle for enlightenment, the ideas of gradually purifying the mind through meditation or the sudden deconstruction of the ego allowing enlightenment to arise are still the same today. Is the search for enlightenment a gradual purification of the mind or, in special circumstances, will the ego shatter suddenly with little prior work and a true view of the cosmic nature of mind suddenly break through? Such people as Merrel Wolff and Wei Wu Wei, and indeed even Shankara, seem to suggest that both are needed and that the final deconstruction of the ego is always sudden and not approached by stealth as the grace of final ego dissolution is given from outside. For how can the ego being deconstructed cause its own death and the vast expansion of mind that follows?

John discusses Proto-Chan 500-600 AD and how these ideas spread out through the Silk Route into China, the arising of Early Chan in 600-900 AD, the differentiation of these schools in the Song Dynasty Chan, 950-1300 AD and the spreading out of the Soto and Rinzi Schools and finally, modern and post-modern Chan-zen.

There is a wonderful section on the Self and consciousness, as seen from a modern perspective, and he uses the device of asking how the present world would seem to the returning Buddha. The Buddha does return and meets Jim, a highly intelligent waiter in a café in Soho, and they have lengthy discussions about the current views of the Self, a thorough review of modern philosophy and psychotherapy (a psychotherapist is included in this discussion). The device works well and those of us who are uncertain of our Kants, Descartes, Wittgensteins, Schopenhauers, Sartres etc will enjoy this section. Finally John looks at the search for a future which is able to overcome the mess that we are in. John is very clear about the nature of the current crisis, which is related to the overweening demand of the self for security. This results in much of the over-consumption of today. The ungroundedness of the self affects all areas of our lives. John comments 'The economy is essentially an area for illusory solutions to ungroundedness then the whole of the consumerist world view is anchored in a fundamental but unacknowledged anxiety. Consumerism has a hidden spiritual objective, albeit an illusory one, in the attempts to compensate for ungroundedness. It is our modern religion and it has spread world-wide through a globalisation that has proved irresistible. The notion of a secular world is actually mistaken. Beneath the secular veneer spiritual needs dominate but in largely unconscious ways.' He quotes Loy as saying that 'God has actually not disappeared, but rather reappeared as the functioning of the Nation State, the market economy and our scientific projects, as if they were a source for grounding our activities in an objectified reality.'

John suggests that education is the best, if not the only way forward, and that what is now formally entitled Religious Education be replaced by courses called Humanity, or Science and Ethics, and perhaps sub-titled World Renewal. He gives a number of headings indicating how we might change our education and points out that 'Such a course would enable a trained teacher to integrate objective and subjective approaches to knowledge and understanding, so that a holistic post-Cartesian perspective can arise, giving an

appropriate broad picture of the human dilemma.'

It has been impossible in a short review such as this to give a full or even adequate account of the wisdom and knowledge that is in this book. John is a very special person with a wonderfully wide training, vision and understanding of the projections of the ego that we all make and call reality. A wide and different form of education is his solution so that the anxieties of the ego can be tamed and world renewal begun. Perhaps then, like Siddhartha, some of us will even be able to claim that we have seen and destroyed the house-builder and have been present when the morning star was first created, living cosmically. Please get on to your Zen cushion, possibly even set aside time for a sesshin in Wales and please get this book and read it. You won't be disappointed.

Dr. Peter Fenwick

is President of the Network

Towards an Epistemology of Love

David Lorimer

MEDITATION AS CONTEMPLATIVE ENQUIRY

Arthur Zajonc

Lindisfarne Books, 2009, 211 pp.,
\$14.99, p/b –
ISBN 978 1 58420 062 8

Arthur Zajonc's earlier book, *Catching the Light – an entwined history of light and mind*, won the Network Book Prize some 15 years ago, and he has a wide range of interests. He is professor of physics and interdisciplinary studies at Amherst College, director of the Programme of the Center for Contemplative Mind and a senior programme director at the Fetzer Institute. In addition, he is former general secretary of the Anthroposophical Society of America, a pioneer of Goethean science and a participant in scientific dialogues held with the Dalai Lama. I say all this to indicate the scope brought to bear on this remarkable book, which has been endorsed by Peter Senge and Allan Wallace.

Many writers have remarked on the imbalance between inner and outer as a feature of modern Western culture. Correspondingly, we value outer over inner work, but the price is widespread mental, emotional and spiritual unease – even distress, calling for a rebalancing of our orientations, which Arthur richly provides in this book. This represents an extension of science, the cultivation of qualities such as humility, reverence and equanimity

that give us an enhanced sense of wellbeing as we work on our thinking, feeling and willing and at the levels of body, soul and spirit. Arthur sums this up (p. 178) in the stages of contemplation: 'Contemplative enquiry rests on the sound moral foundations of humility and reverence. In addition, the practitioner cultivates his or her powers of concentrated attention, equanimity in the feeling life, and a strengthened resolve.'

The book is interspersed with instructions on many forms of meditation based on words, images, geometrical shapes, sense content from nature (sky, trees, flowers) in a process of what Arthur calls 'cognitive breathing' – alternating between concentrated attention and open awareness. This leads to a sense of more subtle dimensions of reality and the emergence of the 'Silent Self.' We reach a deeper rhythm and realise the need for constant renewal as we see in the activity of Nature. Rhythm implies repetition, and spiritual practice must become embedded in our daily lives. This is where we need to strengthen our resolve, the quality of our will, through regular small actions and bringing a finer awareness and attention into our everyday rituals. This helps overcome the inertia of inner laziness, to which we are all prone.

Inspired by John Muir, Thoreau and Goethe, Arthur offers meditative exercises in Nature and quotes Antonio Machado: 'The deepest words of the wise man teach us the same as the whistle of the wind when it blows or the water when it is flowing.' And he adds: 'No words that were ever spoken can equal the sound of the wind in the pine trees.' Arthur takes us to a mountain pond and into a process that elicits wonder, reverence, participation and self-surrender: an experience of the sacred, which, together with other techniques can lead to a greater sense of harmony and balance. A yoga of the senses takes us through the four elements and on to Light, Love and Life, which form the core of Peter Deunov's system corresponding to mind, heart and will, Wisdom, Love and Freedom. Light and Love are fundamentally intertwined, even identical in deep experience.

In this sense, we discover that knowledge or insight is an event in which we participate. The fact, as Goethe insisted, leads us to theory through a delicate empiricism in which we are fully implicated. To stand back objectively is to retreat into abstraction, to lose sight of the original meaning of 'theoria' as contemplation. Science and philosophy are both ultimately about insight and illumination. Arthur lays

this all out in the nine characteristics of contemplative inquiry: respect, gentleness, intimacy, participation, vulnerability, transformation, organ formation, illumination, insight. Organ formation requires a little more explanation and comes from Goethe's saying that 'every object, well contemplated, opens up a new organ in us.' As we attend to the object, we form a circuit that creates a new form of perception through participation.

We also come to understand the process, activity and even agency that gives rise to the varying appearances and forms of nature, 'natura naturans' rather than the more passive 'natura naturata'. In the plant, this formative activity constitutes a 'breathing' consisting of expansion and contraction: the seed becomes leaf, flower and fruit, containing in turn the new seed. From potential to actual and back again, as Arthur puts it, with agency behind. As Goethe said: 'The highest we receive from God and nature is Life.' For him this leads to an understanding of cycles summed up in his phrase 'die and become'. 'Wenn du dass nicht hast, stirb und werde, dann bist du nur ein trueber Gast auf der dunklen Erde.' (Unless you understand this, die and become, then you are only a dismal guest on the dark earth). By the end of this enriching book the reader can appreciate how contemplative enquiry can extend and refine science while balancing the inner life of the scientist in the process. It is a book to savour, a point of departure to a refined range of practices for mind, heart and will.

CAN COGNITIVE SCIENCE THINK OUTSIDE THE BRAIN BOX?

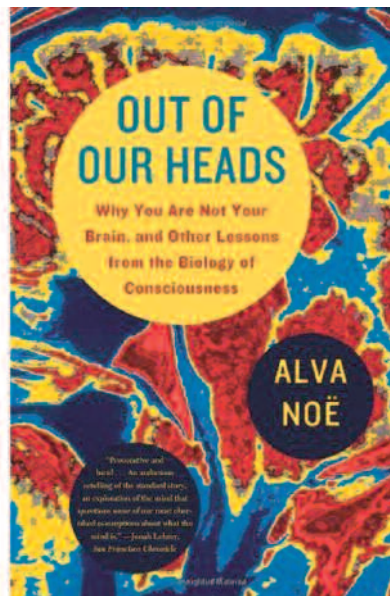
Martin Lockley

OUT OF OUR HEADS: WHY YOU ARE NOT YOUR BRAIN, AND OTHER LESSONS FROM THE BIOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Alva Noë

Hill and Wang, New York, 2009,
214 pp., \$25.00, h/b
ISBN 1 978 0 8090 7465, \$15.00
p/b ISBN 1 978 0 8090 1648 8

Almost everything we say – that is all metaphor – about our place in the universe is in some way related to awareness of how our bodies and other major organs are situated in relation to space and time. We want to get ahead, put the past behind us, anticipate things looking up, stay grounded and get out of ruts. We



want to reach for the stars, get in touch with higher powers, get out of our heads (at least two meanings!), go out on limbs and think out of the box. To many brain centered neuroscientists there is a strong tendency to equate this box with the cranium, but body-mind aficionados find themselves too boxed in by such paradigms.

Alva Noë a Professor of Philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley considers that consciousness is not something inside us...like digestion, rather it is something we achieve.. more like dancing. Therefore, the aim of *Out of Our Heads* [let's use the acronym *OOOH*] is to convince us of this by adopting a genuinely biological approach to the study of mind and human nature. Noë rejects specialist cognitive science jargon as an impediment to understanding, and knows that his criticisms in *OOOH* will come across as a political attempt to change the world...[and] ... shake up the cognitive science establishment. To do this we must give pride of place to the whole, living being. In a brisk rejoinder to Francis Crick's neuro-scientism Noë states that the really astonishing hypothesis is that you are *not* your brain any more than an orchestra is a self-playing phenomenon. The subtitle of *OOOH* is: *Why you are not your brain, and other lessons from the biology of consciousness*. We are living processes interacting within the world. Consciousness is, therefore, the joint operation of brain, body and the world.

The *OOOH* paradigm is supported by child development studies. Children are not separate brains. Their mothers, for example, are literally one of the structures constituting a child's psychological landscape. Thus, not until the age of

about five do children begin to see others as conscious beings. This theory of mind paradigm proves that we are morally and deeply involved with each other – first unconsciously, then consciously. From the outset, therefore, the dynamics of consciousness are widely distributed processes as much outside as inside any brain- or body-defined box. The implications are that a biological perspective is essential if the meaningful, non-mechanical nature of conscious life is to be understood. With this conclusion we open the Pandora's box of panpsychism as the question of consciousness arises for all living beings because they all exhibit at least primitive agency.

Continuing the out-of-the-box argument Noë contends that 'consciousness is no more in the cell (neuron) than dance is in the muscle. As cells in the auditory cortex can be visual...there is no necessary connection between the character of experience and the behaviour of certain cells.' Seeing for example 'is not something that happens to us in our brains. It is something we do.'

And we do things in a world in which we are *involved*. [His italics]. 'The body is the vehicle of being in the world' and being 'interinvolved' in the environment. Experiments with phantom limbs show feeling is maintained in a lost limb, just as we maintain feelings for a lost loved one. In a twist on Ramachandran's clever relief of phantom limb pain using mirrors and the motion of the real limb (Network 88), it is even possible to experience feeling as being in an artificial rubber hand (rather than your own hand) if you see it being stroked and tapped synchronously with your own hand!! So where is consciousness? Is it in the extended body, in the skilful extension of the mind into the adept use of a tool or musical instrument, or even in the mind of the involved audience?

The best means of extending mind is language. Here, curiously, the important parameter of meaning is socially divided between speaker and listener: just as the meaning of the knight in chess is not in the piece itself but in its function. Noë admonishes mainstream neuroscientists for clinging to the simple conception of self that uses the metaphor of the brain as mission control. He attacks the intellectualist paradigm which sees humans as inevitably novice-like and unskilled newcomers alienated from the world and always trying to figure it out by intense, mental computer-like computational effort. In reality, those most skilled at what they do show the least brain activation when

exhibiting the highest performance. [Incidentally, animal instinct is extraordinarily adept and wise in its ability to intelligently navigate the world].

Noë also challenges what he sees as the 'bad science' of skeptical cognitive scientists like Dennett and Blackmore who suggest that the perceived world is illusory. It is true that in the famous Harvard, 'change blindness' experiment, someone giving directions was interrupted by two workers passing by with a door, as a ruse to deliberate replace the person receiving directions. And the person giving directions did not notice the switch. The traditional explanation is that the brain builds up an internal, but false model of the world. However, Noë notes that our perceptual skills evolved for life on earth not for a world in which objects vanish and materialise by slight of hand. While our cognitive powers may be limited and vulnerable to deception, in order to understand what we see, we actively attune our attention to the external world. There is no evidence we refer to an internal advisor in brain-centred, mission control.

Not content with shooting down bad cognitive science Noë challenges the Nobel Prize winning research of David Hubel and Torsten Wiesel on information processing in the mammalian visual system. Noë sees in this work the shortcomings of the computer model and neural basis of consciousness paradigm that assumes vision is something that happens passively in the brain. Particularly egregious, apart from the vivisection involved, was the fact that all the work of Hubel and Wiesel was carried out on animals while they were unconscious!! We know that behaviour of cells in the cortex varies, depending on what the individual is doing' Noë acknowledges that his conclusions are harsh but he nevertheless dismisses the computer model with the Zen-like point that a computer can't think on its own any more than a hammer can pound nails by itself.

Hammering away at the perverse science fiction prejudice that brain = consciousness, Noë points out that although stimulation of the brain produces experience, so does stimulation of the body or that coming from the environment. We are, like a soccer player in mid-match, always involved in the game - dynamically coupled with a world outside our heads. [Moves don't play on a screen in our heads, and watching the game on TV is not a substitute for being on the team]. Noë recommends neuroscience rethink its position from the 'ground

up. [Note the, evolutionary process, start-in-the world, out-of-the-head metaphor]. We need to heed the alternative paradigm of an embodied, situated approach to mind. Some traditions see the world as maya, illusion, or as a flat reality captured like a photo by some visual brain mechanism. Not Noë: he concludes that we are in the world and of it...patterns of active engagement with fluid boundaries and changing components. We are distributed — like Noë's message! The out-of-our-heads metaphor seems a powerful clue in itself. Would our consciousness effectively engage with the world out there if it were merely an illusory, brain-centred epiphenomenon analysing replays of world events the dark room of the brain box? Surely the light of consciousness is embodied in us all, and in the world equally, and 'tis illusion to think otherwise.

Abundance Now, Harmony Later Mike King

SUPER CONSCIOUSNESS: THE QUEST FOR THE PEAK EXPERIENCE

Colin Wilson

Watkins Publishing, 2009, 272 pp.,
£6.66 p/b ISBN 978 1905857982

Colin Wilson has consistently made one of the most perceptive articulations of a specific and universal problem in human nature, the problem of what he calls the 'Outsider'. One does not have to agree with his prognosis to find the precision of his thought to be highly illuminating. His new book *Super Consciousness: The Quest for Peak Experience* is something of a recapitulation of his seminal work *The Outsider*, and begins: 'I am now 75, and most of my life has been devoted to a search for what might be called the mechanisms of the Peak Experience, or power consciousness.'

The Outsider, published in 1956, was a literary sensation that placed Wilson — who was only 24 at the time — amongst the leading writers of his age. His stardom was short-lived however as a critical press turned against him after a minor scandal. His second book was pilloried by much the same people who had raved about his first one, but Wilson persisted and has built up a considerable following. I confess to having only read his first and last works, but in re-reading *The Outsider* earlier this year was greatly impressed with it, and developed the

idea of 'outsider scholarship' from it for a conference paper delivered recently in Luxembourg. I define this scholarship as one that lies outside the academy, involves big-picture thinking, and is capable of seeing very fast the salient features of things: novels, peoples, disciplines and ideas. This is Wilson's gift as a writer.

There is however a more personal reason why both books speak to me so vividly, and this is the almost spooky perception that when Wilson dissects the personalities of individuals like Van Gogh and Nijinsky, he could have been talking about my father, the 1950s sculptor Peter King. In other words from a very early age I too was preoccupied with the problem of the Outsider, and how to avoid the 'crash' that so often accompanies intense creative effort, a crash in my father's case that led to his death at the age of 29. I have photographs of him with staring eyes, perhaps not so different to Nijinsky's, who also died at the same age, after a period of superhuman creative effort. So Wilson's question, how peak experience, power consciousness or super-consciousness can be achieved is hedged around with the question of how one can stop it killing one.

What Wilson did, which perhaps alienated him from an increasingly materialistic mainstream, was to insist that the Outsider's problem is at its core a religious problem. He didn't mean religion in the sense of church-going, but more in the sense of a mystical intensity, one that drove for example Blake, Van Gogh, Nijinsky and the founder of the Quakers, George Fox. Indeed intensity is central to the problem, as Wilson said in 1956: 'the primary aim is to live more abundantly at any cost. Harmony can come later.' So what has over a half-century of reflection on the problem of intensity he so brilliantly dissected in *The Outsider* led to in his new work? He has clearly followed all the key intellectual developments during this time, and has interesting observations to make on Phenomenology and the thought of Derrida for example. Central to his investigation is the Romantic sensibility, which both seeks this greater abundance, but so easily crashes in depression, nihilism or suicide. He takes Beckett to task for the nihilism in *Endgame*: the work probes the right issues, but is ultimately lazy. For Wilson an effort must be made, and his openness to a huge range of thought, and his assiduous study of it, is central to that effort. His clue however came in an obscure text that T. S. Eliot referenced in the *Wasteland*: the

Bhagavad Gita. Wilson seems to have discovered this around the age of 16, and put its central idea of the identity of Atman (self) with Brahman (cosmos) into practice as a daily meditation, quite without the benefit of a guru or spiritual teacher.

Now in his seventies, he concludes that humans have eight levels of consciousness, and that peak experiences are glimpses of higher levels. Without any such glimpse even the most intensely creative minds, such as Beckett's, will fall into nihilism, because the peaks that they do know are always followed by exhaustion. Where Wilson now finds a place in contemporary thought is with the conviction that 'man is on the point of an evolutionary leap of consciousness.' More people will spend more time in the higher states, all the way up to level seven, at which point there is boundless energy, effortless creativity – and no downer after the high.

Now, I part company with Wilson on this point: I am not sure that consciousness evolves in this way, mainly because I am not sure how you would falsify the proposition. This matters little however, and neither does my own instinct that the key to the Outsider problem actually lies in Level 8 of his scheme, which he says 'is not at present our affair.' This is the mystical level of consciousness which for Wilson is constituted by a set of paradoxes, such as 'I am everything and nothing'. The fear of all creative people I think is that level 8 would spell the end of the tension out of which creativity arises: it would lead to harmony, not the abundance sought by the Outsider. Perhaps they are right.

Whatever we might think of Wilson's prognosis for human consciousness, or of his specific routes to peak experience, I can't think of anyone who has so assiduously explored the human crisis of outsiders such as Nijinsky and Nietzsche – noting that the same individual was curiously witness to both their onsets of insanity – and all those blessed (or perhaps cursed) by superhuman creative outpourings. I only wish that my father, who was already descending into the darkness of his own demise when the *Outsider* was published, had been able to read it and understand its warnings and wisdom. *Super Consciousness* in turn would have shown him that creativity and longevity are not necessarily enemies. And if Wilson is right, that human consciousness is evolving, then more and more people will survive the gift of genius.

The Vale of Soul Making

Nicholas Colloff

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE SOUL

Patrick Harpur

Published by Rider, 2010, 240 pp., £9.99, p/b – ISBN 978 1 84604186 0

Imagination is the primary faculty of the soul and that imagination is a polytheist might be the shortest summation of Patrick Harpur's entertaining, erudite and image provoking book. We see the world through a soul's eye and what we see depends on which 'god(s)' or 'archetype(s)' we presently inhabit (or are inhabited by).

That this configuring of the nature of things presents numerous challenges to we, the children of the Enlightenment, Harpur happily recognises as he invites us to consider alternative traditions, most notably neo-Platonism, Romanticism and the spiritualities of indigenous peoples. In passing, his account of neo-Platonism is one of the most lucid and engaging that I have read.

Living an ensouled, imaginative life has three principal obstacles.

The first is familiar. It is our materialism that sees matter as primary and the given discourse of mainstream science as definitive. Harpur seeks skilfully to deconstruct this way of seeing by evoking different ways of perceiving the world; by a renewed empiricism that takes alternative accounts seriously, for example, near-death experiences; and, by showing that the language of science itself is inhabited by myth. He cites the example of the Large Hadron Collider searching for the Higgs boson – the elusive particle that gives the world mass and allows it to pass from the immaterial to the

material, christened the God particle, and, thus, solving the continuous enigma of how the two worlds relate.

But such enigmas may not, he suggests, be solvable and this leads us to the second scourge of imagination, namely, literalism. We think that something ought to be factual or fictional. It cannot be both. It cannot be myth and yet, as Karl Popper reminds us, 'scientific discovery is akin to explanatory storytelling, to myth-making, and to the poetic imagination'. If we talk of multiple universes that no one has seen, can we not equally talk of heavens and hells that people claim definitively to have seen, indeed travelled through, even if their location is strikingly fluid?

Literalism, also, stalks religion wanting to turn the imaginative, lived speculations of soul that are at once embodied, ours, particular to places and traditions and lived without edges, or finite boundaries, comfortable with monotheism, with an indwelling unity, but polymorphous in image and practice into confining, hard edged, fundamentalisms. Literalism craves certainty but the imagination craves life that by its nature dissolves certainties. Literalism demands the facts, imagination imbues the world with felt meanings.

One of the most thought provoking and original chapters of the book explores the relationship between soul and spirit for spirit too can be an obstacle to a soulful life.

To spiritual, hierarchical thinking, the daimons are at best the missing links between this world and the world 'above'. But to soul they are the very fabric of a single world which shifts shape – shows us many different aspects, including the spiritual and the material, according to whatever perspective, whatever god, we are looking through,' writes Harpur.

This, he contends, is a necessary counterpoint to spirit's tendency to ascend, transcend and depart this world for a world above that is clear, light and eternal. Soul takes us down, dark and dirty. Soul celebrates the complexity of real life, being suspicious of purity, preferring Jung's wholeness to holiness. If neglected or ignored, its occupants, deprived of attention, will return doubly distracting for, as Jung remarked, the gods neglected return as diseases.

Both are necessary but either driven to exclude the other loses an important dimension of what it means to be human – a tri-partite reality of spirit, soul and body that inhabits an imaginal space of which all three are an integral part.



This habitation is both given by soul and emerges as we shape soul – the world is truly, as Keats wrote, a ‘vale of soul-making’ and in that making with Harpur we have a guide of sure touch, copious wisdom and a glimmering sense of humour.

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

Exploring the Afterlife

David Lorimer

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

Kurt Leland

Hampton Roads, 2002, 498 pp., \$16.95, p/b – ISBN 1 97174 299 9

This epic book – a sequel to *Otherwhere* is not for the faint-hearted, consisting as it does of long narratives exploring deeper dimensions of consciousness and analytical comparisons with other classic texts, notably The Egyptian Book of the Dead, The Tibetan Book of the Dead and Swedenborg's Heaven and Hell. The four parts explore the NDE as initiation (how far does it take us?), heavens, hells and in-betweens, the soul's journey and the nature of reincarnation, with references to Plato's Myth of Er. These are all stories, perhaps myths in the non-pejorative sense, but they nevertheless convey profound truths about the nature of human consciousness.

In a mind-dependent world, which seems to be more immediately the case in a post-mortem state, our expectations can create our reality. Swedenborg already talks about people who do not realise that they have died but we are told that people who have no belief in the afterlife ‘can create an experience of extinguished consciousness’ but at some point they realise that a part of them is witnessing the experience of extinguished consciousness so they realise they have survived after all. Another consequence of mind-dependency is that unexpressed negative emotions such as anger and fear can create the appearance of traditional hellish landscapes as depicted in Tibetan traditions.

This highlights the importance of catharsis, classically obtained through watching (Greek) tragedy, but also depicted in this book as an opera performance as a means of discharging emotions. Apparently this can also be carried out by the deceased through the living, even in dreams. As one can imagine, the author identifies a number of ‘zones’

in the afterlife landscape including immigration and emigration zones, rescue zones, rehabilitation and redemption zones. They represent states and transitions in the process, and the author accompanies various people through them, including a friend who died in unfortunate circumstances in his early 40s.

Leland distinguishes, as I do in *Whole in One*, between panoramic memory and deep life review, which he says is a process of stripping away the emotions attached to the events of one's life and coming to understand the meanings and lessons behind these events, which are now seen less sequentially than in terms of their emotional resonances. This review also apparently involves checking the life as lived against the soul's ‘master plan’, a process found in the classic *Testimony of Light*, by Helen Greaves. Inevitably a sense of self-judgement arises from this comparison as one comes to realise how much one had remembered or forgotten along the way. Here, we are told, our deep feelings can keep us on track. We are also told that core personality develops as a result of our interaction with physical reality, the very obtuseness of which seems to obscure our innate understanding. The rehabilitation process then feeds forward into the circumstances of the next life. Leland tells us that all this is overseen by wise Facilitators who support the soul with their love and wisdom.

Leland has enormous respect and admiration for Swedenborg, but does not agree with his rejection of reincarnation and has some quibbles about his heavenly geography and what he calls his tendency to over-systematise. He makes an interesting remark about the goal of

spiritual growth being to achieve a perfect balance between identity and union, between a sense of self and belonging to a larger whole – what I refer to in my Learning for Life programme as standing out and fitting in. There is an intriguing reference to Herman Hesse as someone who has graduated from all the possible experiences of human and angelic existence. I myself have learnt a lot from his poetry and novels and used to read them with my pupils at Winchester. Leland wonders about this but was struck by the remarkable tone of his voice in a recording of Hesse reading one of his short stories.

So what does one make of all this? Each reader will bring his or her own understanding and interpretation to these narratives, all of which – whether ancient or modern – are physical representations of something experienced outside space and time. This invisible realm seems to be a cosmos or order, and these experiences or narratives undoubtedly contain metaphysical truths, at least in a metaphorical sense. For my part, I found the book stimulating and enriching and a timely reminder of themes I explored in depth over 20 years ago.

ecology-futures studies

Harnessing the Energies of Love

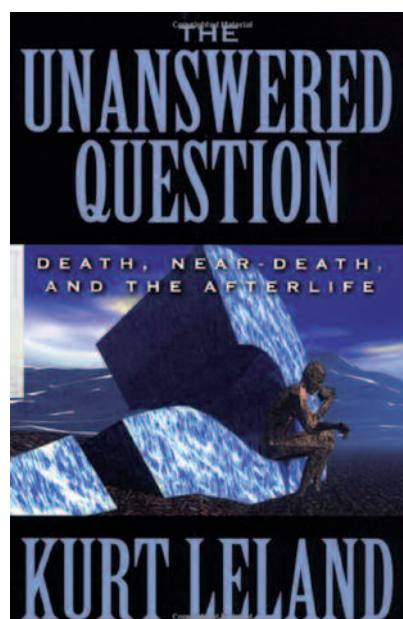
David Lorimer

THE HOPE

Andrew Harvey

Hay House, 2009, 227 pp., £10.99, p/b – ISBN 978 1 4019 2003 6

Subtitled ‘A Guide to Sacred Activism’, this new book by Andrew Harvey has been aptly described by Marianne Williamson as ‘a meteor burst across the inner sky.’ Having listened a couple of years ago to a passionate and eloquent CD produced by the Institute of Noetic Sciences and conveying the substance of his message, the book serves as an urgent reminder of our planetary predicament and the ways in which we are all caught up in it, whether we like to acknowledge it or not. Andrew was a contemporary of Iain McGilchrist at All Souls College, Oxford and they have both made significant contributions to the cultural challenges we face, even if in very different ways. Andrew's path has combined the mystical with the activist, being and doing, the fire of the mystic with the passion of the





social reformer. Among the key inspirations in this book are the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela, Bede Griffiths and Mother Teresa. It is a heady mixture. The joy of compassionate service is yoked to a practical and pragmatic drive to transform all existing economic, social and political institutions.

The book begins with ten suggestions for immediate action, including taking up a daily spiritual practice, listing what is sacred to you and what you are grateful for, an exercise on forgiveness, skip a meal and donate the equivalent sum and tithe 5-10% of your income to a cause in which you passionately believe. This process jump-starts the book, as do a number of powerful stories; among them an occasion when Andrew gave his change to a ragged old woman who used this to buy a chapatti which she shared with an equally emaciated dog. An important influence on the mystical side was Bede Griffiths, about whom Andrew made a film in the early 90's. Fr Bede felt that we were living through The Hour of God, a time of great darkness and even greater light. He felt that this time would call forth an unprecedented force for transformation and healing, which is also Andrew's hope.

The second part outlines the Hope in greater detail while the third part explains a number of laws as forms of practical guidance. The Sun of Hope represents the Divine as the union of Love and Light and the marriage of opposites as evil gives way to good, destruction to new creation and death to rebirth. With the help of mystical texts from the likes of Kabir and Rumi, we understand more clearly our relationship to the Divine, from which we can never be separate – we are that, tat tvam asi. Andrew sees a mystical renaissance taking place in

the world through a new reconciliation between the sacred masculine and the sacred feminine. Then the Dark Night is a precursor to transformation, both individually and collectively as the One is manifest through the surrendered sacred activist embodying wisdom, creativity and compassion. The activist has to face the shadow and the five inner saboteurs of disbelief, denial, dread, disillusion and the desire to cease to be.

Spelling out the death and the birth, the first list features environmental devastation, the population explosion, the growth of fundamentalism and associated terrorism, nuclear proliferation, our technological worldview, the corporate mindset and our hectic way of life. On the birth side we have the crisis and our response to it – the cultural creatives and the work described by Paul Hawken in *Blessed Unrest*; creative technologies, democratised media with the Internet, the mystical renaissance, the evolving philosophy on nonviolence, the return of the Divine Feminine and the potential for the birth of the Divine Human. Since love is expressed in service, Andrew describes five interlinked forms as service to the Divine, service to yourself as an instrument of the Divine (including the body), service to all sentient beings in your life, service to the local community and finally service to the global community.

Part 3 describes seven laws of sacred activism: sacred practice, surrendering the fruits of action to the Divine, recognising evil, the alchemy of anger, constant and humble shadow work, joy and the emergence of networks of grace. Each chapter gives detailed guidance, distinguishing for instance between so-called warm and cool spiritual practices (we need both) and drawing on his own experiences in learning about humility and faith. Rumi reminds us that 'the remembrance of God is force, power, strength and endurance; it is feathers and wings to the bird of the spirit.' Recognising evil means no longer being naive about the realities of power, combining the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove. Anger can be transmuted into fierce compassion, while the result of confronting the shadow can erode our self-righteousness and any smug sense of superiority. Finally, the formation of networks of grace is vital if this revolution of hope is to be grounded, and Andrew suggests how you the reader can help in your own circle (see also www.andrewharvey.net)

Each of us will naturally find ourselves somewhere along the spectrum of contemplation and action, being and doing, mysticism and activism. This radical and

visionary book has the power to galvanise the reader to new levels of inner commitment and effective action and to kindle a sense of urgency about our individual and collective roles and responsibilities in the face of our planetary challenges.

The S-Word

John Drew

SPIRITUALITY AND BUSINESS: EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES FOR A NEW MANAGEMENT PARADIGM

Sharda S Nanram and Margot Esther Borden, editors

Springer, 2010, 263 pp., \$60, h/b - ISBN 978 3 642 02660 7

This is a difficult book title. Business people are uncomfortable with the word 'spirituality' and yet talk easily about values in business, ethics, morality, corporate social responsibility (CSR) or at the margin even love or kindness. Are these all part of spirituality?

The editors of this book could have a problem dealing with a subject which cannot be accurately described by its title. How do they resolve it? First by dividing it into three parts – concepts of spirituality – personal spirituality – spirituality and leadership.

The book has been carefully assembled. Good writers add their chapters under one of the three sub-titles. The editors as well as the authors bring in spirituality when they can although the thrust of the writing is to do with values, ethics, and corporate responsibility rather than spirituality, except in the very widest sense. There is frequent mention of yoga practices and meditation. There has been very considerable growth in Europe and North America of such practices over recent decades and many find them of great importance as they contemplate their inner lives. But it is not yet evident that corporations think they are fundamental to business.

The editors attempt to widen the texts from Western to some Eastern traditions with articles based on Indian (presumably Hindu) and Buddhist experience. There is more analysis of the effect of religion or spirituality from these sources than in the articles written from a Western perspective. Judaic, Muslim, Christian teachings of spirituality, morality or values are not included. It is not evident that spirituality is part of Hindu or Buddhist corporations. Yes, Hindus may be more involved in their personal lives in matters spiritual

when working in businesses, but do Indian companies build their businesses with an integrated spiritual dimension any more than do Western European ones? Or is it just that they understand the personal spiritual dimension of their employees in the same way as Muslim employees would expect and are allowed time for prayer during office hours?

Authors cite Maslow and his famous Hierarchy of Needs as a starting point and then move into ethics, happiness and values. The growth of soft as opposed to hard disciplines of business has begun to effect companies mainly through the human resources function of corporations, but where can one see spirituality as a subject specifically introduced into organisations? The word spirituality is not found in the annual reports of major companies nor of government departments for that matter

'Love is an essential aspect of management' (page 64), - maybe, but what about spirituality? Business ethics are discussed (p73) and how this led to the stakeholder theory of the firm (p75).

'It is time to give wisdom its proper place in business education and business schools.' - yes, but does wisdom mean spirituality? Spirituality and the transpersonal is mentioned (p87) and the need to enhance self development toward a more holistic and peaceful state of consciousness

The Indian perspective (p93) and karma as a concept is discussed, but no evidence that karma is part of business any more than self mastery courses which are mentioned a few pages later. Valiant attempts such as the AWARE programme of Shell are of interest although the word spirituality is not part of this programme. APEX - achieving personal excellence and the meditation silence service are covered as is Integral Transformational Coaching and the concept of mindfulness. Buddhist practices are described. Perhaps the word 'spirituality' will come to be accepted and used by business in the future just as 'meditation' and 'mindfulness' have come into common parlance. 200 US hospitals have introduced mindfulness and some Google personnel follow courses in it supported by their company.

Words such as soul or spirit are not in common use in business. There is perhaps the personal spirituality of some business leaders - another subject - and of course there is widespread development of coaching in companies and concern about work-life balance. But business coaches would run away from the word spirituality. Interestingly,

business is not so worried about ecology as a word and a growing number of companies see the concept very tied in theoretically and practically with their business development. Many would see that ecology has a spiritual dimension, but the 'S' word has not yet come into business language.

'Further research is needed to convince businesses and leaders that spirituality as conveyed in this work is a key to answering many of the challenges they face' is a conclusion of the editors. (p. 247). Why would research necessarily convince leaders of the need for spirituality and that it is the answer to many of the challenges they face? Some might hope for this, but research should be independent and there is no evidence offered here that business leaders would or should be convinced.

The book is a valuable contribution to the discussion of the role of ethical values in business and management and as such is to be welcomed. It does not prove that managers in business are concerned with spirituality or that there is a growing interest in the concept. It could be that the US is more concerned than is Western Europe. It could be that many parts of the world from Muslim to Hindu to Buddhist regions have employees who are more spiritual, but that is because they come from more spiritual cultures. 'This book invites future development in the burgeoning field of Business Spirituality' - the last line by the editors of 'Spirituality and Business.' And so say many of us. But is it a burgeoning field or is it an attempt to include values, ethics, and morality in the wider term 'spirituality'? Many might wish that businesses were more ethically based and indeed say so, but suggesting that spirituality is the way ahead is too far in advance of the main stream of companies and their employees

A book such as this shows the efforts that are being made to develop more caring organizations. We can only hope that more books in the future will be written on the subject of Business and Spirituality and that some will be written by business people who believe and can prove that businesses run in a spiritual way can profit all stakeholders. They are not yet written, but to times in hope?

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Seeing Differently

David Lorimer

GREENSPIRIT – PATH TO A NEW CONSCIOUSNESS Edited by Marian Van Eyk McCain

0 Books, 2010, 282 pp., £11.99, p/b
– ISBN 978 1 84694 290 7

'The Miracle is not to walk on water. The miracle is to walk on the green Earth, dwelling deeply in the present moment and feeling truly alive.' This quotation from Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that our very existence is miraculous but we do not often realise this because we get stuck in our normal perception of reality. And it is this perception, on a large scale, that constitutes an element of our worldview. Philip Sherrard reminds us that our image of the human and of the world correspond: if we see the world in a dehumanised, mechanistic fashion, then we will understand ourselves in a similar way and behave accordingly. The need for a new worldview is a refrain of this Review, of the Network as a whole and of our New Renaissance volume in particular. This book contains multiple perspectives on green spirituality as a key to 21st century consciousness and is appropriately introduced by Satish Kumar, whose meditation and prayer is walking in Nature, drawing lessons of transformation and deep connectedness to the sacred through Nature.

The editor shares this understanding, recounting her own first experience of skiving from church and spending Sunday morning sitting under a tree; being of the Earth rather than just on it. GreenSpirit is a network of individuals who believe that human life has both an ecological and a spiritual dimension, with a vision



bringing together 'the rigour of science, the creativity of artistic expression, the passion for social justice and the core wisdom of spiritual traditions.' It draws on a number of strands and thinkers representing Cosmology (Thomas Berry, Brian Swimme), Creation Spirituality (Matthew Fox), Deep Ecology (Arne Naess), Gaia Theory (James Lovelock, Lynn Margulis and Stephan Harding) and Ecopsychology (Theodore Roszak). The four parts cover understanding ourselves, spiritual pathways, greening our culture and walking our talk. Essays vary from a couple of pages to 20.

Brian Swimme reminds us that the universe is not just a place, but a development, a story, an unfolding process of which we are all a part. He adds, as a poignant reminder, that 'because you are aware of the limits of life, you are compelled to bring forth what is within you; this is the only time you have to show yourself. You can't hold back or hide in a cave....the drama of the Cosmic story won't allow it. The supreme insistence of life is that you enter the adventure of creating yourself.' This passage is quoted in the context of an explanation of Fox's four ways, the *via positiva*, *via negativa*, *via creativa* and *via transformativa*. The last is our imperative, embracing justice, compassion and wisdom and moving from tourist to pilgrim, observer to participant, consumer to partaker, from master to co-creator. The section on spiritual pathways includes Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Sufism and Paganism.

The third part on greening our culture addresses health, education, economics, the law and agriculture. Each is currently imbued with a mechanistic or utilitarian view that prioritises analysis over intuition and creativity, the left over the right hemisphere and neglects the importance of the body. As Matthew Fox states, echoing David Orr: 'if you have only educated the left side of your brain, you are a dangerous person.' David Korten writes about living economies and draws out lessons from life in terms of self-organisation, adaptation to place, permeable borders, sharing, diversity and creativity. I liked his phrase 'mindful markets' and his aspiration to create economies that nurtures life and restores money to its rightful place.

The final part on walking the talk gives more detail about GreenSpirit itself and its activities. There are meetings and retreats of various kinds, publications, pilgrimages and educational work. After reading comes living; and we are living through a major transition involving a

degree of breakdown and/or breakthrough. The editor leaves us with some useful guidance received nearly 20 years ago from the Basque shaman and cultural anthropologist Angeles Arrien. She discovered four archetypal patterns and paths:

- The Way of the Warrior – show up, choose to be present
- The Way of the Healer – pay attention to what has heart and meaning
- The Way of the Visionary – tell the truth without blame or judgement
- The Way of the Teacher – be open, rather than attached, to the outcome

Good advice in any event.

general

A Controlled Demolition

David Lorimer

THE MYSTERIOUS COLLAPSE OF WORLD TRADE CENTER 7

David Ray Griffin

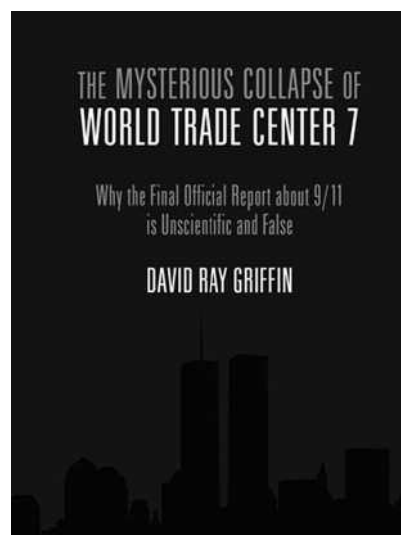
Arris Books, 2010, 328 pp., £12.99, p/b – ISBN 978 1 84437 083 2

Over the last few years I have reviewed all of David Ray Griffin's books on 9/11, which now amount to over 2,500 pages of close analysis. For readers not familiar with his earlier work, a reminder that he was best known as a philosopher of religion and process theologian, and has published over 25 books in this field. He was asked to write an article on 9/11 and began with the orthodox story; the more he delved into it, the less plausible did these official explanations seem, and the result was his 2004 book *The New Pearl Harbour*. Since then he has produced analyses of the shortcomings of the 9/11

Commission report and a book specifically responding to 9/11 debunkers. Many uninformed people are under the impression that so-called 9/11 conspiracy theorists are unhinged and have no rational basis for their views. This could not be further from the truth, but in order to realise this for oneself, one does need to plough through some detail as set out in Griffin's books in order to appreciate the full force of his arguments in relation to the evidence.

This latest book on the collapse of WTC 7 is subtitled 'why the final official report about 9/11 is unscientific and false'. This sounds like an extraordinary claim, but Griffin amply proves his case by means of forensic analysis of the evidence. Many readers will have seen videos of the collapse of WTC on the Internet. If you have not done so, I recommend you stop reading now and have a look for yourself. You will notice that the building collapses on its own footprint at more or less free fall speed. It has all the features of a controlled demolition, which as attested by many demolition experts. And yet this most plausible hypothesis was ruled out by NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) in its official report, where they claim, incredibly, that they found no evidence for it! Griffin conducts a systematic controlled demolition of the official report, showing conclusively how it unscientifically rejects the most likely theory and then advances unscientific arguments for its own theory of fire causing the collapse. The main problem is that their conclusions were politically set in advance, so the report is effectively a political document rather than an impartial scientific investigation. NIST was asked how it was that the building collapsed as a result of fires when fires have never brought about the collapse of a comparable structure, either before or since.

According to the 9/11 truth movement, the attacks were in fact a 'false flag' operation 'in which evidence is planted to implicate the groups or countries the actual perpetrators wish to attack.' Moreover, the official account of the attacks, when subject to close critical scrutiny, can be shown to be false. Griffin has established this case in his earlier books. Unlike the Twin Towers, the 47-story WTC 7 was not hit by a plane, and, if it came down as a result of fire, this would be unprecedented. So how and why did it collapse? This is the 'mystery'. Griffin enumerates key similarities between the collapse of WTC 7 and the features of controlled demolition



through implosion: the collapse started from the bottom and suddenly; the building came down totally, leaving none of its steel columns intact; it came straight down, symmetrically; it came down in free fall or close to it; the concrete was pulverised into tiny particles, and the debris ended up in a relatively small, compact pile. Given these features, it is completely implausible that WTC 7 could have come down in this way without the aid of explosives. The NIST spokesman Shyam Sunder nevertheless brazenly maintained that 'we did not find any evidence that explosives were used to bring the building down.'

Why did they find no such evidence? Griffin explains in detail how NIST ignored all physical and testimonial evidence supporting the implosion hypothesis, including testimonies of explosions from people both inside and outside the building. They distorted the evidence of two city officials inside the building, one of whom subsequently changed his story to fit in with the official explanation, a distortion uncritically repeated in a BBC documentary, as Griffin shows. NIST also ignored evidence that some senior members of the New York Fire Department knew in advance that the building was going to come down. Finally, expert testimony that WTC 7 was brought down by explosives was also dismissed. They misleadingly claim that the explosion hypothesis had been 'carefully investigated', adding that NIST had 'found no evidence supporting the existence of a blast event'. One can only comment that Nelson 'saw no ships' at the Battle of Copenhagen when he put a telescope to his blind eye.

The second part examines the alternative NIST theory that WTC 7 was brought down by ordinary fires on a few floors, the temperature of which could not even have reached the necessary heat to melt the building's steel columns. Griffin analyses the main components of the NIST thermal expansion fire theory and finds them all inadequate, especially how a single failed column can lead to a total and near free-fall collapse leaving not a single column standing. More significantly, he shows how the report itself is not only unscientific but actually contains fabrication and falsification of evidence on at least 20 separate counts. The falsity of the report's conclusion follows from the overwhelming likelihood, given the available evidence, the WTC 7 was brought down by controlled demolition. If this is the case, then this building was not brought down by Muslim terrorists but rather by

domestic terrorists with the ability to plant explosives and orchestrate a cover-up, of which the NIST report itself is a significant component. An appendix puts forward the further hypothesis based on evidence that explosions at the bottom of the building began at 9.30 a.m. (the building came down in the late afternoon) that it was meant to have come down at 10.45, in which case the subsequent evidence for controlled demolition would have been obscured.

This is arguably the most important of Griffin's books since it deals with a building that was not struck by a plane and therefore requires a different hypothesis to explain its collapse (although there is also good evidence that the Twin Towers came down through explosions). The implications of his conclusions are far-reaching since the US political authorities have systematically misled the public about the causes of 9/11, which have been a critical plank for subsequent foreign policy decisions, which had been outlined a year previously in *Project for a New American Century*. All that was needed to get the public behind this agenda was a 'New Pearl Harbour' in the guise of 9/11. Griffin has had to fill the role of the investigative journalist and has shown immense courage and stamina in persevering with his work over the last seven years. The book is essential reading for anyone who wants to get to grips with the reasons behind this momentous event and the ways in which official explanations can be proved to be totally unconvincing and inadequate, a triumph of political expediency over scientific integrity.

Prophecy and Free Will Kurt Dressler

PROVING SHAKESPEARE

David L Roper

Orvid Publications, 2008, 534 pp.,
£37.50, h/b -
ISBN 978 0 557 01261 9

NOSTRADAMUS – THE TRUTH Five Centuries of Prophecies Validated David L Roper

Orvid Editions, 2009, 587 pp.,
£21.23, p/b -
ISBN 978 0 9543873 1 0

Why has the book on the true identity of Shakespeare caught my attention? In Network 99 (Spring 2009) I had reviewed 'D.U.', *The Disappearance of the Universe*, by Gary Renard. I quote (pp.330-331) from Renard's book:

The gentleman who wrote the Shakespeare material was an Earl whose family's crest bore the image of a lion shaking a spear. To honour his family he was sometimes toasted at Court with the phrase, 'Your countenance shakes a spear!' But this Earl was forbidden by Queen Elizabeth the First, who was a political genius and very controlling, from putting his name on his work. There was a social stigma attached to the stage at that time. Plays, especially comedies, were not considered to be serious literature and were beneath the dignity of royalty. It turns out there was an actor by the name of William Shakespeare. When Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, found out about this man, he thought it was almost too good to be true. Here was de Vere being toasted at Court with the phrase related to his family crest, a lion shaking a spear, and here's a man in the business named Shakespeare! Edward struck a deal with William to put his name on the work and have the plays presented to the public with the actor playing the part of author. It was a sly way for Edward to get some credit for his work without actually putting his name on it. The plan succeeded very nicely, although Shakespeare wasn't really paid that much, and many of the plays were published all at once as a catalog *after* the actor named Shakespeare passed away. (End of quotation)

What you have just read is a 'clear vision' given to Gary Renard by an ascended master in 1997, as reported in Renard's book 'D.U.', published in 2003, i.e., five years before Roper's *Proving Shakespeare*. In his book Roper presents scholarly, definitive, convincing evidence that E De Vere, Earl of Oxford, was the man hiding with pseudonym 'William Shakespeare' behind an actor conveniently called Will Shaxspere, from Stratford-upon-Avon, to act as author of his work.

I learned about Roper's book via a review in the Fall 2009 issue of the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*. I then sent him the passage quoted above from Renard's book. His response:

I was most intrigued to discover that Gary Renard had published an almost identical account to my own, describing how the name Shakespeare came into existence. As far as I was aware, no one but I had drawn this conclusion, and I am familiar with most literature on this subject.

Roper's is undoubtedly the most thorough, scholarly and definitive study of de Vere as author of the Shakespeare material. He uses and interprets numerous documents of the period and he breaks a code which was hidden in a text on a historic plaque by people who knew Shakespeare's true identity. *Proving Shakespeare* is a most impressive and fascinating piece of work.

Now to *Nostradamus*: Roper informed me about this book prior to its publication. He wrote:

... upon reading your review [of Renard's two books], I found that you were repeating so much that I am already familiar with, and which I have put into the final chapter, the Afterword, of my new book, which is published next month. With regard to this book, were you to follow through all the links concerning this publication, which are to be found on my website, there is one in particular concerning a quite devastating future for those living in Geneva. I do not think bad news such as this can ever be welcome, but in my defence, I can only say that my interpretations have never failed in the past. (end of quotation).

The relevant links in Roper's website www.davidroper.eu are: Nostradamus The Truth / www.nostradamus.org.uk / A Look Into the Future [1]

This leads you to the following prophecy (in its original ancient French as well as) in modern English translation:

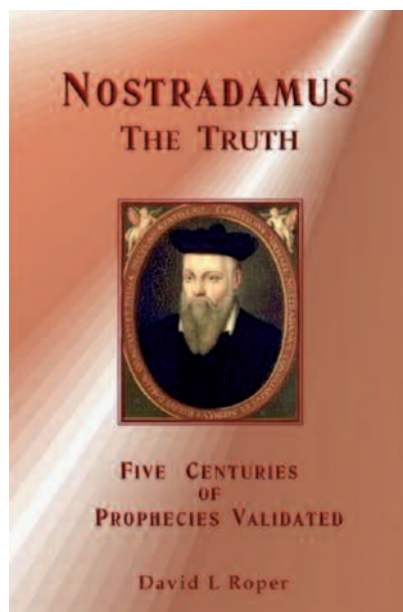
Migrate, migrate from Geneva,
absolutely everyone!

Saturn will change itself: made of
gold out of iron,

The opposite positive beam will
exterminate all:

Before the violent issue, the
heavens will give signs.

The website explains that this must be understood as a reference to the presently ongoing experiments in CERN's Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in which positively charged atomic nuclei are brought into violent collisions with a positive beam of nuclei travelling in the opposite direction. A strange form of matter is thus created, a so called quark-gluon plasma, which requires such immense energies that the likes of it haven't existed since the first instants of the Big Bang. In 2000, CERN announced compelling evidence that this exotic form of matter had finally been created by colliding high energy lead ions into gold and lead targets. The discovery was confirmed in 2005 elsewhere and will be a



major area of research at the LHC. Roper's comment at the end of his website:

Because of the similarities that exist between what Nostradamus predicted for Geneva and the activities intended for the LHC, also at Geneva, it is fair comment and a matter of public interest to draw attention to the relevant similarities that exist.

That urgent call to leave Geneva before it becomes exterminated is certainly an unwelcome message and one that is unlikely to be taken seriously there. So we are left to helplessly stand by and observe the future inevitable course of predetermined history or, if not, then wonder why in this first instance in 450 years, the predicted calamity refuses to happen.

Roper's book presents some 200 prophecies, out of a total of 945 published by Nostradamus 1555 - 1558. Those 200 cover the period from 1557 to 2009, while the remainder was said by Nostradamus to extend as far as the year 3797. The 200 represent an impressively complete record of the major historical events in the history of France and beyond, including such recent examples as 9/11, the war in Iraq, and the prediction that great clarity will come in our times concerning the meaning of Nostradamus' work.

Roper has enriched his Nostradamus book with an Afterword in which he presents a careful analysis of the apparent conflict between predetermination of future events in prophetic revelations, on the one hand, and free will that might be exercised to prevent the predicted events from happening, on the other hand. Nostradamus has

carefully worded his prophecies such that, although they can quite clearly be identified with past events, they can not accurately be assigned to future dates or places in advance. That renders it impossible to change the course of predetermined events and it thus guarantees free will. Furthermore, our experience of the flow of time and of separation between past, present and future is a product of our normal state of consciousness. The entire outer world of matter, space and time is generated by our consciousness. It is not matter that generates an illusion of consciousness, but consciousness that generates an illusion of matter and of spatial and temporal separations (read again my review of Gary Renard's books).

Renard is told by an ascended master: 'Don't take the tricks of time seriously. What you think of as the past is an illusory happening that is taking place right now. The future is happening right now, but your mind has divided these images up to make them look like time. Yet the whole thing happened all at once and is already over.' Within this worldview there is a knowledge who knows everything. In heaven, the future is already present. It is us who believe that the future is still open. Roper calls this a block universe which contains it all, past, future, the whole works. It is us who move through this block universe with the illusion of an open future. And yet we really do have free will, except that what my free will is going to decide tomorrow is known already today to the Knowledge who knows all. Roper calls this Knowledge God and he suggests that the existence of accurate prophecies can be taken as a proof of an all-knowing God. If you don't like that you still must acknowledge the existence of a body of information about events which for us lie in the future, i.e., information that is apparently accessible to ascended masters as well as to earth bound people with access to prophetic vision like, some 450 years ago, that French physician Michel de Nostredame.

It is reasonable to expect the prophecies of Nostradamus continuing to reveal major events in the world on a regular basis. The implications are therefore profound, and these will be a major source of contention for very many years to come.

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