



books in brief

David Lorimer

SCIENCE/PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

Creation and Evolution

by Lenn E Goodman

Taylor & Francis 2010, 222 pp., £21.99, p/b.

A thorough and stimulating analysis of the relationship between Darwinism and Religion. As a professor of philosophy who is also religious, Goodman brings a balanced but searching critique of arguments on various sides, asking a number of central questions about religious opposition to Darwinism, the way in which the biblical creation narrative should be read, the evidence for evolution by natural selection, contemporary objections to evolution and how evolution can complement theism. The book surveys the backgrounds of today's conflict and offers a thematic treatment of the Biblical creation story as a critique of literalism. It then articulates the history of the case for evolution before considering three lines of critique from Darwin's contemporary Sedgwick, Popper and Intelligent Design. Goodman does not believe that the methodological naturalism of science implies an ontological naturalism, criticising the likes of Dennett on that score. He himself proposes that God works in and through nature and that value is endemic in nature; also that natural selection does not eliminate teleology, which he sees as presumed in Darwin's concept of adaptation. This results in a more nuanced understanding of this contested field.

Les Racines Physiques de l'Esprit

by Tom Atham & Emmanuel Ransford (SMN)

Editions Quintessence 2009, 149 pp., £14.50, p/b.

This is a serious attempt to create a new model of science and consciousness, using a number of fertile new concepts, which are explained in the course of the book. The structure entails a preface by Emmanuel Ransford followed by a series of chapters from Tom Atham about Ransford's scheme and a concluding observation by Ransford. A key idea is that of psychomatter as a result of the search for the causal principle within the heart of matter itself. The reader is reminded of Penrose and others who state that no theory of everything that ignores consciousness can possibly be adequate. The book elaborates a new ladder of causality, beginning with what is called exo-causality, associated with the external deterministic factors such as gravity. The next level is exo-a (aleatoire), signifying determinism and chance; then we have endo-causality to which psychomatter corresponds, and finally a combination of all four, where physics abuts onto metaphysics.

This in turn corresponds to four forms of medicine along the lines elaborated by Larry Dossey; and again to the structure of the self as it becomes more universal, moving from what is called 'supral' (connected to the whole) through to the total self, where we are linked to the whole universe in its invisible and essential depths. The final picture is a rich one of sharing, unity, interdependence and abundance. Instead of being complete only in a physical sense, our world and our lives are seen to open up to a transcendence that is both an extension and a ground, or, to use another

expression, a cosmic supral canvas which harmonises and envelopes everything in a parallel fashion to quantum entanglement. One gap in the analysis was the distinction between life and death as two forms of matter, the substance of which is identical, but in the latter case the psycho part seems to have been removed elsewhere. A very stimulating treatise for those whose French is up to it.

The Man who Tapped the Secrets of the Universe

by Glenn Clark

Filiquarian Publishing 2010, 68 pp., £6.99, p/b.

An introductory book about Walter Russell (1871-1963), a little-known genius who published a series of books on science and philosophy following a prolonged and mystical experience in 1921. When his book *The Universal One* was published in 1926, Russell sent it to 850 leading thinkers, and received not a single reply. His approach is still ahead of its time, and this book provides a fascinating introduction to his life and work. As well as his writing, Russell was a prominent sculptor, painter, architect and musician, as well as an accomplished horseman and skater. The key to understanding his work is the way in which he tapped into the light and energy of the universal mind and lived according to universal principles. He states that all is One Mind, that men do not have separate minds and that all knowledge can be obtained from the universal source by becoming one with that source. One must not be the part, one must be the whole. A truly inspiring account.

The Artificial Ape

by Timothy Taylor

Palgrave Macmillan 2010, 236 pp., £17.00, p/b.

An intriguing book arguing that humans took control of their own evolution at a much earlier stage than is currently supposed by means of the invention of tools, fire and shelter as a way of modifying their biology. The author posits three systems within which we live: physics and inorganic chemistry, biology and technology. He contests Darwin's view and that of creationism equally, using the telling phrase 'survival of the weakest'. Without artificial aids we would not have made it; technology supersedes biology, although I was not convinced by the one-way nature of technology driving evolution - it is surely a reciprocal process. We have been constructing artificial environments now informing ourselves in artificial images for thousands of years, so there is no going back to nature since we are both product and producers of this third system of artificiality.

Seen/Unseen

by Martin Kemp

Oxford University Press 2006, 352 pp., £25.00, h/b.

A book of extraordinary scope and erudition subtitled 'Art, science and intuition from Leonardo to the Hubble telescope.' Martin Kemp is Professor of History of Art at Oxford with a long-standing interest in the interface between art and science, especially in relation to visual perception and the structural intuitions connecting these two fields. This leads to topics such as the way we visualise space, the relationship between wholes and parts, the generation of forms in nature and the mathematics of complexity represented in fractals. He

begins with Renaissance techniques for representing perspectival space and moves through a number of exemplars including the architecture of Copernican astronomy, the diagrams of Kepler, the contemplative science of Goethe and D'Arcy Thompson's Growth and Form (Kemp and D'Arcy were both professors at St Andrews). Throughout the book, illustrations form part of the exposition and enrich the narrative. The Unseen part of the title refers to the way in which we image cellular and subatomic worlds. The book is a veritable tour de force and elegantly written besides. Essential reading for anyone interested in the art-science interface and who wants to explore more deeply the dominance of visual perception in our culture.

From Galileo to Gell-Mann

by **Marco Bersanelli & Mario Gargantini**

Templeton Foundation Press 2009, 320 pp., £27.95, h/b.

A beautifully produced book about the wonder that inspired the greatest scientists of all time, drawing on the writings of over 100 people. The authors have done a great service in bringing all this material together, sometimes from obscure sources. They group the writings, accompanied by an interconnecting commentary, under seven major headings: wonder, observation, experiment, discovery, certainty, sign and purpose. Each of these in turn is explored in relation to particular themes such as wonder and beauty, experiment and attention, certainty and limits, purpose and responsibility. The book is literally a goldmine of reflections and insights and can be opened at more or less any page or read more systematically.

MEDICINE/HEALTH

Obesity: The Biography

by **Sander L Gilman**

Oxford University Press 2010, 214 pp., £12.99, h/b.

A timely book in view of current preoccupations with globesity, although it is somewhat ironic that it appears in a series of volumes on the biography of diseases, when obesity is not in fact a disease. The author is an authority on the social and cultural history of the body, and is able to trace the history of obesity from ancient Greeks to the present, showing how cultural interpretations have changed but the pattern of therapeutic interventions has remained relatively constant in taking either a psychological or physiological approach. There is an interesting section in the middle of the book about the influence of the 16th century Italian Luigi Cornaro, who suffered from a variety of ailments due to overindulgence until his middle age but cured himself by a strict regime that enabled him to live healthily until the age of 98. Coming to the present, the discussion in the final chapter includes a critical reference to Weston Price and his theory of nutrition and physical degeneration. The discussion of organic food reflects the author's prejudice, although I do agree that those who eat organically are not necessarily better people as such! And the role of giant food companies in helping create widespread obesity is not referred to except obliquely in a reference to the China Study showing that the transition to a Western diet brings with it a tendency towards overweight and the advent of diseases of civilisation. There is also no reference to the work of Sir Robert McCarrison.



PHILOSOPHY/RELIGION

Naked Being

by **J M Harrison**

O Books 2010, 136 pp., £9.99, p/b.

A series of 450 reflections about mind, life and consciousness from a non-dual perspective. A few extracts can convey the sense: 'life is seen by the habitual mind to be diverse and many, but realised by pure mind to be ONE.' 'The ego self thrives on separation that seeks to be whole. Pure mind doesn't seek and can never be divided.' 'Naked Being is the one Self, which is 'something we seek and yet something we already are.' It is also an essential dimension to life that we all share. I was struck by the quotation from Aristotle that 'the energy of the mind is the essence of life.' Each of these aphorisms is a reflection of the One, providing an insight from a slightly different angle but which, paradoxically, cannot be fully understood by the analytical mind. A book that needs to be tasted and savoured. See www.wholenessofbeing.com

Reasonable Faith

by **John Haldane**

Routledge - Taylor & Francis Group 2010, 200 pp., £22.99, p/b.

This book of essays follows up John Haldane's earlier volume *Faithful Reason* and falls into two parts, the first one reason, faith and God, and the second one reason, faith and the soul. Haldane is well-known as a Catholic philosopher of wide sympathies and vision, qualities which are apparent throughout these essays. Taking up the wager theme from Pascal, he uses this to discuss Nicholas Rescher's contributions to philosophy of religion which engage practically with the meaning of human existence, a topic studiously avoided by many contemporaries who shy away from practical applications of philosophy. In this same essay, Thomas Nagel is quoted as being uneasy that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people he knows our religious believers, while he positively hopes that there is no God. Rescher comments tellingly: 'Many people feel threatened by a belief that God might exist, because they feel that, were it so, God might not approve of them.' Another essay on the very idea of spiritual values discusses the contribution of the French scholar Pierre Hadot to our understanding of ancient schools of philosophy as a means of forming the soul. Haldane does not believe that spiritual formation should proceed independently of the truth of the accompanying metaphysical discourse. Rather, believers and materialists alike should ask themselves what follows from arriving at their own understanding of a fundamental view of reality.

There are two essays on death and immortality, one of which is entitled 'The examined death' and discusses the nature of human embodiment and arguments for an immaterial soul. While definitions of death necessarily refer to the cessation of bodily functions, it does not follow, as Haldane implies, that one cannot experience one's own death as an experience. This is exactly what is reported in NDEs. From a philosophical point of view, the question of who is experiencing is only a problem if one insists on an identity coterminous with physical embodiment. In another part of the essay, Haldane observes that the ancients defined the immaterial not as consciousness but as abstract thought. On this view, abstract thought might persist in a post mortem states. As is often the case, the difficulty arises with the notion of an immaterial self being disembodied, while the evidence suggests that there are different forms of body according to the constitution of that type of existence. It is here that human experience in these liminal states can help shed light on philosophical matters. But such is the modern aversion to dualism that these considerations are seldom mentioned. Having said this, the essay is no less stimulating on that account.

What is This Thing Called Happiness?**by Fred Feldman***Oxford University Press 2010, 286 pp., £27.50, h/b.*

A major philosophical study of the nature and value of happiness. The first part is a critique of prevalent theories including what is called sensory hedonism, preferentism and life satisfaction. The second part is devoted to an exposition and defence of his own position, which he calls intrinsic attitudinal hedonism, by which he means that attitudinal pleasure is a propositional attitude representing a capacity to take pleasure in things and experiences. At the same time, the book seeks to clarify the various meanings and usages of terms within positive psychology. Although technical, the book is accessible to a persistent general reader.

The Philosopher's Toolkit**by Julian Baggini and Peter S Fosl***Blackwell Publishing 2010, 284 pp., £11.99, p/b.*

Second edition of this highly informative compendium of philosophical concepts and methods introducing the conceptual toolkit required by any systematic thinker. As one of the reviews points out, the book is ideal for introductory courses in philosophy as well as for anyone interested in methods of argument, criticism and assessment. As such, it can also be used by IB students as a way into their theory of knowledge paper. There are nearly 100 sections divided into a number of tools for argument, assessment, conceptual distinctions and radical critique along with tools of historical schools and philosophers, which includes Hume's Fork and Occam's Razor. Each of the entries is cross-referenced with a short reading list at the end. It is an ideal way of getting to grips with important philosophical distinctions and concepts such as necessary/sufficient, circularity, false dichotomy and genetic fallacy, not to mention an entertaining introduction to logic and the validity of arguments.

Unveiling the Breath**by Donna Kennedy Glans***Pari Publishing 2009, 183 pp., £9.99, p/b.*

An important book giving new insights into gender relations, especially with respect to the Islamic countries (Yemen in particular) where the author has worked. The emphasis is on Western people reframing their own ideas about gender roles as part of an ongoing dialogue with traditional cultures. She presents the idea of a gender onion with different layers - the relationship between the individual and family forming the inmost layer, while outer layers deal with the individual and faith, community, work and the world. More subtly, the task is to integrate the masculine and feminine aspects of ourselves and to incorporate this more generally in education. Interested readers can consult www.canadabridges.com

Ancient Egypt 39,000 BCE**by Edward F Malkowski***Bear & Company Publishing 2010, 299 pp., \$24.00, p/b.*

Subtitled 'the history, technology and philosophy of Civilisation X', this is a groundbreaking study making a strong case for the existence of much more sophisticated technology than is currently acknowledged to have been involved in building the pyramids. It is sobering to reflect on how little would be left of our civilisation if we were overtaken by the kind of catastrophe that has occurred during the earth's history. The book's argument hinges on the discovery of an extraordinary stone at Abu Rawash which shows signs of having been machine tooled. The sheer scale and precision of the technology involved suggests to the author that a technically advanced civilisation existed in the remote past, which had the skills and power to quarry, move

and dress multi-ton blocks of stones and had the technology to cut and shape granite into beautiful temples. A wealth of evidence is provided to support this proposition, along with an explanation of the cataclysm which seems to have wiped it out, based on the work of Paul LaViolette. This is a serious piece of work which deserves careful consideration.

The Mysteries of the Holy Grail**by Rudolf Steiner***Rudolf Steiner Press 2010, 217 pp., £12.99, p/b.*

This volume collects together for the first time a varied selection of teachings relating to the Grail, Arthur and Parzival to modern initiation. The editor suggests that the Grail represents a state towards which we are evolving parallel to the impulse of the Christ within. Just as the hero's journey involves engaging with the veils of material illusion and the valleys of shadow and doubt, so Steiner presents a challenging path, inviting us to embark on our own journey so as to become vessels of the spirit.

There Were Giants Upon the Earth**by Zecharia Sitchin***Bear & Company Publishing 2010, 346 pp., \$24.00, h/b.*

The latest in a series of books by Sitchin, who is now in his 90th year. He continues his theme that the gods of Sumer and Babylon - the Annunaki from another planet Nibiru - genetically engineered humans to those of an existing hominid some 300,000 years ago. Drawing on a vast range of scholarship as well as his grasp of ancient languages and archaeology, he asserts that two of the tombs of Ur contained the remains of an Annunaki goddess Puabi, which actually still exist in the Natural History Museum. Sitchin has been urging the museum to do a DNA test on these remains in order to assess his hypothesis. So far, his requests have been politely refused, and the intent of the book is to provide sufficient evidence to justify this request. It is an intriguing story.

In the Name of God**by John Teehan***Blackwell Publishing 2010, 272 pp., £14.99, p/b.*

Subtitled 'the evolutionary origins of religious ethics and violence', this fascinating study argues that religious violence is grounded in the moral psychology of religion, which can be accounted for through evolutionary psychology. Adopting an approach of methodological naturalism, the author argues that evolution has 'designed' the human mind with a set of mental tools that shape our morality is that religions. Accordingly, his first chapter is devoted to the evolution of the moral brain with five layers: kin selection, reciprocal altruism, indirect reciprocity, cultural group selection and moral emotions, all leading to the emergence of moral grammar and moral systems. Moving on to moral religions, he applies his analysis to the 10 Commandments in Judaism and the morality of Jesus in the New Testament. He argues against the view that Christianity has developed beyond reciprocal altruism by pointing out that there is a reward for turning the other cheek, but from God rather than another person. He contends, rightly in my view, that religions are both peaceloving and violent on the basis that they always constitute an in-group and an out-group, hence 'the tragic flaw in religious moral psychology begins by drawing a boundary around the group, setting it apart from the other.' This both creates a sense of communal identity while at the same time creating a limit of moral obligation, thus setting up the conditions for religious violence. In his conclusion, the author offers an inclusive vision of humanism which he hopes will resolve this contradiction, even though he admits that the new atheists perpetuate the distinction between an in-group and an out-group.

The Imaginal Cosmosedited by **Angela Voss (SMN)***University of Kent 2007, 158 pp., p/b.*

Subtitled 'astrology, divination and the sacred', this is a series of papers presented at an international conference in 2004, and include leading scholars in psychology, esotericism, the history and theory of astrology, mediaeval philosophy and religious studies. Not so long ago, it would have been inconceivable for an academic meeting on divination to be held at a University. As the title suggests, many papers focus on the prominent role all the creative imagination as the organ of symbolic insight, and locate divination in the *mundus imaginalis*. Of central concern is the mode of knowing implied in divination and one's corresponding understanding of the cosmos. Our current mechanistic understanding is only one mode, then one should not forget 'the older analogical view of nature with its alternative vision of order in terms of influences, sympathies and correspondences, implied, incidentally, in Jung's concept of synchronicity. Cosmologically, one can see the emergence of a fuller understanding of the universe articulating qualitative as well as quantitative aspects. Among the many interesting papers, the work of Gaston Bachelard was unfamiliar to me. The volume can be recommended as a valuable way of enhancing one's understanding of an esoteric perspective.

Seeing with Different Eyesedited by **Patrick Curry and Angela Voss (SMN)***Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2007, 350 pp., £39.99, h/b.*

Essays on astrology and divination originating at a conference held at the University of Kent in 2006 (see above). The title of this scholarly collection of interdisciplinary studies was inspired by a quotation by Plotinus who wrote that we should 'shut our eyes and change to and wake another way of seeing, which everyone has but few use.' Accordingly, a central theme is that divinatory knowledge involves a different mode of insight and a corresponding shift in perception. The essays range over many cultures and schools, including Chaldea, Stoicism, Iamblichus, Theravada Buddhism, astrology, medicine and Mayan culture. The tension between divination and the normal approach of academic studies is particularly fruitful and brings the reader to a deeper understanding of the meaning of participatory knowledge.

PSYCHOLOGY/PARAPSYCHOLOGY**Cognitive Psychology**by **Michael W Eysenck and Mark T Keane***Taylor & Francis 2010, 752 pp., £29.95, p/b.*

Sixth edition of this highly acclaimed and accessible student textbook, with increased emphasis on cognitive neuroscience, a new chapter on cognition and emotion and, significantly, they owe final chapter on consciousness. The first four parts deal with visual perception and attention, memory, language, thinking and reasoning. The last part is on broadening horizons, containing the new chapters. Prominence is given to global workspace theory, according to which a selective attention helps us determine the information of which we become aware, although there is also evidence that conscious awareness can precede selective attention. There are online links for both instructors and students, including reference links to key journal articles and even a chapter by chapter PowerPoint lecture course.

Cognition & Emotionby **Jan De Houwer and Dirk Hermans***Psychology Press 2010, 347 pp., £39.95, h/b.*

A technical review of current research and theories about the interplay between cognition and emotion. The aim of the book is to pride researchers and students with state-of-the-art reviews of the most important research topics, specifying the relevant issues, the main theories, findings and conclusions and the most important challenges for the future. In addition, there is a discussion about how the research topics are related, especially with respect to the most important series and their bearing on the evidence. Topics include the psychology of emotion regulation, the effects of emotion on attention, measures of emotion and the perception and categorisation of emotional stimuli.

Mindworlds: A Decade of Consciousness Studiesby **J Andrew Ross***Imprint Academic 2009, 342 pp., £24.95, p/b.*

A series of papers by a regular contributor to the Journal of Consciousness Studies who also has his own philosophical blog at www.andyross.net. Helpfully, these 16 papers upgraded easy, middle or hard and each is explained in the introduction, which is followed by an informative autobiography that forms the backdrop to the following papers, which were written for a variety of occasions and audiences. It is a good way of becoming acquainted with the central issues under consideration, and ends with a brickbat arising out of a scathing review by Colin McGinn of a book by Ted Honderich.

Ten Years of Viewing from Withinby **Claire Petitmengin***Imprint Academic 2009, 404 pp., £17.95, p/b.*

A reconsideration of first person approaches to the study of consciousness on the 10th anniversary of an edition of the Journal of Consciousness Studies edited by Francisco Varela and Jonathan Shear. Varela has died in the interim, so this volume is devoted to his legacy, and is edited by one of his former doctoral students. The contributions are wide ranging and necessary technical, so this will appeal to existing JCS readers and subscribers.

The Intelligent Guide to the Sixth Senseby **Heidi Sawyer***Hay House Publishers 2010, 169 pp., £8.99, p/b.*

This book receives a strong endorsement from Member Prof. Kim Jobst in his Foreword, telling the author's own story and providing a guide to our subtle intuitive faculties and their development. This opens up the big questions of life and the need to understand unusual experiences, especially in a materialistic culture. There are chapters on choosing a psychic, the purpose of readings, blocks to psychic awareness, healing and psychic children. Towards the end of the book there is a summary of techniques and advice, and a reflection on the difficulties of pursuing this path in the face of family and other opposition.

The Shiftby **Dr Wayne W Dyer***Hay House Publishers 2010, 155 pp., £8.99, p/b.*

A simple yet profound book about taking your life from ambition to meaning, from the sense of separation and isolation to one of spiritual connectedness and purpose. It is easy to identify with one's possession, position and reputation, but these are symptoms of a sense of separation inherent in identifying with the ego. This also involves sense of separation from God. Gradually, we shift and turn around, with the belief of unity replacing our belief in separation. We are motivated by ethics and quality of life and become open

to the possibility of miracles being part of our life, at the same time deepening our spiritual practice. Dyer describes the four cardinal virtues that constitute our original nature as reverence, natural sincerity, gentleness and supportiveness as we move towards a more trusting attitude to life.

Truth, Triumph and Transformation

by **Sandra Anne Taylor**

Hay House Publishers 2010, 268 pp., £9.99, p/b.

A helpful book based on many of the dilemmas and confusions brought about by a simplistic understanding of the law of attraction and creation. A literal and fundamentalist approach always misses the spirit of creative success as it tries to reduce the process to a set of rigid formulas. The first part of this book looks at various case histories, especially where things have not gone smoothly or as anticipated. For instance, clear intentions are only part of a much larger process which has to be lived as well as understood - flexibility and openness are essential. There is an excellent summary towards the end, including essential principles of the power of consciousness and six related keys to conscious creation including gratitude and love. The strongest thing we emanate is a direct reflection of our being in terms of prevalent thoughts and feelings constituting what Swedenborg called our ruling love.

The Napkin, the Melon and the Monkey

by **Barbara Burke**

Hay House Publishers 2010, 130 pp., £7.99, h/b.

An appealing modern-day parable of stressed out professional life involving Olivia, an assistant at Mighty Power's customer service call centre. It's a nightmare scenario and Olivia's sunny disposition and can-do attitude is soon worn down by the constant barrage of angry calls from frustrated customers. In desperation, she consults Isabel, an experienced rep and the wise woman of the moment. This provides the framework for 22 life lessons which enable Olivia to turn things round as she resigns with immediate effect her position as General Manager of the Universe and discovers the power of letting go. Among the lessons are 'the nicer I am to myself, the nicer I am to others', 'the less I talk, the more I learn' and 'problems can be gifts in disguise.' An entertaining book full of practical wisdom.

Amazing Encounters

by **Elizabeth Nowotny-Keane (SMN)**

David Lovell Publishing 2009, 204 pp., A\$24.95, p/b.

There is a growing literature of well attested communications from the deceased, to which this is a welcome addition with a foreword by the well-known writer on after death communications, Louis LeGrand. Many people are unaware that this field has been thoroughly investigated for 130 years and that there is a vast database of case histories which cannot be dismissed without thorough review. In this book, the author groups stories together to show characteristic features, weaving them into an overall narrative. The overall effect is to diminish the fear of death and reveal something of life's deeper meaning. The book gives a good feel for the field and is a good place for the novice to begin.

The Future of the Soul

by **Ian Lawton (SMN)**

Rational Spirituality Press 2010, 113 pp., £7.99, p/b.

A small book about 2012 and the global shift in consciousness, based on a series of channelling sessions. The big picture is that we are due for the kind of shift that happens only every 26,000 years and that this process is beginning to happen and will intensify over the next few years. According to these teachings, worldwide upheavals will result in the loss of over a quarter of the global population and completely new systems of governance will emerge, much more in line with spiritual principles. There is a good deal of apocalyptic literature about, and we will have to see how accurate it turns out to be.

Human Potential

by **David Vernon**

Taylor & Francis 2009, 267 pp., £19.95, p/b.

An interesting academic study exploring techniques used to enhance human performance. The introduction explains the scope of the book with the emergence of the concept of human potential in the work of Abraham Maslow, the desire to enhance human performance and the need to measure this up against evidence. Vernon usefully debunks the myth that we use only 10% of our brain and constructs a rubric whereby techniques are classified according to whether they are traditional or contemporary, active or passive. The first part explores passive techniques such as hypnosis, sleep learning, subliminal training and audiovisual entrainment; the second deals with meditation, mnemonics, speed reading, biofeedback, neurofeedback and mental imagery practice. In each case the technique and procedure are described along with the results of various studies. He then draws a measured conclusion, assessing the extent to which claims for effectiveness are justified. More often than not, practitioners are inclined to overplay these claims. For instance, results in speed reading showed that comprehension drops sharply beyond 600 words per minute, although it is relatively easy to enhance reading speed from 300 to 600 words per minute while retaining comprehension.

FUTURE STUDIES/ECONOMICS/ ECOLOGY

Local Money

by **Peter North**

Green Books Ltd 2010, 240 pp., £14.95, p/b.

Building on the recent spate of publications about transition towns, this book, under a new imprint Transition Books, explains how to make local money happen in your community and enable it to build a resilient economic future. It questions our current monetary system and explains alternative currency models from various parts of the world and the emergence of transition currencies in places like Totnes, Stroud and Lewes, with instructions on how to go about building a local currency as a means of helping create resilient local communities. This process supports local production of food and energy while at the same time reducing community carbon emissions. Comprehensive and practical.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PHOTOGRAPHS OF A NETWORK GROUP, WORKSHOP OR CONFERENCE?

If so, please send them to Olly Robinson at olly@scimednet.org

for publication in the Network Review

Supercapitalism

by Robert Reich

Icon Books Ltd 2009, 272 pp., £8.99, p/b.

Subtitled 'the battle for democracy in an age of big business', this brilliant overview of the evolving relationship between capitalism and democracy enables one to understand some key developments of the last 50 years. Focusing mainly on America, the author explains how capitalism and democracy were relatively evenly balanced until the 1970s, but since then intense global competition has produced supercapitalism as firms compete for our attention as consumers and investors. As consumers, we are looking for better deals, and as investors for better returns. This conflicts with our role as citizens, and competitive pressures have encouraged companies to step up their political contributions and lobbying efforts in order to influence public policy to their advantage. Major institutional checks such as labour unions have declined and deregulation has won out, this latter factor being a major contributor to the credit crunch. Negative social consequences of supercapitalism have included widening inequality, reduced job security, loss of community and environmental degradation. The author argues that democracy is the appropriate vehicle for responding to such social consequences and that we must rediscover our capacity as citizens alongside our roles as consumers and investors. He encourages us to remember that the purpose of democracy is to accomplish ends that we cannot achieve as individuals and that we need to exercise our rights to provide frameworks within which these social costs are properly regulated. A major contribution to a critical debate for our time.

How to Live a Low-Carbon Life

by Chris Goodall

Earthscan Ltd 2010, 300 pp., £14.99, p/b.

Described as the carbon reduction bible (this is no exaggeration), the second edition of this extremely thorough and comprehensive book shows how Westerners can reduce their carbon emissions from around 14 to 2 tonnes per annum while saving money in the process. The author explains how we generate emissions both directly and indirectly, making numerous suggestions about how we can reduce our print by choosing to do things differently. Direct emissions include home heating, water heating and cooking, lighting, household appliances, car travel, public transport and air travel, while much of the indirect effects arise from the growing and transportation of food. Both trends and emerging solutions are described in order to put the situation in perspective. All the necessary information is provided, so it is very much up to the reader to think through these issues in relation to their own lives and make future decisions according to the conclusions they draw.

Agrofuels: Big Profits, Ruined Lives and Ecological Destruction

by Francois Houtart

Pluto Press 2009, 196 pp., £13.99, p/b.

A hard-hitting analysis, as one would infer from the combative subtitle. Not so long ago, biofuels were being touted as an ecologically sound means of combating climate change, but the substitution of these crops for food led to a rise in food prices and a realisation that decisions would be made on the basis of short-term profits rather than long-term sustainability. The scope of the book is wider than one might think, in that it discusses energy and development and the twin crises of energy and climate before moving on to the political dimensions leading to the promotion of market friendly solutions to climate change. There are technical chapters on the characteristics of agrofuels and

agroenergy, specifically the production of ethanol from sugar cane and diesel from palm oil. This leads to various collateral effects and an explanation of the extension of monoculture and monopoly in the world food system. Finally, the author discusses alternative ways of solving the climate and energy crises. A highly informative if polemical read.

Environmental Ethics - the Big Questions

by David R Keller

Blackwell Publishing 2010, 581 pp., £24.95, p/b.

I doubt the editor knew what he was getting into when he agreed to put this textbook together while floating down the Colorado River with the general editor of this series. It is a monumental achievement and one for which his students and colleagues will be very grateful since it must rank as the bible of environmental ethics with its synoptic overview of the field. The contributors are not only the leading thinkers of the last 40 years but also Western philosophers, especially on questions of defining anthropocentrism, which includes Aquinas, Francis Bacon and John Stuart Mill. The introduction defines environmental ethics, and is followed by reflections from leading thinkers about why they study environmental ethics. The rest of the book unpacks the big questions in a series of sections on the scope of moral considerability, the grounding of environmental ethics, connections across the disciplines, and ethical dimensions of environmental public policy, including population, agriculture, environmental justice and economics. Finally, Holmes Rolston III and reflects on the future of environmental ethics. An essential reference book for anyone interested in this field. For a growing archive of environmental ethics case studies, see www.environmentalethics.info/

The Blue Economy

by Gunter Pauli

Paradigm Publications 2010, 308 pp., \$29.95, p/b.

This exciting new book follows the principle laid down by Viktor Schauberger that we should understand and copying nature, as the author puts it, emulate ecosystems for a blue economy, one that is low carbon resource efficient and competitive. Leonardo da Vinci said presciently that 'everything comes from everything; everything is made of everything; everything turns into everything for all that exists in the elements is made of these elements.' If the Red Economy' is an economy that borrows without thought of repayment, and the Green Economy requires companies to invest more and consumers to pay more, the Blue Economy engages regeneration so that ecosystems can maintain their evolutionary path and that 'all can benefit from nature's endless flow of creativity, adaptation and abundance.' The book describes the rationale in more detail and finishes with details of 100 innovations inspired by nature with suggestions about how they can be practically applied and help create 100 million jobs in the process. A visionary book.

Cracking the Rainbow Code

by Jens Jerndal (SMN)

Xlibris Corporation 2009, 154 pp., \$10.70, p/b.

Much of the material in this book will be familiar to Network readers, but it brings many issues together in a helpful and inspiring synthesis. The reader is addressed as a co-creator of the future and invited to accompany the author on an adventure which questions the materialistic worldview and opens up new vistas and a deeper understanding of energy, consciousness and life and their underlying principles. Jens explains the power of thought, the holographic and informational nature of reality and the challenge to science of the non-materiality of consciousness. He explores the

soul-body interface, the role of astrology and the limits of a mechanistic approach in medicine. On the social front, he discusses the cult of violence and the way in which this can be mitigated. He also provides a new vision for education, extolling the spirit of investigation and questioning of assumptions and warning how we are manipulated by fear. The final chapter integrates the rainbow code as the key principle of resonance and reaffirms the necessity for a profound shift in our world view.

GENERAL

Essential Life Coaching Skills

by Angela Dunbar

Taylor & Francis 2010, 201 pp., £16.99, p/b.

This is a comprehensive guide to the range of skills required to succeed as a life coach, concentrating on the seven essential skill sets with specific examples of how these are applied and can be developed. These are relationship building, listening, questioning, intuitive, challenging, motivating and marketing skills. The book also gives the background to life coaching in the UK and how to provide a high quality service. There are case studies and a description of the life coaching process based on a standard approach. An excellent primer for those wanting to know more about the field.

101 Coaching Strategies and Techniques

by Gladeana McMahon and Anne Archer (eds)

Taylor & Francis 2010, 302 pp., £16.99, p/b.

This multi-author book sets out practical strategies to help coaches with their work. It focuses on a number of themes: confidence building, developing as a coach, specific skills and strategies, focusing on the future, group coaching, problem solving and creativity, relationships, self-awareness and when a client gets stuck. Each short section outlines the purpose, describes the process and warns of any potential pitfalls. Most entries are no longer than two or three pages, which makes it an ideal book to refer to or to read in small chunks on a regular basis. Coaches and therapists will find much useful material here.

Achieving Excellence in Your Coaching Practice

by Gladeana McMahon et al

Taylor & Francis 2006, 238 pp., £17.50, p/b.

One of a series of highly practical books providing an accessible guide to the business skills required to succeed as a self-employed coach. It assumes no prior knowledge and goes through the whole process of being self-employed, making your business work, money matters, marketing and sound business practice. It serves as an introduction as well as a reference guide to more experienced practitioners. The book contains many valuable tips and opportunities to reflect on the content and apply it to your own situation.

Dowsing - the Ultimate Guide for the 21st Century

by Elizabeth Brown

Hay House Publishers 2010, 301 pp., £12.99, p/b.

A comprehensive guide to the field written in an accessible style and based on 20 years of experience and wide reading. It discusses the history and changing perception of dowsing as well as giving detailed practical instructions and dealing with the mechanics and ways in which dowsing can be applied to health. Of particular interest is the way in which the author makes connections with recent work in science and consciousness studies suggesting, like Ervin Laszlo, that we live in an interconnected matrix or field of consciousness. As she puts it: 'we are already intrinsically connected to every part

of the universe as a holographic model.' Towards the end of the book, the author describes an encounter with Chris French where it is clear that he is exerting an experimenter effect in an unsuccessful study. There is still much unease in orthodox scientific circles about the status of dowsing, but there is no doubt that it works in real life. This book will appeal to readers searching for a wider understanding.

Time, Consumption and Everyday Life

by Elizabeth Shove et al

Berg Publishers 2009, 236 pp., £19.99, p/b.

I imagine that every reader of this publication feels more or less time pressured. This book invites people to step back from their situation and consider time from a number of different angles, investigating the changing rhythms and temporal organisation of everyday life and how we handle stress. As the editor puts it: 'Time is about co-ordination and rhythm, but it also involves material, and emotional, moral and political dimensions. Time is punctuated by extraordinary events like birth and death, but is also organised through a range of ordinary routines, like sleeping, eating or watching the evening news.' The book is arranged around a number of case studies from different cultures, including a comparative analysis in the UK between 1937 and 2000 and seasonal and commercial rhythms of domestic consumption in Japan. The reader comes away with a much more subtle understanding of the topic.

The Mystery of Meeting

by Steve Briault

Sophia Books 2010, 160 pp., £10.99, p/b.

A book about relationships as a path of discovery and a key element in our fulfilment. These relationships exemplify what the author calls an existential tension between individualism and group identification where the challenge is to create healthy relationships between increasingly self-directed human beings. A key theme running through the book is that of thresholds, including those of intimacy and work, where encountering another is a threshold experience involving both developmental challenges and opportunities for personal development in terms of perceptions, attitudes and behaviour. The book finishes with an inspiring quotation from Owen Barfield where he states that love is the force at the core of all human conscious experience; it cannot be spoken of but we can attempt to live it.

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