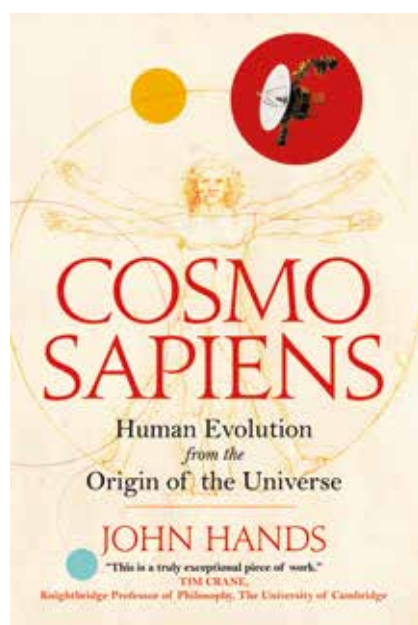


book reviews

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science-philosophy of science



Ultimate Questions

David Lorimer

COSMOSAPIENS

John Hands

Duckworth, 2015, 704 pp., £30, h/b – ISBN 978-0-715-649558

10 years in the making, this *tour de force* is a critical examination of scientific theories and evidence – systematic observation or experiment – about the origin and evolution of matter, life, consciousness and humankind. As such, it could scarcely be more ambitious, but the result is a triumph of detailed conceptual analysis covering the fields of fundamental cosmology, physics, biology and the evolution of philosophical and religious ideas. The author states his viewpoint at the beginning of the book by saying that he was born and educated a Catholic, became an atheist and is now an agnostic with no prior beliefs in theism, deism or materialism; he maintains an impartial stance even if he is accused of not doing so. In the course of his research, he consulted and received detailed feedback from over 60 experts. His writing is clear, careful, painstaking

and critical. Throughout the book, he gives his own definitions of key terms as and when they come up in the narrative, and there is also a glossary of terms at the end.

The four parts examine scientific explanations for the emergence and evolution of matter and energy, then emergence and evolution of life, the emergence and evolution of humans, and finally some systematic conclusions, as well as observations about the limitations of science. It becomes clear in the course of discussing various fields that there are patterns of thought that have ossified into preconceptions that are taken for granted and rarely questioned by those inside the field. Beginning with a survey of origin myths, the author moves on to the cosmology of the Big Bang before setting out what this orthodox theory fails to explain, which is then elaborated in the following chapter. He discusses a variety of other cosmological conjectures before considering more generally the problems facing cosmology as an explanatory means in terms of practical difficulties, data interpretation, inadequate theory and intrinsic limitations of science. He then explores the reasonableness of cosmological conjectures and tests to which they can be subjected as well as approaches involving fine tuning and multiverses. Moving on, he looks at the evolution of matter on a large scale, then on a small-scale, and overall patterns that apply. In his detailed conclusions to this section – set out in 23 numbered paragraphs – he observes that some people conflate mathematical with scientific proof and, on the basis of his analysis, does not think that the standard Big Bang model meets science's test for a robust theory. Indeed, the whole question of origins may in fact be beyond science to ascertain with any certainty due to the fact that the central claims are untestable.

Part Two addresses the emergence and evolution of life with the same thoroughgoing analysis of theories and evidence. In considering the history of biology and the development of science's explanation of life, he discusses vitalism and orthodox reactions to it, including more modern formulations involving David Bohm and

Rupert Sheldrake. The author proceeds to lay out the claimed characteristics of life, arriving at a definition that rejects the reductionist argument that there is no distinction between what is alive and what is not alive; for him, the difference is qualitative and analogous to a phase change. The following chapters explore the emergence of life in terms of evidence and hypotheses, as well as the development of scientific ideas about biological evolution, then the evidence for these ideas in terms of fossils, analyses of living species, the behaviour of the species and the human lineage. The author summarises current orthodox thinking about causes of biological evolution, while setting out specific elements that it cannot explain before exploring nearly twenty complementary and competing hypotheses with respect to complexification, collaboration and the evolution of consciousness. In the course of this part, he brings in the thinking of Prince Kropotkin on cooperation and mutual aid, which forms an important element in his overall conclusions.

The impossibility of divorcing ideas from beliefs, whether in God or in materialism, comes up again in this section, exacerbated by the fact that evidence is scarce and open to different interpretations. In his conclusions to this biological section, he reflects on reactions by specialists to drafts that he sent, which he groups into five types: peremptorily dismissive, politely dismissive, 'you don't know the facts', 'you appear to know the facts but you don't understand them', 'Neo-Darwinism is compatible with all the evidence and all the different hypotheses.' It is very clear that the author does know the facts, but he also considers their overall context and embedded assumptions, which those in the field frequently fail to do. This makes for uncomfortable reading and goes a long way to explaining the reactions above. Again, his conclusions are set out in 53 numbered paragraphs, some with subsections, from which he draws four qualitative laws of biological evolution: 'competition and rapid environmental change cause the extinction of species; collaboration causes the evolution of species; living things evolved by progressive complexification and centration along fusing and diverging

lineages that lead to stasis in all but one lineage; a rise in consciousness correlates with increasing collaboration, complexification and centration.

Part Three deals with the emergence and evolution of humans with a special emphasis on the development of reflective consciousness. The author considers various models and explanatory hypotheses before looking in more detail and the evolution of human thinking from primeval to philosophical to scientific. He observes that Indian sages emphasise the underlying unity of reality, and he makes an important distinction, illustrated in a chart (p. 505), between the development of insight and reasoning, corresponding broadly to the right and left hemispheres of Iain McGilchrist's model, incidentally not mentioned here. Under insight we have psychological, ethical, mystical, mathematical, scientific and artistic, while under reasoning there is natural philosophy, metaphysics, logic, epistemology, ethics and aesthetics. Ethical thinking goes beyond competition and instinct by insisting that we can only achieve by acting unselfishly: 'at root it is a prescription for cooperation not competition in order to achieve progress for humanity.'

The chapter on scientific thinking describes the scientific method and the emergence of the three branches of physical, life and medical sciences (see chart on p. 516), then of psychology in the late 19th century. The rise of scientific specialism is accompanied by a corresponding reductionist methodology, but more recently we see the emergence of a convergent trend, especially in physics with its quest for a theory of everything (of course, this should include consciousness....). The conclusions to the section are set out in 35 paragraphs and make the central point, as for the emergence of life, that reflective consciousness is a change of kind, not merely of degree. The author then brings together the strands of his thinking - which has parallels with that of Elisabet Sahtouris (not mentioned) - that convergence and complexification also correspond to increased cooperation and collaboration, as Kropotkin pointed out over 100 years ago. Globalisation and communications, as well as the establishment of global institutions, have exhibited this trend, particularly since the end of the Second World War. It represents, despite the current prominence given to terrorist attacks, a gradual overcoming of competition, aggression, hierarchism and divergence by cooperation, altruism, complexity and convergence, as thinkers like Teilhard de Chardin envisioned some 80 years ago.

The final part on a cosmic process discusses the limitations within the domain of science in terms of observation and measurement, data,

subjectivity, method, theory and defective science; then limitations of the domain of science based on subjective experiences, social concepts and values, untestable ideas and metaphysical questions. Scientific theories are necessarily underpinned by philosophical assumptions, which in turn influence the selection and interpretation of data. As William James and Prince de Broglie also observed, such assumptions should be reviewed, modified or abandoned in the light of conflicting evidence. In particular, the reductionist approach is limited in its explanatory power for complex, open, interactive and emergent systems (p. 566). For orthodox readers, the author's proposal that we need to postulate a new form of energy - psychic energy associated with mind - will be a step too far, but there is good evidence for such effects that are frequently discussed in this Review. The author questions and indeed demonstrates the limitations of current scientific thinking, but also highlights the limitation of the human mind, which can be inferred from reports of mystical experience where subjects are immersed in rather than separated from reality. The author's final conclusions are set out in a further 39 paragraphs, at the end of which he arrives at his short answer to question of what and who we are: 'the unfinished product of an accelerating cosmic evolutionary process characterised by collaboration, complexity and convergence, and the self reflective agents of our future evolution.' At the end of this dense and closely argued treatise, one can only agree with Tim Crane, Knightsbridge professor of philosophy at Cambridge, that 'this is a truly exceptional piece of work.'

Fishy Evidence for the Origins of Consciousness

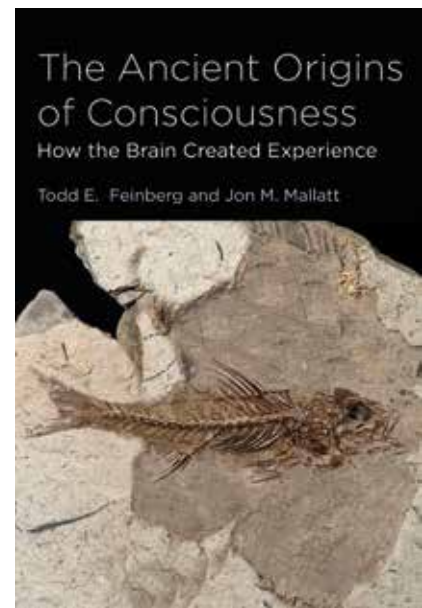
Martin Lockley

THE ANCIENT ORIGINS OF CONSCIOUSNESS: HOW THE BRAIN CREATED EXPERIENCE

Todd, E. Feinberg and Jon M. Mallat

MIT Press, 2016, \$35.00 h/b., £24.95, ISBN 978 0262 034333

Ancient Origins fills a "gap" but not philosopher Joseph Levine's still-intractable, mysterious gap "between the physical properties of the brain... and the subjective experiences that the brain thereby creates" (also referred to as the "hard problem" of consciousness). Personally I question, but cannot convincingly refute, the assumption that the physical brain creates consciousness, rather than, say, channeling, receiving or embodying all manner of non-sensory, sensory as well as supersensory "information." No matter! Most SMN readers will also be familiar with another problem:



the vague and variable definitions of consciousness, which most researchers feely admit is ever-elusive. Feinberg, a professor of psychiatry and neurology and Mallat, a professor of biology and medical sciences at least tell us that this book is not about "higher" reflective "self-consciousness" but rather aims to explore "sensory" or "primary consciousness," or more elaborately "neuroontologically subjective features of consciousness" (NSFC) comprising qualia, referral, mental unity, (isometric unity), and mental causation. They propose to trace the origin of the hard problem back to the origin of sensory consciousness in order to resolve "the neurobiological gap between subjective experience and the brain" with a theory of "neurobiological naturalism" derived, with some modification, from Searle's "biological naturalism." [At the risk of simplification this is the brain-centric view that consciousness is an epiphenomenon of brain activity. I also see a problem in assuming, or assuming to understand, subjectivity in remote-from-human-experience, and sometimes-extinct species of fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds mammals etc., For example the sensory faculties of such sentient creatures may not produce mental images that are experienced subjectively. We humans can sleep walk, or dream, or even drive a few miles, while responding to sensory input, but not be "consciously" aware of any subjective experience!]

Chapters 2 through 6 launch into what is essentially a biological and paleontological text dealing with the physical (morphological) evolution of the nervous system (brain), with particular emphasis on origins at the time of the popular and much-debated Cambrian explosion some 520 million years ago. At this time small animals developed nervous systems, eyes and mobility, all integrated and complimentary faculties described as "extreme sensory and cognitive enhancement."

[Again, one asks, does “cognitive” follow from sensory?] The details of these developments are copiously and conscientiously illustrated, and tied to various interpretations of their significance, including, I am glad, to say a “holistic” appreciation that senses interact to create a unity of perception of the type referred to as mental unity or isomorphism: (e.g., you have two eyes, but experience one visual image, and your two ears hear one sound). Evidence for the development of sensory organs is well-known from the Cambrian, and later, fossil records, beginning when the first inch-long, proto-fish, with eyes and head, began to look like a vertebrate. So it seems, Feinberg and Mallat consider them as possible “candidates for the first conscious organisms on earth” but admit that other researchers consider that conscious species arose later with birds and mammals.

Again, without refuting their thesis, I am a little vague on the meaning of “conscious.” Presumably this refers to previously-mentioned sensory or primary consciousness. Thus, as I understand it neuronal complexity can be considered a potential “marker” (their word) for consciousness, and so equated with said complexity. So again, the thesis is that the brain creates and evolves consciousness, and that brain size is a proxy for measuring consciousness. [What then do we make of cultures, and childhood development stages, that do not see the brain, or brain alone, as the seat of consciousness? It seems, in our desire to understand this “problem,” we cannot escape the assumption that consciousness has an “origin,” source or “seat.”]

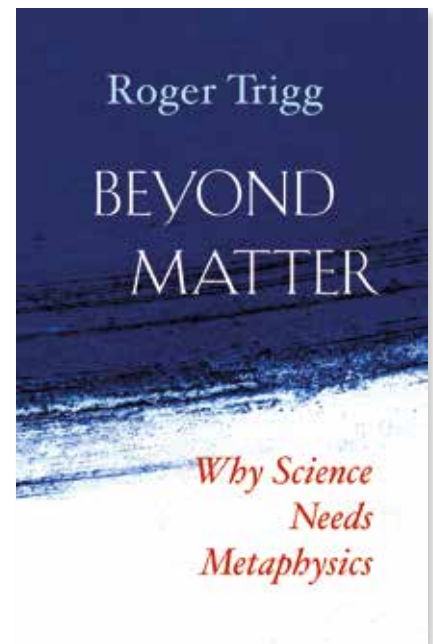
I admit to being bewildered by the equating of “conscious” with “consciousness” and diverse states and faculties (perception, recognition, memory and arousal) assumed or considered for animals as diverse as invertebrates, fish and mammals. Are conscious origins the same as origins of consciousness (or even knowable)? Few workers agree: some claim consciousness originated with fish (560-520 million years ago) others say it arose with mammals (220 my) and or birds (165 my) and the cerebral cortex, allowing the term cerebral consciousness, and such bewilderingly anthropomorphic concepts as “high computational needs of advancing consciousness” used in association with rather stale Darwinian “race for survival” terminology. [Methinks they protest too much on behalf of consciousness].

Chapter 7 on “sentience” defines “affect as a conscious experience” and launches into a list of workers who again trace said “origin of affective consciousness” as far back as fish (560 my) or merely back to the origin

of *H. sapiens* (200,000 y). Although claiming “not to overwhelm the reader with detail,” I was overwhelmed to the point of being underwhelmed (4 tables in Chapter 8 take up 10 pages). *Mea culpa*. Perhaps a failing on my part, but I find more and more data makes less and less sense.

I’m all for crediting invertebrates, fish, amphibians *etcetera* with remarkable sensory faculties which look to us like signs of impressive intelligence (some might use the ill-defined term “instinct”). But to categorise the perceptions of myriad non-human species on a scale of consciousness, affect, experience or sentience, (complexly and inconsistently defined and understood by different researchers), seems a tall order. Having said that it is interesting to ponder the extent to which this volume parallels our changing awareness, dare I say consciousness, of animals. As we humans have become “civilised,” our relationship with animals has changed (see review of *Troublesome Inheritance*), and we speak in human-centric language of the “humane” treatment of animals. The animal rights movement (Network 119), and our concern for the ecological environment are just two manifestations of our shift in consciousness.

In this regard Jonathan Balcombe’s new book *What a Fish Knows* is an interesting exposition on fish sentience, perception or “knowledge” dealing, among other things, with the essentially moral question of whether they feel pain, for example by demonstrating nociception (response to noxious stimulus). Feinberg and Mallet deal with this topic in some detail noting that “the question of fish pain is heavily debated.” The point is that even if one is skeptical about categorising fish consciousness it is useful to have studies that trace the evolution of the nervous system back for a half billion years, if only because such expositions demonstrate our broader interest in the evolution of animal sentience, which in turn reflects our changing relationship with the animal kingdom. If, as some like to say, humans are the/a self-conscious organ of the biosphere, rather than a “separate” self-conscious, or exceptional species, then knowing ourselves, as far as it is possible, biologically and psychologically, involves knowing and delving into the biosphere at the psychic level of “knowing” and consciousness. I will let readers decide what “knowledge” about consciousness and experience arises from *Ancient Origins*, and only add that the exploration itself is evidence of the former we-are-part-of-the-biosphere view.



Science, Naturalism and Post-Modernism

John Maxwell Kerr, SOSC.

BEYOND MATTER: WHY SCIENCE NEEDS METAPHYSICS

Roger Trigg

Templeton Press, 2015. 162 pp. \$19.70 h/b. ISBN 978-1-59947-495-3.

Here is Roger Trigg at his most incisive and succinct as he returns to his examination of where the limits of the modern scientific enterprise might legitimately lie. He makes a clear and persuasive case for the validity of explanations in metaphysics, ethics, and theology, against both the reductive stance we have inherited (through various permutations) from positivism and the abnegation of universal truth claims of post-modernism.

Trigg neatly and concisely evaluates methodological naturalism (a metaphysical position not known to be such by the many working scientists who espouse it) and philosophical naturalism, with its wider claims about the nature of what can exist. Trigg cites one definition of ‘naturalism’ as asserting that all that is consists solely of the physical, spatio-temporal world, with its corollary that such a world is accessible to science. That this is hardly a scientific claim is evident. However, without the validity of the metaphysical ground assuming the existence of an objective reality, science would simply be a game of which it might be said that, for those who like that sort of thing, that is the sort of thing they like.

The examples he deploys suggest that naïve naturalist claims are not easily substantiated in the face of quantum realities and multi-universe speculations. His case requires re-examination of the belief one has heard

so often, that science is what there is any evidence to suppose is the way the world is, not what it would be nice to suppose about the way the world is. The assertion that there really is an infinite number of universes, each transcending any possibility of being known by humans, has struck practising cosmologists (even those who have never heard of William of Ockham) as rather profligate with universes, verging on mere speculation. Most working scientists would distinguish between speculation and science, without the benefit of Trigg's arguments and well-chosen examples, though it would be to their very great advantage to have read "Beyond Matter."

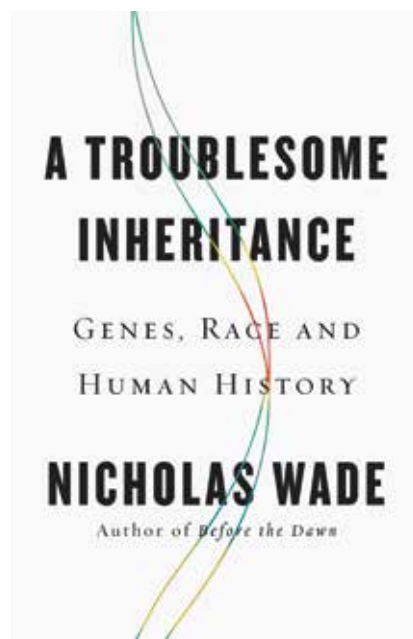
His analysis rather neatly (but again, fairly) undermines the post-modernism project (derived originally from architecture, and perhaps too-widely extrapolated) that there are many meanings, not that one universal relationship between human knowledge and "the universe" traditionally claimed by science.

Why would anyone believe that science is omniscient as an explanatory method? Why would anyone claim (with the Oxford physical chemist, Peter Atkins) that, if science has not objectively explained everything quite just yet, it can and will undoubtedly do so, at least in principle. Could such a claim be, in any sense, scientific? Philosophers of science will appreciate that the "at least in principle" caveat goes back to Carnap's qualification of the Vienna Circle's criterion for meaningfulness. Trigg valuably supplies an outline of the history of his opponents' positions: this background illuminates his examples. For instance, Eugene Wigner's observation about "the unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics (the free creation of the human mind) in the natural sciences"... "something bordering on the mysterious," has never quite persuaded this reviewer of Max Tegmark's assertion that "all mathematical possibilities are actual" in an infinite multiverse. Tegmark's is notably a classically metaphysical position, though he deny it.

The weight of many of the arguments in senior common rooms and laboratories against science's reliance on metaphysical assertions is usually not the more grandly philosophical one that science has somehow eliminated the need for metaphysics and all other forms of explanation. The banal claim is that "science works": it has delivered the goods and ever more shall do so. Science progresses (the evidence is all around us) by self-correction of models and hypotheses in the light of empirical data. Philosophy does not bring about change in the world; it leaves things as they are. Scientific progress rests on increasingly more comprehensive explanations and remarkable predictions. In effect, the assumption

is that metaphysical explanation has been eliminated by the inductive idea of always advancing progress derived from the rapidity and effectiveness of the "the human appliance of science" over the last two centuries.

The brief overview Trigg affords us in "Beyond Matter" (its 162 pages includes notes and an index) is written in the sort of prose one longs to meet in any book one wants to put into the hands of graduate students in the sciences. Such readers may not notice, nor be dismayed by, the few but stunning lapses in proof-reading confronting one, for example on page 27, where one reads, "Physics in the nineteenth century bares (*sic*) little relation to contemporary physics." No doubt that is so, but it distracts from the force of an otherwise well-developed, sustained, and comprehensive argument.



The Race for a Less-troubled Civilisation

Martin Lockley

A TROUBLESOME INHERITANCE: GENES, RACE AND HUMAN HISTORY,

Nicholas Wade

Penguin, 2014/2015, 288 pp., \$17, p/b - ISBN 978-0-14-312716-1

When I first heard of *Guns, Germs and Steel* (GGS), by Jared Diamond, I was disinclined to read it, and still have not done so conscientiously. In reading *A Troublesome Inheritance* by Nicholas Wade I have a better inkling of why my intuition made me avoid the former of these two best-selling titles. Apart from the 'harsh' title GGS is far too deterministic, accounting for culture in terms of metal weapons, disease, geography and other external rather than human factors. Diamond, like the famous anthropologists Franz Boas

and his student Ashley Montagu, deny the existence of race, regarding it as a "social construct" with no basis in biology – a "fallacy," a "dangerous myth," "America's original sin." Montagu even labeled it "witchcraft." They evidently believe race (and the diversity it implies) is somehow unrelated to biological and evolutionary reality, having arisen as the result of humanity's conceptual misunderstanding of itself.

The message of *Troublesome* is fairly simple: "race" and its biological, genetic, ethnic and social manifestations is a real phenomenon that can and should be studied without implying that its students are "racists" who believe in the superiority of one race over another. To deny the existence of race because some people are racist is an ideological and unscientific approach popular in some academic circles, mostly because it is a touchy and potentially inflammatory subject like politics or religion. But these too are deeply influential cultural realities.

Eugenics is also a taboo subject. While its extremely objectionable manifestations (sterilisation of perceived inferiors *etcetera*) is despicable, not only is breeding (artificial selection) a deliberate application of eugenics in the plant and animal world, it is also exercised through our free, human choice when it comes to "selecting" partners, often within our own race or ethnicity. Like seems to attract like, with evolutionary implications for biology and our cultural institutions. So race is a biological reality. Wade holds that there is substantial consensus about the traditional threefold distinction of Asian, Indo-European and African (Mongoloid, Caucasian and Negroid), with Australian and Native American as two less populous but distinctive groups. Here Wade reminds us of the famous Dmitry Belyaev experiment with foxes, our mammalian brethren. By selecting foxes simply for their degree of tameness, within a few generations he bred in many juvenile anatomical features that had not been selected for. If it works for foxes, why not for we human mammals? If no one denies the physical variation in stature, skin, hair and eye colour between ethnic groups (races) should we be surprised that there are different manifestations in the sphere of social behavior and culture, which also correlate with genetic variation?

Here Wade makes the compelling argument, backed up by diverse studies in the broad field of cultural anthropology, that the shift from tribal to city state, nation state and global polities has brought about inevitable change, which in a word has helped "tame" human nature, not least by forcing most individuals, in any given culture, to live and let live with a widening and more civilised community of neighbors beyond the narrow confines of family and tribe.

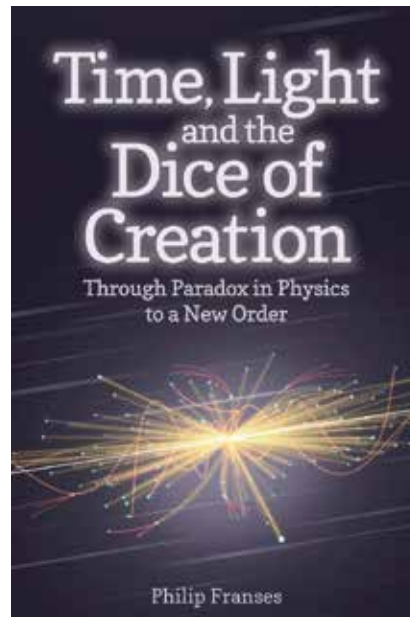
Thus, the murder rate has gone down steadily in the transition from tribal to more regional and nationally-structured polities that have instituted religion, the rule of law and other collectively civilising influences. [For skeptics who doubt such progress, mere rumination on the subject of improving human nature implies a higher aspiration and reluctance to regress]. Skeptics should also note the well-established biological evidence for the ongoing evolutionary juvenilisation of the human species (known as paedomorphosis) leading to a physical gracilisation, or decrease in robustness, and increasing “domestication” or tameness. We are no longer robust Neanderthals, at least in 96% of our genetic makeup (Network 116). Thus, biology and culture remain inextricable interwoven.

There is, it appears, no single gene to ensure “tameness” or civilisation in individuals or cultures as a whole, but “gene frequencies” play an important, collective role. The MAO-A gene is “associated with aggression” and occurs in different frequencies, in different individuals, resulting in different levels of aggression and delinquency in different ethnic groups. So genes influence human behavior and cause it to “vary from one race to another.” *Vive la difference*: but use it not for racist generalisations! Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) sites on the genome where at least 1% of the population has a non-standard DNA unit have helped define distinctive ethnic groups (races) that are generally consistent with the aforementioned threefold (plus 2) race distinctions. However, races are not sharply defined but rather are “clusters of individuals with genetic variation.”

Such individuals give the overall cultural group (cluster) certain propensities [rather as an individual might influence a group culturally]. To date the chicken and egg riddle of whether cultural propensities drive genetic variation or vice versa is unresolved, but almost certainly it is a complex two-way evolutionary dynamic. This exposition is appealing, at least to this reader, because it integrates the complex race debate holistically with biological and cultural evolution, and thus with history, including changing views on race and racism. Put another way, given that race and ethnicity is widely recognised, except by a few ideologically motivated, if well-meaning, naysayers, and is, moreover, responsible for much of what we call history, how could these cultural, biological (genetic) factors not be interwoven in a complex evolutionary dynamic with everything else in the biosphere, including tamed and untamed foxes, human delinquents and saints!?

Arguably we do not need to use the term “race” as a rigid label, if we

recognise, as Wade does, that “human evolution has been recent, copious and regional” affecting all individuals and cultures differently, and complexly, but not randomly. Using the overarching paradigm of cultural evolution (tribal though global polities), we see shifts in the propensity for a domestication, taming and juvenilisation of human nature, though not without reversals and regressions. Perhaps, therefore, we could use the dreaded “r” word in a different context and speak of the “race for a less troubled civilisation.”



Living with Paradox Paul Kieniewicz

TIME, LIGHT AND THE DICE OF CREATION Philip Franes

Floris Books, 2015, 235pp., £25, p/b -
ISBN 978-178250-172-5

The subtitle of Philip Franes's book is *Through Paradox in Physics to a New Order*. Franes takes the reader in a journey through modern physics. However, his book is ultimately less about physics, and more about how we think and approach physics. Central to his approach is the notion of paradox, and the many instances where paradox comes up. The best known example is the Copenhagen Interpretation of subatomic particles. A particle can be described as a wave or a particle, depending on how it interacts; depending also on the experiment that we design. What is it really? Most physicists dismiss the paradox as unimportant. Advice given to university students is usually, “shut up and calculate”. However, Franes views the paradox as essential, and suggests that we not only embrace it, but recognise that it is characteristic of the nature of the universe. Time, for example, can be viewed as travelling forwards or backwards. We live in a world of paradox, of irreconcilable dualities: darkness and light, chance and order, emptiness and form, zero

and unity. The Western description of nature takes an either-or approach to paradox. The human mind trained with Aristotelian logic is uncomfortable with paradox. The notion of “both” requires us to embrace paradox. What if, by embracing paradox we would come to a radically new description of the universe?

The chapters expand on each of the above dualities and how those arise in nature. His arguments are non-linear in the sense that the reader will have to let go of how he/she is used to thinking about dualities to appreciate what the writer is getting at. The central chapters of the book deal with Goethean Science, which appears to be a major influence in Franes's thinking. Those chapters are the easiest to follow and offer a clear account of Goethe's approach to science and how it differs from conventional approaches. Franes explores the relationship between the seed and the plant, how plant forms develop, how petals develop from primary structures.

The author's approach is somewhat Platonic, in that the most fundamental constituents of nature are viewed as dualities; pairs of opposites. The world we observe emanates from a hidden world of archetypes. At the root is zero and unity, potential and existence, form versus emptiness. Interestingly, such dualities also occur in many religious traditions including early Christian Gnosticism. Franes recognises this mythical dimension in his final section where he looks at the nature of time. Time is only incidental to quantum mechanics, as if it doesn't really exist. So where is it? What is its role? All creation myths tell the story of how time began. Particularly Hindu myths. He writes,

We have forgotten where time in the equations came from. We have forgotten the treasure of time, which is what oriented us, hidden underneath the ground of all this mathematics and physics. “t” is still there but everyone has forgotten what it represented. We have taken away from ourselves the very thing we need to live, the very story that organized us and orders us.

Overall, this book challenges the reader to adopt a new way of thinking about nature. To embrace paradox and see where that leads. Those who take the time and effort, and it will take an effort to follow the author's argument, will be rewarded by some startling new insights.

Paul Kieniewicz is an Astronomer and Geophysicist, co-founder of the *Institute of Archetypal and Religious Studies*, in Poland. He is a co-editor of the *Scientific and Medical Network's Network Review* and website. He writes on depth psychology, science, climate studies and early Christianity.

medicine – health

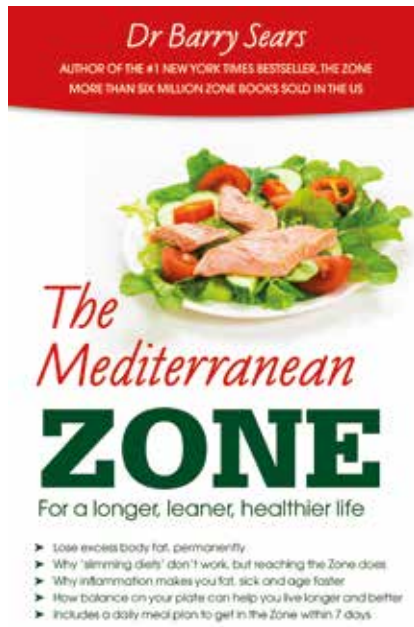
Diet-Induced Inflammation

David Lorimer

THE MEDITERRANEAN ZONE

Dr Barry Sears

Hammersmith Books, 2015, 363 pp., £9.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78161-073-2



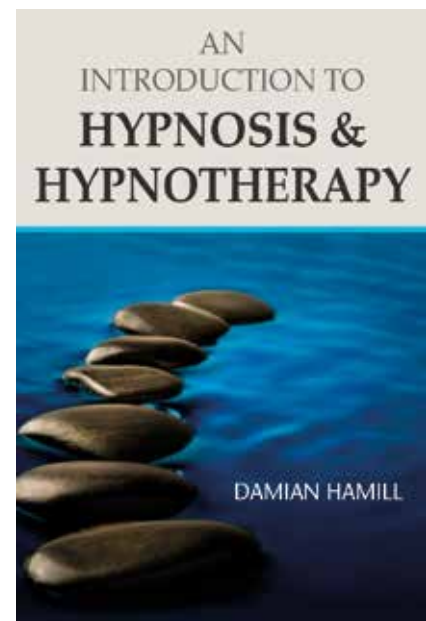
Barry Sears introduced the idea of the Zone in a book 20 years ago, and has written about a dozen books further explaining the concept, of which this is the latest. Readers will be familiar with the benefits of the Mediterranean diet, and perhaps with specific studies of long-lived Greek islanders. The concept of the Zone may be less familiar as a 'dietary roadmap for reaching and maintaining a constant hormonal balance that allows the body to operate at peak efficiency.' It is a metabolic state of stable blood sugar that diminishes risks of many chronic health issues. The book also clarifies the genuine traditional Mediterranean diet, not the false one full of pasta, pizza and bread. This diet is anti-inflammatory and antioxidant with a particular emphasis on the role of polyphenols. Specifically, it consists of one third low-fat protein, and two thirds colourful non-starchy vegetables and small amounts of fruit - note that this excludes white carbohydrates, including potatoes, all of which create more inflammation and increase the glycaemic load of the meal. This process is repeated every five hours, either as a meal or a snack.

The key is to maintain a balance between the two phases of inflammation activated by hormones, which themselves are controlled by our diet - these key hormones can be unbalanced by diet, which has happened on a wide scale over the last 50 years due to the

industrialisation of food associated with increases in obesity, the development of chronic disease at an earlier age and the acceleration of brain ageing. The author puts this schematically as increased diet-induced inflammation > increased obesity > increased diabetes > increased Alzheimer's, with a time delay as each process reaches critical mass. Even more seriously, it appears that changes in epigenetic markers due to diet can be passed on to the next generation, creating a cumulative effect. The good news is that this process can be reversed on an individual level, although it may take decades to do so collectively. The author goes on to explain the mechanics of inflammation as the real reason we gain weight, become ill and age at a faster rate. In this sense, Alzheimer's is an ageing of the brain. In order to control diet-induced inflammation, one has to control insulin and the levels of omega-6 fatty acids found in vegetable oils and processed foods. In addition, people are eating a great deal more high glycaemic load carbohydrates, thus increasing the secretion of insulin. At the same time, we have reduced our consumption of omega-3 fatty acids found, for instance, in fatty fish and fish oil. Moreover, we are generally consuming fewer polyphenols in terms of fruits and vegetables. It is this combination that has led us to our current crisis.

In further explaining the Zone, the author discusses how hormonal control is based on the balance of protein to glycaemic load at every meal, and the danger of the current standard Western diet in terms of a combination of excess omega-6 fatty acids coupled with high levels of insulin leading to increased oxidation throughout the body without adequate levels of polyphenols and of omega-3 fatty acids. The overall goal becomes a reduction in diet-induced inflammation. In contrast with much official advice, the author produces his own Mediterranean zone food pyramid with vegetables and fruit at the bottom, then low-fat protein, mono-unsaturated fats like olive oil and moderate amounts of grains and starches. He gives specific examples, advice and pages of recipes as well as a sample shopping list and a summary of basic rules (pp. 73-74). The good news, for some of us at least, is that both coffee and red wine contain good levels of polyphenols, as explained in the next section. Spices, especially coriander, as well as parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme contain very high levels. A further interesting implication is the association between decreased calorie consumption and longevity, which is elaborated in terms of the proposition that the key factor for steady energy is stable blood sugar level rather than calorie consumption as such. Perhaps the most interesting historical example of this is Luigi Cornaro, a 15th century Venetian nobleman who wrote his third anti-ageing book at the age of 95. The next section explains the correlation between the industrialisation of food and

the rise of diet-induced inflammation, which is not in fact due to any single factor, but rather to a combination. It was truly alarming to read that China now has 100 million diabetics. Advances in trans-generational epigenetics are now enabling us to understand the implications of the health timebomb. It is possible to lay down diet-induced epigenetic markers in the DNA, so that children born after 2000 are much more susceptible to obesity - hence 'the growth of the industrialisation of our food supply may be a driving force in an epigenetic shift in our genes that could be responsible for the epidemic rise of obesity, diabetes and eventually Alzheimer's.' (p. 159) However, as stated above, it is possible to reclaim our genetic future, but not without a major turnaround in our lifestyles and dietary preferences. This in turn has implications for medicine, which traditionally neglects diet, and perhaps for a health system based on maintaining wellness rather than treating the symptoms of chronic disease. The second half of the book is devoted to a more technical discussion of the central issues. The author's arguments make a great deal of sense to me and have real practical implications for all of us - we would be well advised to modify our diets in the direction he recommends, even if it is harder to go all the way.

**Debunking the Myths**

Chris Allen

AN INTRODUCTION TO HYPNOSIS AND HYPNOTHERAPY

Damian Hamill

Hypnotic Outcomes, 2015, 148 pp., £4.79, eBook - ISBN-13: 978-1-4566-0951-1 (Available from Amazon)

What if I'm in deep trance and the hypnotist has a heart attack and is unable to awaken me? Will I be stuck there? And if so, what will become of me?

What if the hypnotist tries to take control of my consciousness? Will I be strong enough to resist him? Can he force me to do something against my will? Like rob a bank or murder my wife?

What if I'm in a trance; can the hypnotherapist get me to reveal my innermost secrets?

Myths ... How do they come about? Well, in the case of hypnosis, one can point the finger in a number of directions. Count Dracula as portrayed by Bela Lugosi and Christopher Lee is a good place to start. Their stirring performances—particularly in taking control of the minds of their hapless victims—have done a wonderful job in blurring the public perception of hypnosis and propagating widely held misconceptions, forming the basis upon which the questions above in italics are just a representative sample. But then again, some of the most famous names in the colourful history of hypnosis—especially notorious dabblers such as Mesmer—have also contributed to the immense confusion. Which is a shame really when one considers that the BMA endorsed hypnosis as a powerful therapeutic tool—with no known harmful side effects—as long ago as 1958. And it may come as a surprise to discover that the Royal Society of Medicine has a hypnosis and psychosomatic medicine section. Yet recent data indicates that psychiatric drugs such as tranquilizers and anti-depressants made up 8.6% of all NHS prescription items in 2010. And rising, causing concern not only because of the enormous cost but also because of well publicized side effects.

So what's going on? And can anything be done to promote the value of a natural alternative to over reliance of mood altering pharmaceuticals? And to debunk the myths that seem to shackle the more widespread use of therapeutic hypnosis? If these questions are of interest, then you could do worse than to investigate what Damian Hamill has to say in this book, first published in 2012. In the opinion of the reviewer, it is one of the very best ever written on the subject. But don't just take my word for it; if you go on the Amazon website, you will find that it has picked up 8 reviews—all of them with five stars.

'An Introduction to Hypnosis and Hypnotherapy' starts with a hard hitting introduction, likely to ruffle a few feathers in the psychotherapy community; continues with twelve chapters which cover a wide range of interesting topics; and ends with a short but inspiring conclusion.

Chapter 1 gives a brief history of hypnosis. Of particular note here is the section on the contribution of physician Milton H. Erickson (1901-1980) who is generally regarded as the most influential hypnotherapist of the 20th century.

Chapter 2 explores what hypnosis is all about. The author attempts to dispel many of the misconceptions surrounding the subject. He proceeds to set the record straight, dealing with each of the most oft quoted myths in turn. He does however concede that it is little wonder that people have so many incorrect preconceived ideas and notions given the fact that there is no consensus even amongst practitioners as to what hypnosis *actually is*. He offers the following working definition to get the reader thinking: "*An altered state of awareness effected by total concentration on the voice of the therapist. It will result in measurable physical, neurophysiological and psychological changes in which may be produced distortion of emotion, sensation, image and time*". The author admits that whereas this may not be the whole story—an understandable position given that even consciousness researchers struggle to define human **awareness** in the first place—it is at least somewhere at which to start.

Chapter 3 deals in detail with common hypnotic phenomena that seem to occur within trance with great frequency. These include but are not restricted to: Catalepsy—inhibition of motor movement ... Ideo-motor activity—physical manifestations of mental perceptions ... Amnesia ... Dissociation ... Regression ... Hallucinations ... Time Distortion.

Chapter 4 concerns different types of hypnosis which one might not recognise as such. These include: Daydreaming ... Highway hypnosis—drifting off whilst driving ... Hypnogogic—the intermediate state just before falling asleep ... Hypnopompic—the condition after being sleep but just before one becomes fully awake ... Traditional or authoritarian hypnosis in which the subject responds to clear instructions ... Non-traditional, permissive or naturalistic hypnosis—based primarily on the work of Milton Erickson, in which the subject responds to open or indirect suggestions.

Chapter 5 contains a detailed discussion of individual responses and susceptibility. Chapter 6 evaluates the best known theories which attempt to explain the remarkable range of hypnotic phenomena. These include: Atavistic Immobilisation ... Modified Sleep ... Suggestion. Chapters 7 to 12 concern such matters as trance induction, communication, case history, client management and an overview of major therapeutic approaches. They are all well written and informative but probably of most interest to professionals in the field.

In the one-page conclusion, the author suggests that hypnosis has a great deal to offer if used from an ethical position of guidance and encouragement and not one of domination and self-

aggrandisement. He expresses the hope that he has succeeded in sweeping aside much of the mysticism and mystery that surrounds the subject. And make no mistake about it ... He has. Whether you're a newcomer to this field seeking to become less confused or an experienced practitioner wishing to build up your Continuous Professional Development, this book is a gem, a very useful read indeed.

Finally in answer to those questions: *If it were to happen, you'll come out of trance naturally at your own pace as if you'd just fallen asleep. You may then have to apply emergency first aid. Mind control under these circumstances simply isn't possible and is confusing hypnosis with an occult power or siddhi which—according to the esoteric literature—is said to be achievable after years of austere spiritual discipline and dedicated practice at the feet of a master in some remote location like a monastery in the Himalayas ... And not currently available through any of the recognised training organisations for Hypnotherapy in the UK. No, definitely not; you can keep them to yourself; you retain an inner censor even in deep trance.*

Chris Allen is a retired Technical Author with a degree in physics and many years of experience working as a contractor in such industries as Avionics, Defence and Transport. He is a crime writer specialising in unusual and well researched fiction. He is also a practising hypnotherapist and a full member of the British Society of Clinical Hypnosis. He has a lifelong interest in military history, jurisprudence, criminology and Advaita Vedanta philosophy. Web site: www.cach.co.uk

Vital Energy

David Lorimer

ANCIENT SECRET OF THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Peter Kelder

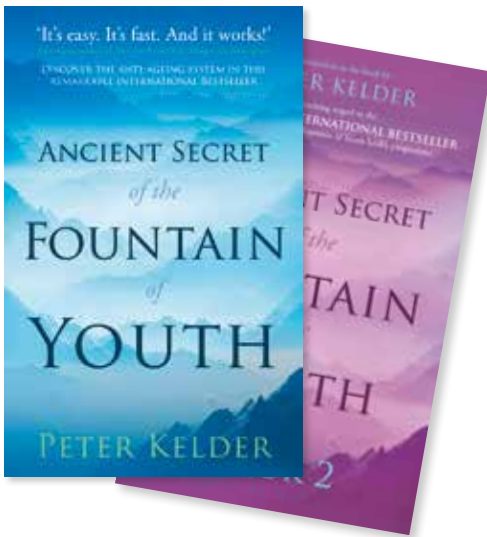
Virgin Books, 2011, 106 pp., £8.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-7535-4005-3

ANCIENT SECRET OF THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH – BOOK 2

Various authors

Virgin Books, 2012, 308 pp., £8.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-75-354007-7

I was recently travelling in the United States and stayed with a friend in Virginia, on whose shelf I found the first of these books. Just perusing some comments from previous readers on the extraordinary effects of practising the exercises in this book was enough to pique my curiosity. So I read it, and started practising what are called the five rites straight away. The book first came out in 1939, and told



the story of an ex-British Army officer and diplomat, Col Bradford, who had travelled to a monastery deep in Tibet. When Peter Kelder first met him, he looked old and was walking with a stick. The Colonel invited him to accompany him on his travels, but the author turned down the offer. Some years later, Col Bradford appeared again at his door and was almost unrecognisable due to the fact that he looked 25 years younger rather than four years older. The Colonel tells his own story where he was amazed when, after three months in the monastery, he looked at himself in the mirror to find a much more youthful person looking back.

The book then explains how to perform the five rites, starting with only three repetitions and gradually moving up to 21. Some are similar to yoga exercises, and lead to improved circulation, muscular strength and flexibility. The first one, however, consists of spinning round in a clockwise direction and can serve as an introduction to the theory behind the practice, namely that, as one grows older, the speed of circulation of the chakras slows down and becomes uncoordinated. The exercises are meant to remedy this and provide a boost to the vital energy, prana or qi so that the physical system as a whole benefits from increased energy flow. Research, however, has been more along the lines of surveys and feedback than systematic trials, but it makes practical and intuitive sense to me.

In addition, mental attitude is very important: we must want to think, act and feel as a younger version of ourselves and can create an affirmation to this effect that will be carried out through the operation of the superconscious, as the author explains. He also gives advice on diet and food combining as well as an exercise for men's voices. The sixth rite receives a separate treatment and is designed to rechannel sexual energy.

The second book builds on the first with experts contributing more detail to the basic concepts and also giving a historical context through the travels of other scholars and an interesting conversation with Robert Thurman. Helena Blavatsky, Baird Spalding,

Alexandra David-Neel, Theodore Illion and WY Evans-Wentz all travelled to Tibet before or during the 1930s and clearly discovered some of the same secrets set out in this book. Alexandra David-Neel learned Tumo breathing and was able to go about in light clothes even in freezing temperatures. She also lived until the age of 101. Various authors reinforce the point that it is quality of life or health span that really counts, while Robert Thurman emphasises the importance of compassion. This second book contains more detailed stories of people whose lives have been transformed by these exercises. The authors explore in more depth the understanding of energy that underlies not only these practices, but also Tai Chi and Qigong. The section on the exercises themselves adds a few more postures, while there is an extensive chapter on food combining and diet, as well as on the energetics of the voice, sound and meditation. All this expands the rationale of the first book and encourages readers to persist in their practice of the rites. Although I have only been practising them myself for just over three weeks as I write, they have certainly contributed to an increase in strength, flexibility and energy.

philosophy – spirituality

The Wisdom of Christ

Edi Bilimoria

THE TEACHER, VOLUME ONE: THE DAWNING EPOCH

Beinsa Douno

Shining Word Press, 2016, 412 pp., £30, h/b (also p/b) – ISBN 978-1-905398-36-2

The hundred-year period starting from around the middle of the nineteenth century was especially momentous for a new wave of spirituality that affirmed the Immortal and Timeless verities of all ages, but in a manner and form to suit the prevailing times, particularly in the West, which was then ultra-materialistic. The fertile period of spiritual effulgence was privy to such luminaries as Helena Blavatsky and Annie Besant in the Theosophical Society, William James, Manly Hall and Emerson in America, Ramana Maharshi and Krishnamurti in India, Rudolf Steiner in Europe – and Beinsa Douno the Bulgarian sage of whom Einstein said 'All the world renders homage to me and I render homage to the Master Peter Deunov [Beinsa Douno] from Bulgaria'.

The book presents the lectures of Beinsa Douno based on passages from the Bible with the aim of preparing humanity for a new epoch by imparting an understanding of the practical guidance from the scriptures that, at a profound level, can only be attained by direct contact with its

source. Whereas it would naturally be profitable to read sequentially, there is no indispensable need to do so. Why? Because in the manner of any spiritual book on eternal truths about the inner life of Man, the material is organic, so to speak like a hologram or a fractal. An harassed reader may therefore 'dip into' any chapter at random since each one mirrors the whole purpose of the book. And that purpose is to assist the earnest disciple (hopefully, you the reader) to acquire spiritual enrichment gained through the practical wisdom and application of the Christ's Teachings.

However, it is no hyperbole that there are countless books purporting to sort out our lives by providing guidance based on the Christ's words. Does this book stand out from the crowd, and if so, how and why? But first, who is Beinsa Douno? Do we know him? Of course there are the historical facts about his life and literary output, but can we claim to know the soul nature of the sage? The writer makes no such claims. Nonetheless, there are facts to consider and signs to read. A slight diversion is needed.



We have just had the EU Referendum. Notwithstanding all the ill-feeling and personal invectives on both sides of the debate, the sole criterion for both the exit and remain factions has been economics, brutal factionalism to put it bluntly, as if a material utopia were the sole yardstick of human happiness. But now look to any religion and culture from ancient antiquity to modern times, whether to the East or to the West. What do we find? Not a single one of the sages and philosophers ever allowed the self-realisation of truth to be sullied by the lure of establishing any earthly Utopia, or his life-energy to be wasted in inventing techniques and technologies or social schemes and economic models for dealing with the turmoil and malice of the world's politics, economics and physical conditions at their own level. Each one of them saw with unerring insight that it was unregenerate man the world over – spiritually impoverished man – who

was himself the prolific spawner of the ubiquitous cruelty and suffering around him; and so it was through man himself, his character, not his possessions, that the way must be found to redeem the world situation: the way of truth, wisdom and love – the transformed man. However, none of the saints and prophets of old like Buddha, Zarathustra or Christ, or the sage-philosophers such as Plato and Pythagoras of ancient times and Krishnamurti, Brunton and Emerson in recent years, ever preached a diet of material poverty or self-mortification as the highway to truth. Supremely practical men, they understood the value of the material existence and its enjoyment; but their counsel was ever the same – the evils resulting from ignorance of our true spiritual nature and the healing hand of the divine physician.

It is exactly the same with Beinsa Douno. On page 144 we find the sage counselling about wealth: 'I am not recommending poverty. I recommend three types of wealth: physical, mental and spiritual wealth. But it is the spiritual wealth – 'Collect treasures' – in the Christ's words (Matthew 6: 19-21) that is by far the most important, and the most neglected, that obviously constitutes the theme of this book, which provides practical guidance on life-challenging situations, along with instructions on surmounting obstacles in the path of the neophyte. Douno considers a whole host of subjects like hope, faith and love, good and evil, sin, mastering destiny, moral character, service and sacrifice, correct thought and prayer.

At this juncture we must issue a warning of utmost significance. And it is this.

There are at three principal ways of reading any sacred texts, such as the *Upanishads*, the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, or the Bible: 1. the dead-letter literal and intellectual; 2. the symbolical and intuition; and 3. the Spiritual. These three modes correspond to: 1. reading with the brain, forming concepts; 2. reading through the mind, invoking percepts; and 3. reading with a quiescent brain in order to sense the soft intimations of the Soul.¹ If the reader cannot (or chooses not to) raise his consciousness beyond the literal and intellectual then he had better put away this book (or any other spiritual and religious book) for good; for this kind of level 1. reading is the modus operandi of the sort of dry, academic pedagogy that indulges in interminable, dead-ended debates in the gymnasium of the left brain that get nowhere, other than polarizing opinions, in turn generating the toxic cocktail of confusion, ill-feeling, and the scorn shown towards religion by the vast majority of scientists, plus the calumny heaped upon religious teachers by those very scientists who presumptuously think that they know better.

Deep truths about Man's inner nature cannot be written down in words to be taken at face value. They can only impart their meaning in words through symbols, allegories and metaphors; and this is where the strength of the book lies and why its value rises way above the rabble of materialists who seek to denounce religion without having a clue about the allegorical nature of the teachings. The historical authenticity of the characters in the New Testament is of minor concern. What is of major significance is that these characters – men and women – are really the personifications of forces and processes which take place in the body and psyche of each human being. Needless to point out then, that words like God, the Lord and the devil, frequently used by Beinsa Douno, must always be understood in their universal meaning and never be taken in an anthropomorphic sense.

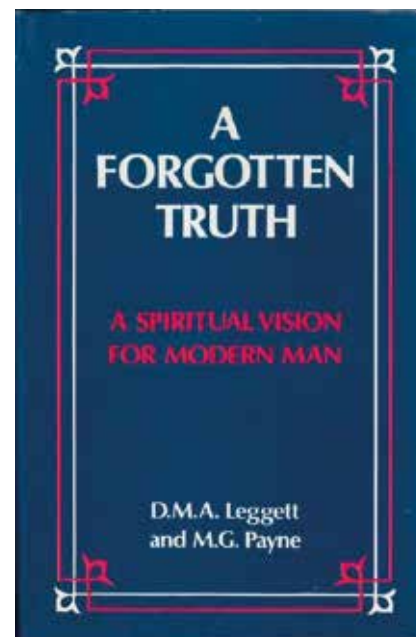
The chapters follow a general pattern: a pithy quote from the Bible (with an expanded version in footnotes), followed by a brief account of its essential meaning, which is then fully amplified by way of stories to illuminate the meaning further, then an exposition on the practical import for the everyday life of the ordinary man. I chuckled no end about the story (p. 109) of the two inquisitive frogs who fell into a pail of milk and swam round in circles. One frog got fed up (don't we all when faced with a boring task), lay down at the bottom to rest and then died; but his companion continued swimming until the constant churning of the milk turned it into butter, which then provided a firm foundation for him to hop out of the pail. The moral: 'Constancy in Life', the message of Ecclesiastes 6:12, *Who knoweth what is good for a man in his life?* But I can just imagine all the arguments of the literalists (in their droves) taking the story at face value: surely the milk couldn't suddenly just turn to butter; wouldn't his legs get stuck when the milk started congealing, how does a frog know that churning milk would turn it into butter, how high can a frog jump, etc.? Apropos, it is comforting to know that when we are winging or suffering, it means that there is something in our souls that God must chip off, and when we sin, 'a sinner is a stone out of which the divine chisel will form a graceful statue' (p. 111).

One of the most revealing chapters (for me) is 'The Grain of Wheat, the Emblem of the Human Soul' based on John 12:24 (pp. 137-149). It is an eloquent exposition of how a grain of wheat metaphorically depicts the history of nature's development and the human soul passing through the cyclical stages of death, sprouting, growth, and seeds. Then there are carefully worded comments on topics such as the future of our planet, the beginning of a new epoch, divine providence and the White Brotherhood (Douno's School

of Esoteric Christianity is called 'School of the Universal White Brotherhood'). I was fascinated by a section on 'The Testament of the Colour Rays of Light' correlating the spectrum of light with that of spiritual qualities and also the days of the week. This is in line with the occult teachings on the mystical nature of colour from Douno's contemporaries like Blavatsky, Bailey and Steiner.

In conclusion then, we have been bequeathed a book that adds new meaning to the Christian scriptures and given us the practical and usable tools and techniques to apply the teachings in the course of our daily lives. It fulfills a desperate need to inject the living vitality of esoteric Christianity into what can only be referred to as the moribund shell of institutionalised 'Churchianity'. The book is replete with Appendixes, a Bibliography, and References, the latter include an enumeration in both Bulgarian and English of the lectures constituting the book chapters, all painstakingly and lovingly assembled by the two translators Maria Mitovska and Harry Carr.

¹These three modes correspond very broadly with William James's account of brain function: productive, permissive or releasing, and transmissive. See William James, 'Human Immortality (1898)', <http://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Pajares/jimmortal.html>.



A Science of the Spirit

David Lorimer

A FORGOTTEN TRUTH
D.M.A. (Peter) Leggett and Max Payne
White Crow Books, 2016 (1986),
237 pp., £14.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-910121-98-6

THE SACRED QUEST

D.M.A. Leggett

White Crow Books, 2016 (1987),
237 pp., £14.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78677-000-4

Many readers will be familiar with Max Payne, whose obituary we published in this Review last summer, and who was a regular contributor of book reviews at the interface between science and spirituality. Fewer will now know about Peter Leggett (1912-1995), one of the founding members of the Network and an exact contemporary of George Blaker at Trinity College, Cambridge. Peter was a mathematician who eventually became vice chancellor of Surrey University, where he held some early meetings of the Network, including a conference on reincarnation in 1974. He was a great friend and mentor to me, and was the first chairman of the Network Council before Peter Fenwick. I remember him once telling me about a conversation he had had with a bishop about reincarnation (the forgotten truth of the first book), where the bishop had told him that if he accepted reincarnation, he would have to change his whole theology!

The subtitles of these books – which I read with profit when they originally came out – are significant in referring to a spiritual vision for modern man and the integration of experiment with experience in arriving at a coherent worldview. Both Max and Peter epitomised the Network approach of balancing rigour with openness, and indeed it was Peter who invited Max to join the Network after the initial meeting recommended writing letters to possible members. The books draw on a wide range of reading, not all of which will still be familiar to contemporary readers. Sir Kelvin Spencer, another founding member, provides the forewords to both books. He quotes Sir Alister Hardy's remark that our civilisation has been built upon the spiritual interpretation of the world and that if the majority of the population come to have a materialistic view, the whole nature of our way of life may change, and not for the better. He urges readers to remember that we are essentially spiritual beings, and that the spirit can move mountains. He also observes that scientific materialism has evacuated our sense of purpose, but there is no intrinsic reason why science cannot be combined with a spiritual outlook.

In *A Forgotten Truth*, Peter begins with a discussion of what constitutes evidence, widening his view beyond the repeatability of science and arguing for the validity of cumulative evidence of reliably recorded happenings or experiences. He builds on this in a discussion of the distinctive roles of science and religion before considering evidence from the Scriptures about the nature of God, fundamental principles and application. This leads him to formulate a hypothesis (p. 48) consistent with these observations that can then be tested by experience. His understanding of God is that from which all that is proceeds, while the relationship of a human being to God

is likened to the cells of the body. Human beings are charioteers of their body, while the purpose of human life is learning lessons in a school of spiritual development. The purpose or end is an ever expanding and ever deepening consciousness. This provides an inspiring philosophy of life that is then discussed with reference to mysticism, psychology, biology, physics and the paranormal. The next chapter consists of extracts from talks by a discarnate teacher on various aspects of life; the tone is somewhat apocalyptic but sheds further light on the deeper nature of the human being.

The second part, co-authored with Max Payne, discusses the implications of Peter's hypothesis for religion, science and society in terms of the need for a new metaphysic and the necessity of spiritual evolution integrating both Western and Eastern perspectives. In conclusion, they argue that neither scientific humanism nor Christianity as normally presented can provide a compelling and realistic vision of the future. We need a new understanding based on the integration of science and spirituality, which is what this book provides in terms of a vision that will give purpose and meaning to human life.

A Sacred Quest records Peter's intellectual and spiritual journey and begins with the question of what education is for. He sees contemporary education as essentially utilitarian, neglecting its role in helping young people develop a philosophy of life. This book provides the basis for such a philosophy or metaphysic. Parts Two and Three look at evidential insights from mysticism, poetry and the paranormal in terms of out of body experiences, survival and reincarnation. This enables him to formulate a series of propositions, that are worth quoting in detail (p. 96):

- Man is not just 5 pounds' worth of chemicals and a lot of water.
- Man, when alive, can function as a self-conscious being independently of his physical body.
- Man's consciousness survives the death of his physical body.
- In the post physical death state man undergoes some kind of judgement/review of the life just ended.
- Man evolves through a series of lives, the circumstances of which are interconnected.
- Love, justice and tension exist at the heart of the universe.
- Unity underlies all that is.

In discussing the purpose of human life, Peter develops a further series of propositions suggested by the evidence he considers. He moves on to a more detailed consideration of Christianity and the relationship between Jesus the man in Christ the divine spirit. Next, he explores the subtle constitution of the human being and the purpose of life in terms of the expansion of consciousness, a vision he also shared with Sir George Trevelyan. The key, as explained in the last part, is application, and it is here that Peter tackles the thorny issues of evil, sin and suffering as well as the wisdom derived as the fruit of experience. This brings him full-circle back to education and he quotes the UN Secretary-General U Thant in advocating an integration of Eastern and Western approaches so that there is equal emphasis on intellectual, moral and spiritual development. Given that the content of these books is perennial, even if many more books have been published in the intervening period, readers can profitably engage with the arguments and assess for themselves the extent to which they feel the reasoning is sound in the light of the evidence considered. This is classic Network thinking.

Becoming of both Minds

Nicholas Colloff

THE SECRET TEACHERS OF THE WESTERN WORLD

Gary Lachman (SMN)

Tarcher Penguin, 2015, 509 pp., \$19.95, p/b - ISBN: 978-0-399-16680-8

An apocryphal story has Picasso confronted on a train by a man waving a photograph of his wife under his nose declaiming, "Why do you not paint things as they are? Like this". "You mean small, square and rather flat," responds Picasso! Different minds perceive differently but what if our own, apparently single mind, has two distinct modes of behaviour? The one, like Picasso, seeing intuitively, things as a whole and the patterns that connect; and, the second, like the man, in precise yet fragmented, mechanically sequenced parts, of high utility but reduced depth or meaning. This, in a compressed nutshell, was the thesis of Iain McGilchrist's 'The Mastery and His Emissary' that explored in a renewing way the discussion of 'right and left brain asymmetry' and suggested that the emissary, the utilitarian, reductionist if practical brain, had usurped its place and become the dominant mode of perception. We have come to know much of value in the process but drained life of meaning and purpose.

The Western esoteric traditions are in essence pathways to meaning that aim to transform our way of seeing who and where we are, not an accidental part in a meaningless universe, but as a living

being connected, enfolded within a cosmic order that is sacred. Could our understanding, Lachman asks in this accomplished book, of those traditions be enriched by looking at them through a lens borrowed from McGilchrist? As practices for replenishing and repositioning the relationship between our two minds, of restoring them to balance?

With this question in mind, Lachman takes us on a tour through the multiple pathways, convergent and divergent, that comprise the Western esoteric tradition, secret sometimes out of necessity either to guard knowledge from the ignorant or hide it from the persecutors but primarily because though culturally profoundly important and creative, mostly unacknowledged especially since we entered Yeats' 'the three provincial centuries' of 'left brain dominance'. It is all deftly handled, with sufficient space devoted to the key figures and contexts, so that you emerge with a sense of their contribution and their significance to the whole, often with a desire to know more; and, you recognise that the motif of double mindedness does run through the traditions.

You notice too how difficult it is to maintain a sense of balance betwixt the two minds – what Lachman describes as 'the Goldilocks' moment' where each finds its appropriate balance, place, and they enrich rather than confront one another. This is partly, as Lachman notes, the apparent violence of the utilitarian left brain that reaches for the constant security of the certain, the complete, even at the expense of the whole, extinguishing vulnerability to the felt, the emergent, the unknowable. While there is a necessary truth in this, what if one imagines it from the other side? The emissary has tasks to perform, a life to run and secure, all important but so often little acknowledged or praised. Is it akin to being the elder brother of the prodigal son whose service is too easily taken for granted? Tripping into the imaginal, the cosmic, the 'ungrund' is transformative but to what purpose if not practised here and now, in each and every encounter within the life that we are given?

This brings us to the importance of Lachman's second lens – does our consciousness change over time in a way that creates grounds for hope that this dichotomy between minds will find, if not 'a solution', a newly conscious way of being lived out? One possible answer is in the work of the Swiss German philosopher, Jean Gebser, who, in his magnum opus, 'The Ever Present Origin' sets out a masterful case for how human consciousness has evolved through specific, describable stages from magical to mythical to mental-rational to now the possibility of the integral. At the heart of this possibility is the invitation to live 'ego-free', not

it must be seen 'ego-less'. 'Ego-free' is where each preceding structure of consciousness is enfolded within the new, recognised as valuable but transformed by being seen from within the new structure; and, this structure is itself illuminated by the Origin with a renewing transparency. Perhaps the master and the emissary can finally become friends rather than master and servant?

Likewise with McGilchrist, this is an accompanying lens through which we follow the esoteric traditions as they unfold. Each tradition wants to transform us but each must speak into, and reckon with, the place it finds itself with regard to our presiding 'structure of consciousness'. Our brains are, as Bergson suggested, limiting devices so that we can be both open out to but also critically bear consciousness, they are what we navigate with and at different times navigation may require different maps. One way of reading Lachman's book is to see each tradition seeking to create the necessary map required at the time to find one's way to transformation – no map is ever redundant, one can learn from all of them, but no map is ever complete and new one's may add features not before noticed as necessary because the demands of consciousness have changed.

The book can also be read, more simply, as a treasure trove of lucid exposition. My own favorites were the passages on Plotinus that allow you to taste what it might mean to navigate the One; a compelling description of the 'Imaginal' through the eyes of Surawardi and his inspiration for Henri Corbin to coin the term; and, on why Dante is an esoteric thinker as well as a great poet.

Meanwhile, neither lens is wielded in a way that tends towards reductionism – we may have two brains because consciousness is structured that way, not the reverse, and accepting neither lens as 'true' is necessary in order to profit from the book. The beauty of the book is indeed in the faithful, sensitive rendition of the essences of the traditions themselves whilst continuing to pose the question to all of them: where and how do we find the right balance between whole and part, transcendence into meaning and practice into life? There can be no more important question.

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The Outsider and Beyond

David Lorimer

COLLECTED ESSAYS ON PHILOSOPHERS

Colin Wilson (edited by Colin Stanley)

Cambridge Scholars, 2016, 235 pp., £47.99, h/b – ISBN 978-1-4438-8901-8

I still remember my sense of intellectual excitement when I first read *The Outsider* in my last year at St Andrews (my daughter Charlotte is now at Durham and was also very taken by it when she read it last year). Subsequently, Colin was the main reader for my first book *Survival* in 1984, and strongly recommended its publication. Later, I went to see him at his home in Cornwall where he offered visitors not only copious wine but also £5 if they could suggest another place for a bookshelf – he had some 25,000 volumes, and even his garage was full. Part of the reason for my excitement was reading Colin's critique of the French existentialists, in particular Camus and Sartre. In addition, he opened up huge new avenues (also with his second book *Religion and the Rebel*) to Hermann Hesse, William Blake, Dostoevsky, TE Hulme, Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee, AN Whitehead, Friedrich Nietzsche and many other writers, who I proceeded to read.

This book brings together 17 essays on a wide variety of philosophers. Some of these are short newspaper articles on the Oxford philosophers Sir Freddie Ayer, Sir Peter Strawson and Sir Geoffrey Warnock, with whom he has very little in common, but the other two in the series, with Sir Karl Popper and CD Broad are more engaging. Broad criticises fellow philosophers for ignoring psychical research, while Popper's view on Wilson's work is very interesting as he takes him to task for overrating self-expression, adding that artists, poets and scientists 'become great insofar as they reach out to something outside themselves.' I think this is an important point in relation to Colin's overall approach. His most basic contention is that ordinary consciousness is subnormal, and that we should make every effort to transcend and intensify it. His original book was written before publication of Maslow's work on peak experiences, which helped him flesh out this picture of a spectrum of conscious states. Since then, transpersonal psychology has considerably extended this analysis.

In his essay on Camus and the even more extensive one on Sartre, he criticises their approach to contingency (nausea) and absurdity by failing to realise the responsibility we all have with respect to our perception in terms of intentionality, as explained by Husserl (there is also an essay on him). One of the examples given by Camus is seeing a man talking and gesticulating

in a phone box - this is only absurd if one does not know what the man is talking about. On a wider front, I wrote an essay in the 1970s contrasting the approach of Camus with the experience and writings of Victor Frankl in Auschwitz - he was able to realise meaning even in those circumstances. Both Camus and Sartre try to convince their readers that this passive perception of absurdity is actually how things are. Sartre even tries to construct a philosophy of freedom on top of the contention that man is a useless passion; this does not really work, as Colin shows very clearly. Sartre also denies Husserl's idea of a transcendental ego, which is arguably the very basis of freedom and corresponds to the witness consciousness of the Upanishads and mindfulness.

Nietzsche was an important influence on his thinking since he conveys an intense feeling of vitality and aliveness, especially in two key experiences of his life, which are also related to the development of his idea of will to power. In an essay on Spinoza, Colin quotes Nietzsche as saying that 'it has gradually become clear to me what every great philosophy up till now has consisted of - namely, the confession of its inventor, and a sort of involuntary and subconscious autobiography.' This insight applies to Nietzsche himself and indeed to Colin as well as other philosophers discussed in this book, including Sartre and Foucault.

The clearest answer to this question is given in the final essay on Whitehead, who features in *Religion and the Rebel* (Colin has a much higher opinion of Whitehead than Russell). Whitehead put forward an overall system (in *Process and Reality*) as a basis for explaining every element of our experience, and criticises the bifurcation of nature brought about by Western philosophy. For him, the universe is not separated from the human mind and we have two modes of attention or intention, presentational immediacy and what he calls causal efficacy, which Colin interprets as meaning perception. These can come together in symbolic perception, which one finds in the poetry of Wordsworth. To lose a sense of meaning is to lose a sense of causal efficacy, and this feeling is at the basis of existential despair. In Whitehead's scheme, humans are a dynamic expression of the consequent nature of God and as such part of divine evolution in the actualisation of new possibilities. It was good to revisit these existential themes in this collection of essays, but I felt that the overall perspective was perhaps too individual without a sense of belonging to a larger whole and indeed serving that whole with love. Although Colin makes frequent references to mystics, he does not take the step of shifting his identity from self to Self, although he does

open up important new dimensions of human freedom and makes some very significant criticisms of the limitations of existentialist thought.

A Moral Compass

IN SEARCH OF THE COMMON GOOD

Jack E. Brush

iff Books (John Hunt), 2016, 132 pp., £9.99, p/b - ISBN 978-1-78535-291-1

This stimulating book is a sequel to *Citizens of the Broken Compass*, which I reviewed in Network 118, and is subtitled 'guideposts for concerned citizens.' It is a wide-ranging historical review of the relationship between law and order in a cosmic sense and in a moral sense. The theme of the common good was also discussed in the previous book, and some themes reappear here. The distinctions the author makes between power, force and violence are timely in view of current events. For him, force compels and coerces, while power persuades and convinces; when force becomes destructive, it crosses over into violence. In this context, power and violence are inversely proportional, and by these definitions the US is in fact a superforce rather than a superpower, aiming as it does at full spectrum dominance. Moral authority, the author contends, stems from power rather than force, and here there is an interesting parallel with Stephan Schwartz's notion of beingness in his book reviewed in another section.

For Brush, the most sympathetic of the ancients is the Stoic Cicero, whom he quotes at some length. For the Stoics, natural law permeates the universe like a membrane and can be apprehended through reason; the law is immanent rather than imposed. Hence Cicero writes that 'law is the highest reason, rooted in nature... and established in the human mind.' (p. 21) Acting morally is acting in accordance with the common good corresponding to the connectivity of things; 'human beings are born the sake of human beings' according to Cicero. Interestingly, Brush argues that the loss of this cosmic dimension of imposed law led to a literalistic interpretation of the Bible.

Descartes, Newton and Kant all contributed to the emergence of a mechanistic view that separated the physical or cosmic from the moral. For Descartes, law was grounded in the immutability of God, while the metaphor of the machine allows no free will or purpose. It was only a matter of time before God was eliminated from this universe and we thus find ourselves subject to moral nihilism with no reliable basis for establishing moral values and making moral decisions. Darwin and Freud further contributed to this process where the emphasis is shifted from rational in the phrase

'rational animal' to 'rational animal' subject to powerful sexual drives. In addition, historicism reinforced this process by demonstrating the cultural relativity of values.

Brush advances a new departure, starting from an analogy of physical constants as fixed points, with the self experienced as a centre of unity and continuity. He then proposes three polarities or axes of human behaviour: force - power, life - spirit and time - eternity. His distinction between force and power, defined above, exactly corresponds to the system of David Hawkins, who is not mentioned here and whose work could have added to the argument. Although he does not formulate it like this, the author could have added a further polarity of individual - social. In relation to society, he proposes that these polarities become processes of self-knowledge, self-actualisation and the transformation of relationships. The full expression of these processes is hampered by excessive individualism, itself related to property rights described by Locke and incorporated in the American constitution. This sets up a tension between individual interests and the common good, where the corresponding interests are seen to be freedom and national security. Brush makes less use of holistic arguments from modern science here than in his earlier book, but he does describe the evolution of our modern emphasis on human rights from Hobbes, where the individual is the building block of society rather than being embedded in it.

He develops three guideposts for compliance with natural law: respectful dialogue, opportuneness of action and community building. He applies these to specific situations by way of explanation, but cautions that the last guidepost has been subverted by consensus building through manipulation of public opinion going back to Freud's nephew, Edward Bernays, in the aftermath of the First World War. What is really at stake here is the relationship between metaphysics and ethics, which is the underlying theme of my book *Whole in One*, subtitled 'the near death experience and the ethic of interconnectedness.' My proposal is that mystical experience and the life review - as well as parallels in depth psychology, physics, biology and ecology - point to an underlying oneness of life, being and consciousness so that we are in a very real sense one another. In this context, the golden rule is not only ethical, but ultimately logical. The moral order of interconnectedness is embedded in a metaphysic of the oneness of consciousness. Having said all this, I applaud the highlighting of the common good, which we must now apply on planetary scale rather than pursuing selfish nationalism at the expense of the whole and indeed of Nature.

psychology – consciousness studies

Psi and the Brain

Robert Charman

PSYCHIC PHENOMENA AND THE BRAIN: EXPLORING THE NEUROPHYSIOLOGY OF PSI

Bryan J Williams

Australian Institute of Parapsychology
Research Inc. Gladesville, NSW, 2015,
135 pp., \$ 35. Monograph No3. ISBN
978-0-9870772-2-6

Bryan William is a Research Affiliate, Psychical Research Foundation, Texas, and has written many articles on psi and has contributed the chapters on *Revisiting the Ganzfeld Debate: A Basic Review and Assessment* and *Experimental Examinations of the Reported Abilities of a Psychic Claimant: A Review of Experiments and Explorations with Sean Harribance* in Broderick & Goertzel (2015).

With a Foreword by Dr Edward F. Kelly, Visiting Professor, Division of Perceptual Studies, University of Virginia, this AIPRI commissioned peer-reviewed monograph with some 250 references is a valiant attempt to bring some order into the complex field of research into the neural correlates of psi activity using electroencephalography (EEG), event related potentials (ERPs) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). If neuropsychologists can determine which areas and which structures of the brain 'light up' during different manifestations of psi such as telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, micro-psychokinesis (microPK), recurrent spontaneous psychokinesis (RSPK) or macroPK (poltergeistic phenomena), then this would increase the possibility of psi being accepted by the neurosciences on an evidential basis. If research can also demonstrate which of the four brainwave frequency bands predominates during successful psi in terms of voltage amplitude compared to the other bands then maybe we will be able to use this knowledge to train people in psi using brainwave biofeedback.

In his Introduction Williams outlines the scope of his inquiry, discusses the pioneering survey achievements of the early years of the Society for Psychical Research, presents some interesting anecdotal cases, looks at the work of J.B. Rhine and surveys the range of modern neurological research into psi phenomena. The following nine chapters are devoted to a detailed explanation and evaluation of the findings of individual studies and meta-analyses

of research into each of these different manifestations of psi. What becomes very clear is that when you are dealing with the ever fluctuating changes of brain activity arising from a multitude of possible confounding causes extracting signal from noise, chance correlation and artefact is not easy.

At the end of his review Williams comes to some guarded conclusions concerning this field of psi research that may act as a guide to present practice and future research. There seems a good correlation between an increase in alpha wave amplitude relative to the other brain wave bands in successful ESP performance implying that a calm receptive mind increases the likelihood of psi performance. While this finding holds true in general, it seems especially true for those with a good psychic record such as Sean Harribance and Michael Bessent. There is a hint of a functional oddness in the brains of high performance psychics with regard to structure and function similar to savants such as Kim Peek. There also seems to be tentative evidence for an increase in brain wave frequency coming into mutual step between successful 'sender/receiver' pairs.

Besides some cautious evidence of almost simultaneous ERPs between the brains of 'sender/receiver' pairs at the moment of 'sender' stimuli, there is evidence of a more pronounced ERP response to those screen images chosen later by random computer and flashed onto the screen compared to non-shown control images. This is thought to imply a non-conscious increase in presentiment of what will be experienced and is backed up by other techniques such as recording autonomic nervous system (ANS) anticipatory changes in respiration and electrical skin conductance. There is tentative evidence that right hemispheric activity, particularly in the temporal lobe and hippocampal (memory) area, is more associated with successful ESP in men, but this relationship is more ambiguous in females who tend to use their hemispheres more in tandem whatever the task. Successful microPK as in statistically significant but rather borderline deviations towards a desired increase or decrease in non random RNG noughts and ones seem associated with enhanced alpha activity. As for any neural association between episodes of poltergeistic type RSPK and individuals at the scene, there has not been much research as such occurrences are not predictable.

What, however, will really fascinate readers are the questions this research raises as to the nature of psi and Williams is to be congratulated for discussing them. Neuroscientists point out that the brain has no mechanism to send or receive nonsensory signals across space and physicists point out

that all transmission systems whether acoustic or electromagnetic lose power over increasing distance. So to claim that telepathy is equally effective between people whether they are tens of yards apart or thousands of miles apart means that something must either be fundamentally wrong with our understanding of neurophysiology and physics, or that understanding is correct and 'ESP' must for ever stand for 'Error Some Place'. Where, for example, does telepathic energy come from, let alone the psychic energy necessary to perform psychokinesis whether as interfering with the randomness of RNGs or claimed feats of table turning? What signal is being given off by those out-of-sight objects that clairvoyants claim to detect? What is imprinted on the objects that psychometrists hold and then claim to know about the owner? None of these claims make any sense at all within the present framework of science. Williams points out that what all these objections share in common is the idea that psi is some form of mental radio in which the brain or mind of the sender brain sends a message across space that is received and decoded by the brain or mind of the receiver when they are neurologically 'tuned in' to each other.

What, say Williams, critics do not realise is that parapsychologists do not employ concepts of A to B message transmission across space as in classical physics. On the assumption that well investigated anecdotal cases and experimental findings are valid evidence of psi, it is agreed that as they are not explainable in terms of classical physics. The eventual explanation is likely to lie in the alternative concept of nonlocality as in the entangled quantum relationship between two photons of complementary 'spin' in which the detection or changing the spin of one photon simultaneously determines the spin of the other, even if they are at opposite sides of the universe. For psi, as for those entangled photons, distance is irrelevant. It has been pointed out that, unlike sound and vision, there is no characteristic sense unique to psi, so psi has to employ whatever familiar sense or thought is most relevant to convey its meaning. Neurologically speaking, psi expression will always tend to be masked by the accompanying familiar sense. Williams does an excellent demolition job on Moulton and Kosslyn's (2008) boast that the null results of their one-off neuroimaging experiment did not 'simply fail to support the psi hypothesis: they offer strong evidence against it'. Hubris indeed!

As no message is sent from A to B in the conventional sense (although, rather confusingly, we use 'sender' and 'receiver' to distinguish their roles) then it is proposed that the information must already exist and an ESP experience,

or an experimental detection of ESP-in-action, is the result of selective ESP activation of existing information. Mutual social memory, as in sharing a common cultural stock of knowledge and imagery seems essential. Williams quotes Roll (2006) as saying that 'ESP has no experience to call its own. When ESP appears in consciousness it comes in borrowed garb. The brain has a storehouse of used apparel in the hippocampus where ESP chooses whatever fits the occasion. When the ESP target is a visual scene, the response may be a visual image or it may be an auditory expression' (p. 13). This concept is further captured by the following interesting quote from Harvey Irwin (1979) 'Suppose that by some extrasensory means you learn of the death of your friend John in a car accident some distance away. Now John has never died before, so there cannot have been a single trace in memory corresponding to John's death in his car. However.....each discrete piece of information is already contained in memory at the time of the experience: there is stored information about John, about death, and so on (p. 87). The inference is that while physically separated in space and often in time we are non-spatially related by common cultural and specific personal knowledge and its emotional meaning. In our mental reality it may be that our emotional relationship with each other, which remains the same regardless of distance apart, is our mental equivalent of quantum non-locality.

In psychometry, the emotional vividness of imagery held in the mind of the token owner seems to be picked up by the psychometrist. Williams quotes a revealing example from Pagenstecher's (1922) studies of Senora Maria Reyes de Z (Mrs Zierold) who practised psychometry under hypnosis. She was handed a piece of string that had once held the identification tag of a German soldier during World War One. Holding it 'She described a cold, foggy day on the on the frontlines of a battlefield during which she saw a bomb fall from the air and kill several soldiers'. The soldier who had worn the tag confirmed her imagery, saying he had actually witnessed the event adding 'I am certain that this was the first great impression I received of the war **possibly the greatest of all.**' (my emphasis in line with William's italics). As Williams concludes, with the 'hard problem' of the relationship between the physical processes of the brain and mental processes of mind and consciousness remaining unsolved, further research into the nature of psi, including its neurological correlates, may add clues to help solve the puzzle. Solve the one and you will solve the other. This book is an important step forward and AIPRI are to be congratulated for sponsoring this monograph and Bryan Williams

for undertaking the huge volume of research required for the writing of it.

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Behind the Veil

David Lorimer

WHAT IS CONSCIOUSNESS?

Ervin Laszlo (SMN), Jean Houston, Larry Dossey (SMN), edited by Kingsley L. Dennis

Select Books, 2016, 156 pp., \$22.95, h/b - ISBN 978-1-59079-347-3

Last year, Ervin wrote to Jean and Larry asking them to send a summary of their interpretation of consciousness. The result was much longer than he expected, as printed in this book, which I read on my way back from Italy this week. It provides a succinct account of three important perspectives on consciousness, which share a common view of transcendent oneness. Both Larry and Jean refer to an interview with Max Planck, which is worth quoting here: 'I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter is derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing, postulates consciousness.' He continues by stating that there is no matter of such and that it exists only by virtue of a force bringing the particle

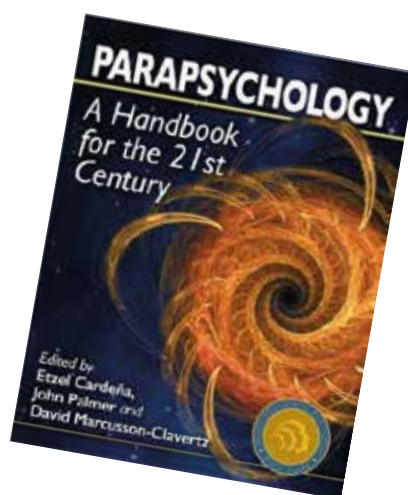
to vibration and holding it together in a minute solar system; 'we must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent mind. The mind is the matrix of all matter.' The importance of this statement is hard to exaggerate, coming as it does from one of the pre-eminent quantum physicists of the last century after 50 years of research. As many readers will know, this sentiment can be echoed in the writings of many other physicists, as collected by Ken Wilber and more recently by Bob Jahn and Brenda Dunne. In this respect, the worldview of neuroscience lags behind, still fundamentally influenced by the mechanistic metaphor.

Jean's contribution is entitled 'Consciousness is the Quantum Field of the Cosmos' and explains her more experiential take at the four levels of physical-sensory, psychological, mythical-symbolic and spiritual-unitive. Like Ervin, she considers the hologram an important theoretical concept, seeing the universe as having an outer body and an inner mind whereby the infrastructure of the mind mirrors the structures of the universe. In terms of consciousness, this is an interdependent co-arising, so that the level of reality we are able to access depends on our state of consciousness. She quotes Deepak Chopra as saying that 'the future of God is the evolution of our own consciousness from separation to unity, from a fragmented mind to a whole mind, from thought which is in time to Awareness which is not in time.' She gives a useful exercise where we can re-edit a significant incident in our lives that did not work out as we might have hoped, thus changing our feeling of the past. This also highlights the importance of imagination in its creative sense. Another key for her his archetypes as cosmic blueprints that we can tune into.

Larry directly addresses the inadequacies of the physicalist or materialist view of mind, pointing out that how we perceive ourselves as profound social and moral implications. The dominant physicalist view is not presented as a modest hypothesis, but rather as an incontrovertible fact, in spite of the lack of evidence and the frank admission on the part of many distinguished neuroscientists that they do not know how consciousness is produced in or by the brain. They rely on what Popper and Eccles called promissory materialism, the assumption that there will eventually be an adequate materialist account of consciousness. The irony is that other theories are criticised from this standpoint, which itself has no basis other than correlation and disqualifies the proponent - why should such theories be taken seriously if they are simply a deterministic outcome of brain processes?

William James pointed out more than a century ago that the hypothesis that the brain produces consciousness cannot adequately explain anomalies such as OBEs, NDEs and survival of consciousness and that we need some form of filter or transmission theory to account for these data. In a particularly felicitous phrase, Larry states that 'empirical evidence shows that brains are separate, but minds are not', as documented in his own book *One Mind*. The real problem is the incompatibility between scientific assumptions and the reality of conscious experience. Here Larry adds two useful quotations, one from Sir Arthur Eddington and the other from David Bohm: Eddington maintained that the idea of the universal mind is a fairly plausible inference from the present state of scientific theory, while Bohm asserted that deep down the consciousness of mankind is one. Overall, this is one of the best summaries of the current state of consciousness studies that I know.

Ervin Laszlo builds on the other two contributions while referring in more detail to some of the evidence for consciousness beyond the brain. A particularly arresting example concerns a chess match, where one of the players was discarnate - he only lost after 48 moves and the medium had no specialist knowledge of chess. Ervin quotes the intriguing ostensible account relayed by Rosemary Brown about the post-mortem state of Bertrand Russell, which I also quote in my own book *Survival*. It is an eloquent statement and one of the great ironies of 20th-century philosophy if true. Ervin moves on to explain his ideas about consciousness as a nonlocal projection of a cosmic hologram, which he relates to his theory of the Akashic Field. He ends with a personal credo about living the answer in terms of being a conscious human being as an intrinsic and infinite part of a universal mind. This means that the world is not outside us and we are not outside the world: the world is in us, and we are in the world. As Plotinus put it 1700 years ago, 'we are within a reality that is also within us.' In addition, we are part of an evolutionary drive towards coherence and wholeness; and since we are expressions of the same mind, we are in a deep sense part of each other, which has significant ethical implications for the emerging society of caring and sharing. The visionary content of this book can help catalyse the shift we all need to make.



Unveiled Reality

David Lorimer

PARAPSYCHOLOGY – A Handbook for the 21st Century

Edited by Etzel Cardena, John Palmer
and David Marcusson-Clavertz

Macfarland, 2015, 414 pp., \$65, p/b –
ISBN 9-780786-489160

This comprehensive volume updates the original Handbook that was published back in 1977 - so nearly 40 years ago. During that time, more research has taken place, but we have also seen the rise of organised scepticism with continuing vigorous attempts to debunk the whole field, part of which is manifest in the control by guerrilla sceptics of the Wikipedia parapsychology pages, including the Society for Psychical Research, where readers will find that about one third of the entry is devoted to fraud. It is also interesting to reflect that the original Handbook was published only two years after Raymond Moody's *Life after Life* introducing the term near death experience. Going further back, the SPR and ASPR have been conducting systematic research since the 1880s, but one still hears the rhetorical refrain that no progress has been made in the intervening period. It is also worth remembering that the *Journal of Consciousness Studies* has been published continuously since 1994, and that the phrase a science of consciousness has become much more widespread. Also on historical note, Ed Kelly rightly observes that psychology took an immense detour through behaviourism after the death of William James, who was a scholar in philosophy and psychology as well as psychical research.

The book is structured in nine parts: basic concepts, research methods and statistical approaches, psychology and psi, biology and psi, physics and psi, psi phenomena in terms of anomalous cognition, perturbation and force, research on survival, practical applications, and finally a summary

of the volume. In all, this makes 31 chapters with extensive references after each one. It is worth noting that the use of the word anomalous relates to the predominance of scientific materialism, a framework that can make no real sense of the data presented here. Among the specific topics are macro and micro PK, meditation, drugs, quantum theory, ganzfeld, remote viewing, presentiment, distant intention, mental mediumship, reincarnation, ghosts and electronic voice phenomena, animal telepathy, and exceptional experiences in clinical psychology. This gives readers many points of entry, depending on their particular interests. In this relatively short review, I will confine myself to a few points.

The third chapter is the case against psi by Douglas Stokes, who has written widely in the field over many years. I read to his earlier books, *The Nature of Mind* from 1997 and *The Conscious Mind and the Material World* from 2007. I remember one of the main points being that there was no really adequate theory to account for psi, a point repeated here. To begin with, he remarks that many parapsychologists contend that spontaneous cases may be explained by normal processes, but he himself finds this dismissal premature. He discusses a priori scepticism, experimenter fraud with reference to science in general, data selection and the repeatability problem. In answering the question does psi exist he states: 'the pattern of experimental results is exactly what would be expected if there is no psi and quite different from the pattern that would be expected if psi exists. Fraud at rates known to occur in other disciplines is a much more parsimonious explanation of the data that is the postulation of mysterious and inexplicable psi powers.' On this basis, he concludes that psi does not exist, and, by implication, that psi-conducive experimenters must be fraudulent. The argument may be logically parsimonious, but it is contradicted by data analysed in most of the rest of the volume, and I was surprised that there was no refutation of this viewpoint in other essays apart from a brief editorial comment at the end.

However, an interesting point arises from this, namely the nature of the experimenter or sheep-goat effect where some experimenters get positive results that cannot be replicated by others. On one level, this may be explained by the prior attitude or expectation of the experimenter, as in two staring experiments on the same subjects by Marilyn Schlitz and Richard Wiseman. It turns out, though, that the third series of experiments was insignificant for both experimenters. I have often discussed this topic with Rupert Sheldrake, and we wonder if, in fact, the phenomenon is more widespread in psychological research

generally. If so, this fundamentally undermines the simple conception of scientific objectivity, which, one should also remind oneself, is in fact a form of intersubjective consensus. There is a whole chapter devoted to experimenter effects in parapsychological research where the phenomenon is divided into two hypotheses, the experimenter behaviour hypothesis where certain experimenters are better than others at putting participants at these, and the experimenter psi hypothesis where the experimenter influences the outcome of experiments by imposing their own psi. This whole area would make more sense within a participatory worldview where there is a less clear-cut distinction between subjective and objective.

The work of Ian Stevenson's carefully reviewed, as are possible explanations of the cases; Antonia Mills and Jim Tucker conclude that the evidence is now stronger than it was with Stevenson's original 1977 paper, although it is still true that mainstream psychology has not incorporated this body of data. Rupert Sheldrake provides an extensive account of natural history of psi, including the various experimental avenues he has pursued. He takes on sceptical claims, particularly by Richard Wiseman, showing that a reanalysis of his data does not lead to the conclusion stated. One interesting line of research that I had not yet read about was thinking of someone one has not seen for years then suddenly meeting that person totally unexpectedly. Rupert makes the overall point that such experiences are in fact common, natural and normal - they are only paranormal through the lens of current orthodoxy, and he is right in maintaining that the dogmas of materialism have severely inhibited research in this area.

It is clear the end of the book that there are many fruitful research questions and avenues to pursue, and indeed specific recommendations are made throughout the volume. In addition to those mentioned, more cross-cultural research could be fruitful, as the work of anthropologists like Natalie Tobert have demonstrated - an anthropological approach allows questions to be opened up in a nonthreatening manner. It would also have been good to have seen a contribution from K. Ramakrishna Rao, who integrates parapsychology into the wider tradition of Indian philosophy. The volume will stand as a landmark for many years to come, and the editors are to be congratulated on bringing it together - a real tour de force.

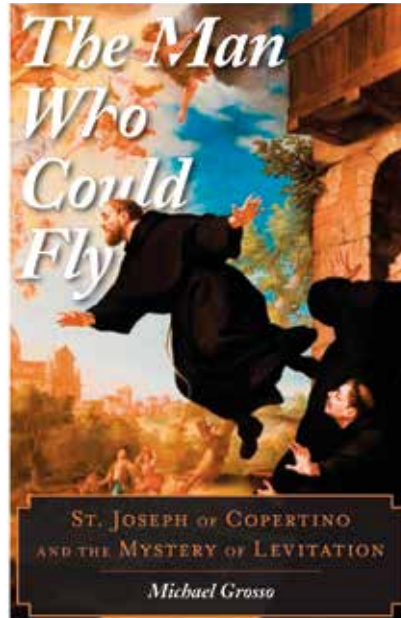
St. Joseph of Copertino and the Mystery of Levitation

Nicholas Colloff

THE MAN WHO COULD FLY

Michael Grosso

Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015, 264 pp., \$24.95 - ISBN 978-1442256729



A miracle, to quote St. Augustine, "does not occur contrary to nature, but contrary to what we know of nature." So what happens when a miracle occurs, repeatedly, what can it tell us about the nature of the nature we inhabit and, more importantly perhaps, about its meaning?

This is the subject of Michael Grosso's searching, beautifully written and challenging book. The repeated miracle in question is a seventeenth century Franciscan priest's ability to levitate, not once or twice, but repeatedly over years, observed by hundreds of people, many of whom originally were sceptical. These repeat performances, accompanied by other manifestations of psychic skill, were an embarrassment to the Church not, interestingly, for their plausibility (after all St Joseph was not the first flying religious) but for the temptations of pride and self-advertisement in which Fr Joseph might become ensnared. For this reason, he was investigated more than once by the Inquisition, always being exonerated but always presenting a difficulty to the Church hierarchy who forced him into ever more remote priories until he spent the last period of his life virtually a prisoner in a single room. It is ironic or perhaps emblematic that establishments of all kinds find anomalous experience difficult (though for different reasons). This inquisitorial interest, however, is a boon to subsequent researchers given their scrupulous bureaucratic attention to detail.

Needless to say our still established scientific materialism too finds St Joseph's experience confounding so it must be a consequence of a known mechanism - mass hysteria or conscious fraud, say. Grosso patiently sifts the evidence, weighing it carefully in the balance, and leaves you with no other truly reasonable conclusion than that St Joseph could indeed, under particular and described circumstances, levitate. It would be erroneous to think of this as 'defying gravity' as Grosso argues as if the 'the laws of physics' were legislative rather than the best possible available descriptions of what can be taken to be the case. If Joseph can fly, the question now is how - what force or dynamic can act in certain contexts such that the 'normal' rules of gravity are transformed? What might that look like and how does it effect how we think about the nature we inhabit?

The first thing it asks us is to revisit is the relationship between mind and matter (and indeed whether those neatly divided categories are not grossly misleading). For Joseph's ability to levitate was connected with the achievement of certain, circumscribed patterns of ecstasy when, forgetting himself, all his concentration was on the religious trigger of his intense devotion. Our minds appear not simply to be contained epiphenomena of our material brains but causally effective. Grosso takes us through a graded ascent of those abilities - from everyday intentionality through to levitation - in order to make the case for their plausibility - differences in degree and commonality but not of kind.

If this be so, where might we go to discover what the eminent physicist and early explorer of the 'paranormal', Sir William Crookes, called, 'a psychic force' by which under certain conditions and, within as yet unknown boundaries, a person with 'a special nerve organisation' can enable action at a distance, without muscular effort shift objects or, in the case of St Joseph, levitate? Has our understanding of consciousness and matter advanced since Crookes' nineteenth century speculation grounded in observed phenomena? Yes, argues Grosso, if slowly, because with the development of quantum mechanics, consciousness has undertaken 'a return of the repressed' rather than being seen as a quirky (and limited) epiphenomena, it is becoming potentially a constitutive, structuring reality that permeates everywhere. In his penultimate chapter, Grosso explores a number of approaches to mind in quantum mechanics that are a suggestive basis for a renewed interest in consciousness as a non-local, unifying reality that transcends and configures 'matter'. We are reminded that if the world is seriously strange at the quantum level, why stop there?

If this is so, what might it mean? The final section of the book turns to what Grosso describes as a parapsychology of religion. I recall attending a science and religion conference many years ago and being embarrassed to find myself the only empiricist there. All the conversation was on whether religion and science in their most abstracted forms were or were not compatible not on the ground where they might actually meet which, as Grosso articulates, is in the space of the 'psychic' where the study of the paranormal begins to extend and deepen our understanding of human possibility.

This parapsychology of religion will not simply confirm the 'realities' confessed to by any particular religion; indeed, they might be as challenging to them as they are to 'mainstream' science, but they offer a fruitful path through the thicket of incompatible claims to the normative. In a modest yet compelling way Grosso sketches how this might be so in reinforcing the belief in a spiritual world, a belief in the power of belief itself, in the power of prayer, in a life after death and in miracles. It advances William James' request in his 'Pluralistic Universe' to put empiricism at the heart of religion once more such that, "a new era of religion as well as philosophy might begin," one that experiments after the truth, modest, wondering, humble as befits the temperament of a saint who could fly yet placed all his emphasis on the devoted, experienced love that at its heart triggered it. "The Man who could Fly" is not only an exemplary case study of a levitating saint but an agenda both for further research, search and reconfiguration of what it might mean to be human in a universe the knowledge of which remains enticingly and enjoyably uncertain, open and inviting.

A Deeper Geography

David Lorimer

THE MAP OF HEAVEN

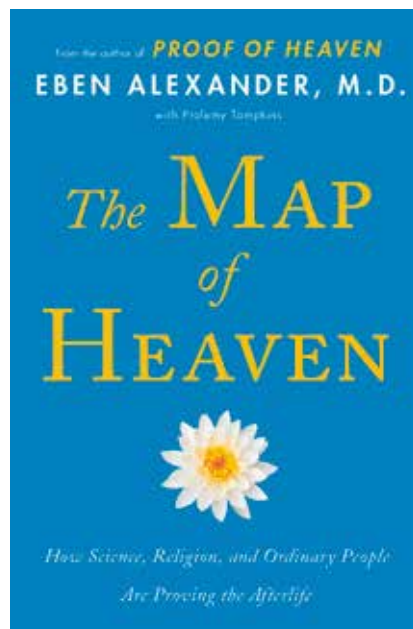
Eben Alexander with Ptolemy Tompkins

Piatkus, 2014, 165 pp., £14.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-349-40351-9

It was a real pleasure to meet and share a platform with Eben Alexander at a conference on Infinite Consciousness in Italy last week. Many readers will recall that Eben is a neurosurgeon who had a profound near death experience recounted in his bestselling book *Proof of Heaven*, also reviewed in these pages along with the book by Anita Moorjani. This experience completely transformed his worldview and in particular his views on consciousness. He told the conference that when he met his current partner Karen Newell - see below - and she asked him about the most transformative aspect of his experience, he said 'the brain does not produce consciousness'. This was not a surprise to her, but it is a fundamental

shift for a neuroscientist, which most are unwilling to take, as Eben has discovered with the vehement reactions to his books.

This book takes the story to the next phase, incorporating as it does a great many profound letters that he has received from readers. These all point to a larger and deeper reality within which we are embedded, and of which the physical world is an aspect rather than the whole. The book is structured around seven gifts derived from his experience: knowledge, meaning, vision, strength, belonging, joy and hope. He begins by affirming the deep reality of love beyond its electrochemical manifestation in the brain. This echoes the central message of his earlier book and of many other experiences. At some point in our lives, we all ask the fundamental questions of who we are, where we came from and where we are going (p. xvii), but usually we revert to getting on with life, as my father recommended to me when I was writing my first book. Following in the footsteps of the quantum physicists of the 1930s, more people are arriving at the conclusion that consciousness is in some way fundamental rather than derivative, and must be included in any adequate theory of everything. In addition, many other phenomena currently ignored by mainstream science need to be taken into account, as this Network has been arguing for over 40 years. Eben quotes Nikola Tesla as saying that 'the day science begins to study nonphysical phenomena, it will make more progress in one decade than in all the previous centuries of its existence.'



As Michael Grosso observed in his book written during the 1980s, *The Final Choice*, NDEs represent the form of initiation corresponding more closely to the top-down philosophy of Plato rather than the bottom up of Aristotle. Initiation is a form of rebirth where we become aware of our true spiritual identity through direct experience. This immediately enlarges our sense of identity and reveals a deeper geography of human existence -

this was indeed the result of Eben's own experience. This is the knowledge of the first chapter, leading to a discussion of meaning in the second - an aspect of life denied by mainstream science with its repudiation of final causes and purpose. Eben advocates a reconciliation of the Platonic and Aristotelian methods to create a real shift in worldview based on rigorous assessment of a much wider evidence base than currently admitted. This would entail a corresponding move beyond what Blake called a single vision taking into account the transcendent perceptions reported in near death and mystical experiences that are utterly inexplicable - other than as a pathology - within the framework of materialist science. And it is important to note that these multidimensional experiences are transformative: people lead their lives on a new basis of oneness, love and wisdom. They draw conclusions similar to Eben, who writes (p. 95) that the earthly realm is where we learn lessons of unconditional love, compassion, forgiveness and acceptance.

It was good to see the experiences of Swedenborg properly appreciated both in a perceptual and a spiritual sense. A key idea is that, in the next world, we gravitate to where we belong corresponding to the amount of love we embody and have expressed in the physical world. Parallel ideas are quoted from the work of Pascal, Fechner and Goethe as well as William James and Sir Alister Hardy, whose book *The Spiritual Nature of Man* came out 30 years ago (I recently discovered that Rupert Sheldrake had had my copy for nearly as long - he found he had two!). Eben also refers to the important work going on in the Division of Perceptual Studies at the University of Virginia, who have produced the volumes *Irreducible Mind* and *Beyond Physicalism* - some of the most robust studies around today.

I think Eben is right in deciding the importance of growth and evolution towards a wider and deeper sense of identity over time. As he puts it, 'the higher in the worlds you go, the deeper the part of yourself that is being called out.' From this vantage point, the physical world may seem like an illusion, but, as Aldous Huxley maintains, it is one that we must take very seriously. My experience of Karen Newell's Sacred Acoustics at last week's conference gave me a better understanding of the appendix in which this work is described. Eben discovered that he could revisit the realms of his own experience through meditation, so meditation practice becomes an important gateway and these sounds are capable of enabling a deeper state past the chatter of the brain. This bold book is an important milestone in the transformation of science towards a deeper understanding of life and consciousness.

Challenging Orthodoxy

David Furlong

THE SCIENCE OF SPIRIT POSSESSION (2nd Edition)

Dr Terence Palmer (SMN)

Cambridge Scholars, 375 pp., £52.99, h/b, (20% discount for Members) ISBN 978-1-4438-6810-5

This book, based on Palmer's Ph.D. thesis, is a scholarly and authoritative exploration into a little understood area of human experience. Palmer sets out his stall in the Introduction where he states:

'The purpose of this book is to demonstrate that, contrary to popular belief in academic circles and in the collective conscious of institutionalised mechanistic science, there is a scientific framework that can, and does, accommodate the phenomena of spirit possession in all forms and diversity' (Palmer, 2014:39).

To accept the concept that individuals can be influenced and affected, both mentally and physically, by spirit entities, leading to psychological illness, first necessitates that there is adequate scientific evidence for the continuation of consciousness beyond the death of the physical body. To support his thesis Palmer draws heavily on the work of the now little known nineteenth century researcher, Frederic Myers (1843-1901), who was one of the founders for the Society for Psychical Research. 'Myers' primary objective was to pursue scientific evidence that Man has a soul and his conscious personality survives bodily death,' states Palmer (2014:30). It is clear that Myers' exploration into these fields was limited by the understanding of his time and, although his posthumous book *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* (1903) was well received by some of his followers, his ideas on the unconscious or 'subliminal' self, gained no acceptance within psychology or the scientific establishment. Drawing on Myer's concepts, Palmer brings us back to the central task of true scientific enquiry, which should be the open-minded exploration of all phenomena, of which perceived 'spirit-possession' is an example.

Utilising a wide variety of sources, both ancient and modern, Palmer lays the foundation for an understanding of 'spirit possession' that strongly supports the notions that separate disembodied spirit entities can access and influence the minds of individuals and, on occasions, take up residence within the psyche. This in turn can give rise to a range of psychological conditions such as schizophrenia, 'hearing voices' and similar mental health problems. We are informed how obvious cases of possession were tackled in past-times through traditional exorcisms and how

modern spirit-release therapists now approach these situations through hypnotic regression techniques, where the intrusive entity or entities are communicated with, helped and then released. Palmer also suggests methodologies for further research into this field, which is sadly ignored by the medical establishment that broadly prefers to see such conditions as stemming from neurological disorders that can best be treated by medication.

Because the book sets out to challenge the current orthodox position on the causes of mental problems, which it does more than adequately, it is full of scientific terminology and jargon that make it a potentially difficult read for the lay person and this is my main criticism of this book. However, for those interested in, or working with mental and psychological health, where a possible cause could be spirit intrusion in one form or another, it should be a must to have on the bookshelf.

David Furlong is Director of the Spirit Release Forum and author of *Illuminating the Shadow*.

ecology-futures studies

Designing Regenerative Cultures



Daniel Christian Wahl

Ecological Activism

David Lorimer

DESIGNING REGENERATIVE CULTURES

Daniel Christian Wahl

Triarchy Press, 2016, 287 pp., £20, p/b – ISBN 978-1-909470-77-4

I am not surprised that this seminal book has been so enthusiastically endorsed by the likes of Fritjof Capra, Hazel Henderson, Joanna Macy and David Orr. If you only read one environmental book this year, this should be it. Daniel has a background in biology, holistic science, natural design and sustainability, and is

also a colleague from the International Futures Forum. His experience and study have enabled him to pull together many disciplines and strands and convert these into a readable and practical narrative with which the reader can engage deeply. One of the most interesting features of the book is the number of questions – over 250 – and the injunction that we should live these questions rather than impose answers that do not do justice to the complexity of our overall situation. The four main elements, illustrated on the cover, are transformative innovation, biologically inspired design, living systems thinking, and health and resilience.

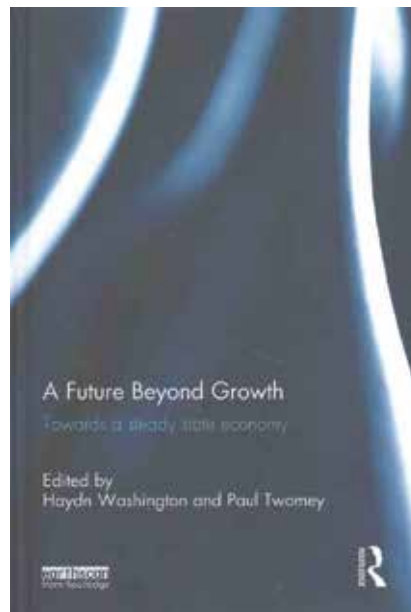
In his introduction, David Orr reminds readers that cultures are not designed from the top down, but grow organically from the bottom up, starting on a small scale as a seed initiative. On this journey, we need to begin by changing our perception of and therefore our relationship with Nature, no longer standing apart but realising that we are integral to life and co-creators of the future. All chapters also take the form of questions, with a number of subsections. We need to move from a perception and narrative of separation to what Thich Nhat Hanh calls interbeing based on relationality, cooperation and collaboration rather than rivalry and competition. Gregory Bateson is quoted as saying that 'the major problems in the world are the result of the difference between how nature works and the way people think.' Readers will emphatically agree with this statement once they have read this book as they will very clearly understand that our current economic system is structurally unsustainable, depending as it does on continuous extraction of natural resources to turn them into economic assets while externalising the ecological and social costs. (p. 210)

A key transformative theme is that of health. As pioneers like Sir Albert Howard demonstrated, the health of the soil is primary, because on it depend successively the health of plants, animals and humans. A healthy ecosystem is a resilient one, and Daniel shows how regenerative agriculture can turn depleted soil as a source of carbon to healthy soil as a carbon sink. Nothing could be more important than this kind of regenerative agriculture, as supported by a major 2013 UNCTAD report, given the impact of agriculture on ecosystems. Our own degenerative diseases are a major drain on government 'health' systems around the world, and much of this could be prevented by changes in diet – but these are unlikely to happen on a sufficient scale owing to our current agricultural and food systems. Fundamental change, as Naomi Klein also observes, will require social mass movements using all the communication power of the Internet.

We can also learn a great deal from indigenous perspectives, which Daniel sums up as a perspective where 'the world is alive and meaningful and our relationship with the rest of life is one of participation, communion and co-creation.' (p. 159) He also points out that their modes of communication involve deep listening and close community. They are no strangers to what we now call biomimicry, which poses the critical question of how humanity as a whole can become a life-enhancing presence on Earth. There is in fact much more progress in this field of applied technology than most readers will be aware of, and of which Daniel gives some interesting examples.

The design element in the title is a very important one as an enabler of cultural transformation, which will also entail a transformation of thinking through the educational system. I remember David Orr making the point in a book on eco-literacy that clever university graduates trained in old thinking are a hazard to the planet. In this respect, it is encouraging that the Scottish curriculum has as a central preoccupation learning for sustainability. Design or praxis can provide a meeting point for theory and practice, which also constitutes a learning journey with adaptive feedback. We also need to instil a biocentric ethic based on ecosystem health, including ourselves, with the adoption of ecological public health. All this involves developing new forms of literacy within the system and introducing systems thinking more generally - I only came across systems thinking through my own reading and research.

Daniel makes it very clear that regenerative cultures are rooted in cooperation. Although our crises demand a collaborative response, we are currently enmeshed in short-term and competitive systems that have resulted in a cumulative ecological overshoot. In his final chapter, Daniel gives many potential avenues for progress involving redesigning economics based on ecology, creating regenerative and circular economies, shifting from quantitative to qualitative growth, and co-creating regenerative enterprises. Consistently with his own advice, Daniel has been active in Majorca, using the very processes and questions set out in this book. I am sure he is right that we need to start on a local and small-scale, and indeed a great deal is already going on although under- or unreported. He takes to heart - and we can too - the practice of the activist May East who, after her morning meditation, consciously chooses where to put her attention that day, and which conversations and projects she will activate through the power of her attention. We can all ask ourselves how we can be the change we want to see in the world and work with others in nurturing the seeds of a new and life-enhancing culture. In this respect, Daniel has written an essential handbook.



Towards a Steady State Economy

David Lorimer

A FUTURE BEYOND GROWTH

Edited by Haydn Washington and Paul Twomey

Earthscan 2016, 256 pp., £29.99, p/b.

This book is both radical and fundamental, and is essential reading for those who want to consider in more depth the potential evolution of the global economy beyond growth and towards a steady state. William Rees sums up the importance of this evidence-based briefing by asking whether our political leaders can rise above collective denial, defy entrenched economic elites and return to serving humanity's collective interest and survival with dignity. The idea of a steady-state economy was pioneered by Herman Daly in the 1970s and must represent the eventual planetary system since the current business as usual is quite unsustainable, as any informed person already knows. The initial chapter reminds us of some 20th century figures, where human population multiplied by four, industrial pollution by 40, CO2 emissions by 17, fish catches by 35, mining ores and minerals by 27, as well as the destruction of one quarter of coral reefs, one third of mangroves and half of all wetlands. This situation continues, with our current ecological footprint equivalent to 1.5 Earths and the prospect of two-thirds of life being extinct by 2100.

In our techno-bubble, we forget our ultimate dependence on nature and ecosystem services, and that the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of ecology. Haydn Washington identifies the key drivers of unsustainability as ecological ignorance, worldview and ideologies, overpopulation, overconsumption, the myth of endless growth and denial of our predicament.

This is exacerbated by a number of 'stupid beliefs' such as that endless growth is somehow possible, that population growth is not a problem and that technology can solve everything. The five sections deal with population, throughput and consumerism, key aspects of a steady-state economy, ethics and policy for change. We deceive ourselves if we think that these ecological realities can be evaded through intelligence and technology. The total pressure of human consumption on natural systems is excessive, and is the direct product of population and per capita consumption.

Population is discussed not only in terms of numbers of people, but also numbers of cars and other products - sometimes, as with biofuels, cars and people are in direct competition. And although there is a demographic transition going on with declining birth rates in many parts of the world, the human population is still increasing by about 80 million a year - around 220,000 every day. The decline in numbers is more than made up for by a corresponding increase in consumption. Robert Engelman proposes nine population strategies to stop short of 9 billion, with a particular emphasis on universal access to contraception, education and empowerment of women, ending policies rewarding parents for having more than two children, and integrating teaching about population, environment and development relationships into school curricula.

Eileen Crist contributes a particularly vigorous essay in criticising the wishful thinking implied in the rhetoric that we can double food production without further damage to biodiversity just through careful planning and management. She reminds the reader that the current volume of industrial agriculture, aquaculture and fishing constitute a mounting planet-wide disaster and that saying that we need to grow more food without further ecological destruction is not going to stop hungry and acquisitive people taking what they need - 'clearing more forests and grasslands, moving up slopes, overgrazing pasture and range lands, decimating sea creatures, replacing mangrove forests with shrimp operations, or killing for cash or food.' The assumption here is that the current damage inflicted by our food system is in fact acceptable.

Crist maintains that industrial food production is the most ecologically devastating enterprise on earth and that we need to consider the wisdom of limitations and humility (agricultural uses 70% of our water). It is startling to learn that cropland already uses a portion of the planet the size of South America, while land for grazing farm animals eats up an area the size of Africa. This means that humanity has effectively seized the temperate zone for agriculture 'wiping out all or most former nonhumans and

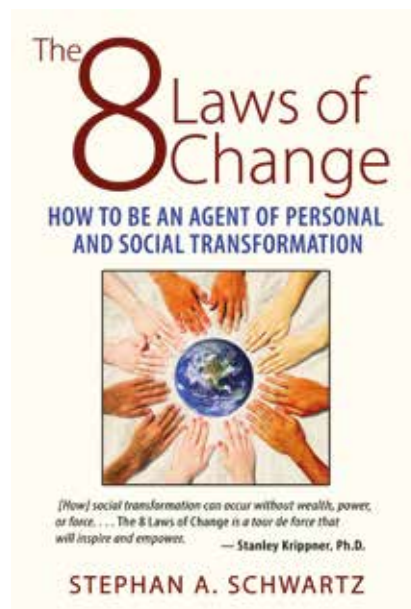
ecologies in order to mine the soil.' Species extinction is a direct result of this human activity. Moreover, industrial food production contributes 30% of anthropogenic greenhouse gases. Yet we still blithely talk about doubling food production without considering its real impact - and in terms of animals, this has to mean more concentrated animal feeding operations with their appalling treatment and serious waste issues. What kind of intensification is really sustainable and ethical?

There is a highly informative section on the steady-state economy, comparing it with the green, circular and blue economies as well as setting out a physical pathway to a steady-state economy, which, as I said above, must by definition represent the long-term human relationship with nature - currently, this demands regeneration, not simply sustainability. There is a very good critique of endless economic growth and an analysis of the systemic instability of capitalism in terms of insecurity and inequality (also that it demands unsustainable growth). Frank Stilwell contends that there is not only a tension between capital and labour, but also between capital and nature if costs are simply externalised. This all requires a fundamental rethink: 'as a society, we need to restructure the economy so that, instead of being geared for growth, it operates within environmental limits, distributes its fruit equitably and creates conditions in which people can lead more secure lives.' (p. 149) This entails replacing maximising by optimising and the urgent introduction of the Genuine Progress Indicator to replace GNP and starting to talk about a sustainable biosphere rather than sustainable development.

Geoff Mosley writes a message from the future, 2300, about the transition to steady-state economy. He says that the aims of that society are to live contentedly, sustainably and cooperatively with an emphasis on local self-sufficiency and quality-of-life. It is somewhat dispiriting, but probably realistic, to read that this transition to a steady-state economy took a long time precisely because of a focus on economic and population growth, with reliance on military force as a major method of resolving resource disputes. The response of current society, as we already know, was reactive rather than proactive, dealing with symptoms rather than the cause, and completely inadequate to the nature scale of the problem. This led to further depletion of resources, civil unrest, mass migration and escalating warfare, so that it was only in the 22nd century that things began to shift in a major way. Howard Kunstler proved prescient with his idea of the long emergency.

The central policy directions towards a steady-state economy entail limiting resource use and waste production, distributing income and wealth equitably, reforming financial and monetary

systems, changing the way we measure progress, securing full employment and changing the way business delivers value. In conclusion, the editors acknowledge that we do need targeted growth for development, but not endless global physical growth with orthodox economics and governments still in denial of ecological limits. Many governments are still actively encouraging population growth as a means towards further economic growth. Neoliberalism, with its bias towards unregulated markets, plays into the hands of multinational corporations, who are able to exert their political influence on governments through funding and lobbying so as to maintain the system in their interest. However, as this book shows, we need to think of humanity as a whole and the future of a sustainable biosphere not just in the present, but to the seventh generation. This is an essential handbook and required reading, not just for students, but for everyone with a stake in the future.



Agents of Social Transformation

David Lorimer

THE 8 LAWS OF CHANGE

Stephan Schwartz

Park Street Press, 2016, 216 pp., \$16.95, p/b - ISBN 978-1-62055-457-9

I heard Stephan speak about this book at a conference in Italy recently, and immediately asked him to have a review copy sent since his message, based on a study of around 100 initiatives, could not be more important for our time. His study and life experience (he was present at MLK's famous I have a dream speech) led him to the encouraging conclusion that 'successful, non-violent, life affirming social transformations share certain characteristics, and they are learnable.' Research over the past hundred years concluded that 'nonviolent resistance campaigns were nearly twice as likely to

achieve full or partial success as their violent counterparts.' Moreover, only 25% of these campaigns were judged a total failure, while the corresponding figure for violent campaigns was 75%. The authors of the study felt that non-violent campaigns facilitate the active participation of many more people, and, fascinatingly, were closely associated with the Quakers. Schwartz goes further by highlighting the importance of our quotidian choices in favour of the life-affirming and compassionate option, and provides a pledge for readers to take in this respect.

A key concept is what he calls beingness, which I referred to in my review of Jack Brush's book above. This is tantamount to character or spiritual substance and is witnessed in intentioned awareness. It can be expressed both positively and negatively, in Gandhi as well as Hitler; in the former case it represents an embodiment of fundamental values. The eight laws (p. 18) applied to individuals in a campaigning group are, in summary, as follows:

- They must share, individually and collectively, a common intention
- They may have goals, but not cherished outcomes
- They must accept that these goals may not be achieved in their lifetime
- They must accept that they may not get any credit or acknowledgement
- Each person in the group must enjoy fundamental equality
- They must forswear violence in word, act or thought
- They must make their private selves consistent with the public postures
- They must always act from the beingness of life-affirming integrity

Stephan discovered that successful movements have all applied these principles in some degree, and gives many examples in the rest of the book. One such comes from the records of the Nobel Peace Prize, where nearly 15% of recipients came from societies where women are traditionally thought to be powerless. It can be as simple as a vision and a mobilising capacity, for example the Irish Community of Peace People or the tree planting activity of Wangari Maathai. All these people share compassion and authenticity, and one of these anonymous recipients in 1947 was a late member of the Network, Douglas Dean - I did not know about this until reading this book, and Dean never referred to his role in his CV.

Among the examples given are Gandhi and his salt march, Greenpeace and whales and the vision of Benjamin Franklin in setting up charitable activities in his will, that have endured over 200 years. For Stephan, Franklin has exerted a structural force in his life, which

is inspiring to read about. Additional qualities required are carriage, integrity and inner resource to face down authority with truth.

The later part of the book takes a slightly different turn by discussing the background importance of nonlocal consciousness and experience of such a state implying deep interdependence and interconnectedness. Stephan proposes a new model of consciousness as causal, with individuals as part of the network of mutually influencing life that also seems to be involved in the creative process. Widespread adoption of this view is, in his opinion, essential for our planetary survival. This leads on to a discussion of the psychophysiology of politics that seems to be a stronger driver than rationality. Basic values are also critical as one advances along a continuum from tradition to conformity to security to self-direction and finally to universalism. These contrasts are exhibited a more detailed analysis of 'red' and 'blue' families (predominantly conservative and liberal) where repressive and authoritarian attitudes have a serious fallout in terms of health and quality of life.

On the other hand, there is extensive research evidence to demonstrate the power of intentioned awareness, for instance in meditation and its effects on the brain. Stephan proposes his own technique that includes choosing four words of intentioned purpose corresponding to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual realms. As we all know, this requires regular commitment; I liked the quote from St Teresa of Avila who recommends 'close your eyes and follow your breath to the still place that leads to the invisible path that leads you home.' He hopes that we will be able to move away from a preoccupation with profit to one on well-being, and it is here that the individual pledge can begin to make a difference. It seems that the tipping point is 10% and each one of us who makes our daily decisions based on compassionate and life-affirming choices can contribute towards that 10% shift being achieved - this book is an inspiring and encouraging pointer towards a brighter future.

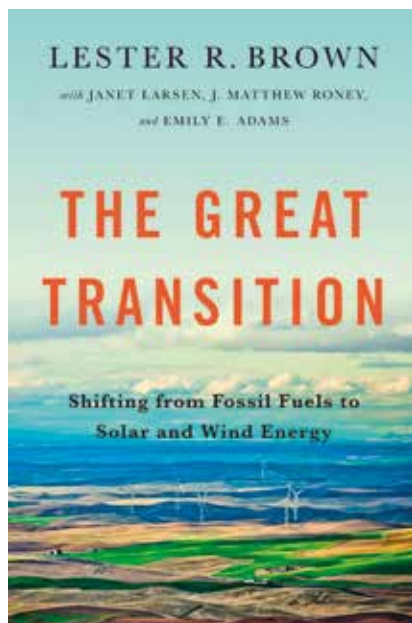
The New Energy Landscape

David Lorimer

THE GREAT TRANSITION

Lester Brown with Janet Larsen, J. Matthew Roney and Emily E. Adams

Norton 2014, 178 pp., \$16.95, p/b – ISBN 978-0-393-35055-5



Regular readers of this Review will recall that I have reviewed every major book by Lester Brown over the last 20 years, going back to his prophetic *Who Will Feed China?* and most recently his autobiography. Here he and his colleagues turned their attention to the energy transition and the emergence of a new economy powered by solar and wind energy beyond the old one fuelled by coal and oil. They draw evidence from around the world, providing a wealth of informative statistical detail. This energy transition forms part of the transition to what Brown calls an eco-economy, even in the face of fossil fuel subsidies in the order of \$600 billion annually. The speed of the process is quite striking - the authors suggest that the next decade will produce half a century's worth of change as renewable costs plummet and those of nuclear power and its disposal continue to spiral.

One significant factor is the quantity of unburnable carbon in view of CO₂ targets. In order to stay within the 2° limit we will need to limit our fossil fuel emissions to 1,400 gigatons. By 2013, we had already released 400 gigatons, leaving only 1,000 gigatons to be released between 2013 and 2050. Given that proven reserves of fossil fuels add up to 2,860 gigatons, this entails leaving 1,860 gigatons in the ground - for the companies concerned, these represent stranded assets. All these objections are beginning to have an effect on the share prices of energy companies and redirect investment towards renewables. An interesting

example of rearguard thinking is the British government commissioning of new nuclear reactors. In 2005, it was calculated that 10 generators could be built for \$3 billion each without subsidy and begin producing electricity by 2017. By the time the EU officials had approved the plan in October 2014, the number had been reduced to 2, whose cost had escalated to \$39 billion, 70% of which will have to be provided by the UK government. In addition, decommissioning the Sellafield facility is estimated to cost \$130 billion. These figures are quite staggering.

The book covers the full spectrum of energy technologies across oil, coal, natural gas, nuclear power, solar, wind, geothermal and hydropower. It also covers changing lifestyle patterns, for instance the huge increase not only in bike sales, but also in bike sharing. In the US, 21 cities had 8,500 bikes at the end of 2012, and the figure is expected to rise to 70 cities with 40,000 bikes by the end of this year. More than 700 cities in 57 countries have operational bike share programmes. One of the lesser-known energy sources is geothermal, where Iceland is the world capital, generating 29% of its electricity from the Earth. Turkey and Japan are also significant users, while China has the greatest installed capacity at 6,100 thermal megawatts - indeed China has been investing across the board in every type of energy, including coal-fired reactors. There are extensive data on hydropower, with Venezuela, Brazil and Canada leading the way in terms of percentages generated. One infrequently mentioned effect is that building reservoirs and dams can trigger seismic activity, with over 100 earthquakes worldwide linked to this cause. As we know, dams can seriously affect water allocation, none more acutely than the Nile River basin, which is home to 600 million people.

The authors maintain that the shift to renewables is being driven by a number of different key factors. Socially, there is considerable opposition to coal and nuclear power, while geologically, fossil fuels are becoming more expensive to extract. In addition, there is a trend towards localisation (also car and bike sharing) and more efficient fuel consumption as well as the development of electric cars. Governments are now encouraging renewables through subsidies and carbon taxes while also setting targets for renewables as a percentage of total electricity generation. Behind all this is the key question of whether the energy transition will proceed quickly enough for the world to avoid catastrophic climate change. The message of this book is encouraging in this respect, especially as this transition also moves humanity in the direction of a more cooperative relationship with nature.



general

What is going on in Europe?

Paul Kieniewicz

EUROPE'S MANY SOULS: Exploring Cultural Complexes and Identities

Edited by Joerg Rasche and Thomas Singer

Spring Journal Books, 2016, 435 pp.,
£23.95, p/b - ISBN: 9781935528746

Can we make any sense of the political and cultural turmoil that has engulfed Europe during the past few years: the rise of ultra right-wing movements, quasi dictatorships, ultra nationalism? Editors and commentators in the media have no shortage of theories as to what is going on. Meanwhile Joerg Rasche and Thomas Singer published this compilation of essays, where they look at each country through the lens of depth psychology. Jung often said that the forces that move nations are deeply rooted in a collective, national psyche. Most people are unaware of those forces, and end up joining political movements without understanding what makes them do it. Whereas those unconscious forces are in many cases benign – feelings of cultural or national identity for example, in other cases those unconscious forces behave as independent entities that overwhelm the consciousness of the people, with destructive consequences. Such cultural complexes, and each country has more than one, often manifest as ultra-nationalist sentiments, xenophobia, and eventually war. In 1930, Jung published a paper, “Wotan” in which he predicted the rise of Nazism, and the disaster that was to follow, based on the dreams of many of his German patients.

Let's start with the UK. Jules Cashford entitles her chapter, “Autonomy and Insularity in an Island Race.” While she does not mention the Brexit vote, her analysis of the British psyche makes it

clear why the country's separation from Europe had to happen sooner or later. Britain is an island.

This royal throne of kings, this sceptre's isle...

*This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver
sea... Shakespeare, Richard II*

Insularity pervades the thinking of Britons. They are uncomfortable with too many people of different races, who speak a different language. “Bloody foreigners!”, a typically British epithet is not commonly used in other European countries. Because the sea defines the British border, it's very clear as to who is in and who is out. Another issue not often appreciated is that until recently Britain had an empire. Its loss left a deep wound in the British psyche, resulting in a selective reading of history, a forgetting of the suffering inflicted by that empire on the natives. It's a past that British people have never come to terms with. Our attitudes towards refugees and people of other races were formed generations ago, during the heyday of the empire, and such attitudes constellated into a cultural complex, that parents still pass on to their children. It may explain why the immigration argument resonated so strongly with Brexit voters. Just as you can't argue with a complex, no logical argument could counter the assertion that *they were all coming here!*

Malgorzata Kalinowska discusses Polish cultural complexes of “The suffering hero, and messianism”. Much of Poland's present day politics can be understood in this light. Deep down, many Poles feel that they are a “chosen people”. That God has a special destiny for them, to save the world from total decadence. A common epithet among Poles for the Western World is “the rotten West”. Messianism leads to a cultural isolation, evidenced by the government's refusal to take in any refugees for fear of diluting, or diversifying Polish culture. Where a country's identity feels threatened, a complex appears, to protect the collective ego. The Suffering Hero complex, on the other hand, is a belief that Poland must suffer just as Christ suffered. Entering a Polish church one is struck by the degree to which pain and suffering are depicted. No one questions that Poland has suffered a lot – 200 years of foreign domination, World War II, German and Soviet occupation, the Holocaust, and then fifty years of communism. The complex arises because the psyche tries to make sense of historical trauma, to put a buffer between itself and the painful events. But when one is unaware of the complex, it behaves as an autonomous entity, giving rise to ultra nationalism, paranoia or xenophobia. The country's

overwhelming grief to the Smolensk air disaster, and a general refusal to accept that it was an accident rather than a conspiracy, is a typical case of how a cultural complex works.

Gert Sauer discusses a German cultural complex of superiority, the view that Germans are better organised and superior to others. Its most destructive manifestation was during WWII when the Nazis set out on a mission “to make the world a better place”. Sauer presents evidence, that the plans to colonise Eastern Europe and to create a mono-racial society by eliminating the Jews, were already being discussed before 1918, long before Hitler appeared on the political scene. Is that complex still active today? Sauer believes that it is. Mercifully it appears most often mainly in sports, the way that commentators describe their team and other teams, and in pop culture.

Russians, according to Sauer, see themselves as surrounded by threatening barbarians and respond with violence to any threat. Other countries are viewed as ready to invade “the motherland”. The collapse of the Soviet Union, losing the cold war, only exacerbated that feeling of vulnerability. Its most recent manifestation is the war with the Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea. Neither event came out of the blue, but followed political events where the West was seen by Russians as gaining a foothold in the Ukraine. When such a complex is activated, no rational argument can hold sway. Russians cannot be persuaded that a European missile shield based in Poland is not directed against Russia.

The book also discusses the history of anti-Semitism and the role of the Jewish culture in the European psyche. Jewish culture was greatly influential in Europe until World War II and the Holocaust. Its absence left a certain yearning, not to mention feelings of guilt.

Other countries discussed in depth are Greece, Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, Austria and Serbia.

What about Europe's relationship to Islam? What lies behind the present day war that makes daily headlines where scores of innocent lives are claimed by a jihadist? According to Joerg Rasche, we're dealing with cultural complexes, both European and Muslim whose origin lies in hundreds of years of history, in wars of conquest and crusades. Those complexes were recently activated in the Muslim world by the West's need for cheap oil, the US support of the Saudi princes, and various wars that the West fought to secure their oil supply. Many Muslims fear the West, that western values will triumph, obliterating Muslim culture. Such fears, rooted in a cultural complex hold sway no matter what the counter-argument.

The book is scholarly, but most readable. The authors are Jungian psycho-analysts or experts in the field. A background in depth psychology is helpful to follow the authors' arguments. The book is unique, in that it offers a psychological perspective on Europe's present day situation, absent in political commentaries or in the media. Until we take into account history, and cultural complexes as outlined in this book, we are likely to only have a limited understanding of why nations behave in ways that seem to us so incomprehensible. Psychology is not the only answer, but it is certainly worth listening to.

The Age of Active Wisdom

David Lorimer

Travels With Epicurus

Daniel Klein

OneWorld, 2012, 164 pp., £7.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78074-412-4

Composing A Further Life

Mary Catherine Bateson

Vintage Books, 2010, \$15.95, p/b – ISBN 978-0-307-27963-7

The Divine Human

John C. Robinson

O Books, 2016, 145 pp., £9.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78099-236-5

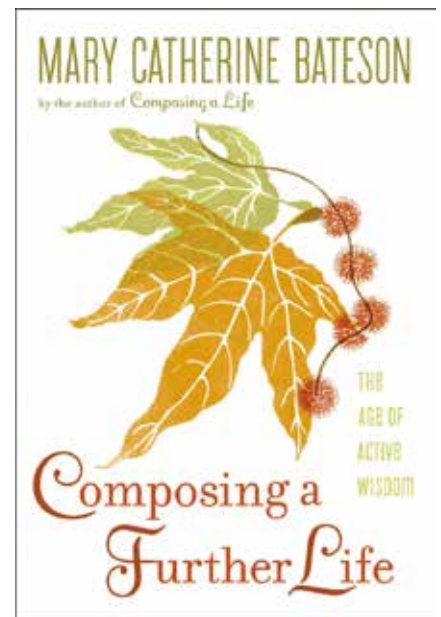
In March this year, I listened into an excellent series of interviews on conscious ageing organised by the Shift Network, in which Mary Catherine Bateson was one of the speakers. Her notion of active wisdom was resonant, especially as I was in the process of organising the conference on conscious ageing and the wisdom of elders that will take place in London in November. A few weeks earlier, I was returning from Jamaica and Iain McGilchrist lent me his copy of *Travels with Epicurus*, which is subtitled 'meditations from a Greek island on the pleasures of old age.' Daniel Klein was

already well-known as the co-author of *Plato and a Platypus Walk into a Bar*, and is a graduate in philosophy from Harvard. As a hippie in the 1960s, he spent the best part of a year on the Greek island of Hydra, where he returned to reflect and write this book, decades later.

In a series of evocative and charmingly written chapters, Klein draws on the philosophy of Epicurus - and indeed of many other philosophers - to consider the change of outlook implied by old age, moving on from the stress and striving of the 'forever young' outlook towards a more relaxed pace of tranquillity and contentment. The old men on Dimitri's terrace are happy to pass the time together, sometimes engaging in some light play. The difference in outlook between Greece and the Netherlands, where his wife is from, is nowhere better illustrated than in his story of getting on the wrong train and finding that the guard was prepared to phone his colleague on the train going the other way and arrange for both trains to stop, as it happened, in an apricot grove. Needless to say, this could never have happened in the Netherlands with its emphasis on punctuality.

Like the other two books, Klein distinguishes between old age and what he calls old old age of limitation, loss and frailty. In this more active phase, one is able to reflect on one's accumulated experience and find threads of meaning running through one's story. It is also a time for asking big questions, and his spiritual quest for connection is partly answered by the outlook of the third book, as well as by his references to William James, as I will explain below. Epicurus's philosophy of death corresponds to the orthodoxy of modern science, but his conclusions about how to live life make for a certain contentment and enjoyment in the present. Whatever life has in store, it is always good advice to live mindfully and perhaps recall this quotation from Epicurus: "not what we have, but what we enjoy, constitutes our abundance."

Mary Catherine Bateson introduces a new stage into the Erikson cycle of life by adding what she calls Adulthood II as the stage of active wisdom in which we have to reinvent ourselves if we are not content with spending our time on golf, travel and bridge. Her metaphor of composing a further life combines planning with improvisation, and this period endowed with health and energy can combine wisdom with activity for the common good. She suggests that, around retirement age, we are faced once more with three crises: of identity, intimacy and generativity. Many people begin with travel, but this just provides an interlude in which to readjust. As we reflect on our lives and their trajectory, she invites us to affirm our own life, affirm our own death and affirm love, both given and received (p. 90). She suggests that we should approach death with a sense of acceptance and trust, clearing both

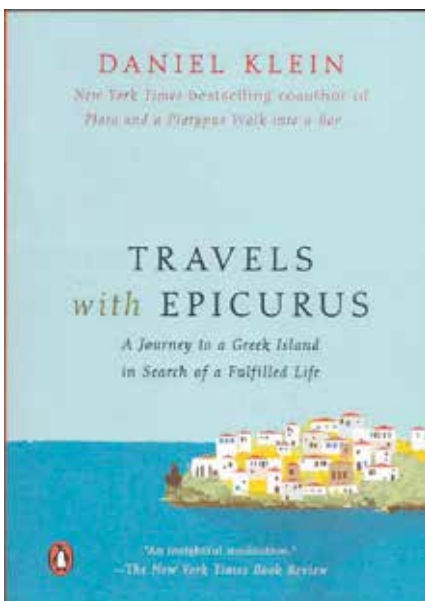


our attics and our consciences. Affirming love involves repairing relationships and building new ones. She asks: 'Am I still person I have spent a lifetime becoming, and do I still want to be that person? How can I affirm that identity and yet accept the knowledge that I will die?' These are profound and important questions.

Another theme running through the book is that of interdependence and mutual care. She sees independence as an (somewhat masculine) illusion, a point which is at its clearest in infancy and extreme old age. She observes that we will eventually have to entrust ourselves to the care of others, and more and more trust will be called for. This is why she adds the quality of humility as a basic strength of old age, 'which often strips us of whatever has made us feel valuable and lovable'. However, we can discover that 'we are loved by God and by our families beyond the loss of those traits we value in ourselves and even beyond the point of active contribution.' This can be a hard lesson, but it is a beautiful one and allows others to give while we take our turn to receive.

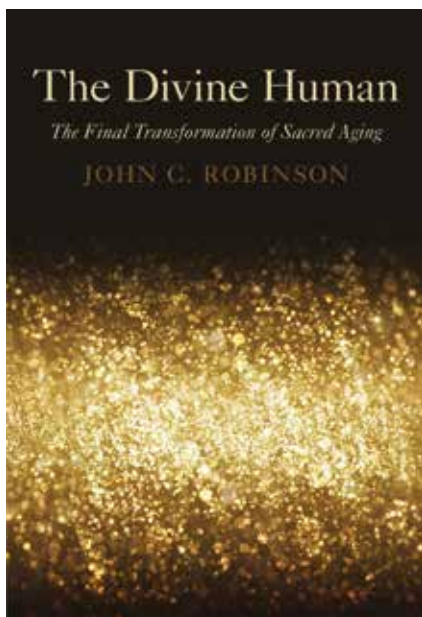
The book is interwoven with a series of extensive interviews, including with James Morton and Jane Fonda, in which the central themes of the book and this stage of active wisdom are explored. Fonda observes that the vertical spiritual dimension becomes more important than the horizontal as we also begin to consider our legacy. Here it is a question of wholeness and a sense of completion by attaining a degree of peace, and it is interesting to learn in this connection that the Hebrew word *shalom*, meaning peace, has the same root as the word *shalem*, which means complete. We have an opportunity to become more truly ourselves and to be able to say 'this is who I am and what I stand for.'

The third book is about the final transformation of ageing, by a psychologist and minister who has



written extensively on the topic. For him, ageing is enlightenment in slow motion as we have the chance to dissolve the false self, find a new centre and realise that this is the Divine Human. At this stage, it is no longer a question of heroic doing, but rather the stillness of being. Robinson's premises are that all consciousness is God's consciousness, all being is God's being, that conscious being is unity with God, that the divine self lives in the depths of conscious being and hence that Conscious Being is the Divine Human. The practices in the book teach readers how to stop thought and remove the conceptual wall of separation so that one can realise the depth of I Am as what God is. As with the other books, there is a theme of emptying and falling away, but this very emptying makes space for the divine to emerge consciously. We can learn to experience inner space as divine consciousness. I very much enjoyed the author's transformation of the famous Einstein equation where E stands for the divine energy of love, m/mass for being and c for consciousness in the sense of being conscious of consciousness. Hence love = being-consciousness². For him, love is both a feeling, a force and a practice, as well as the medium of our transformation as we become a spiritually ripened Elder, full of sweetness, like the delicious plums I have been eating off the trees over the last few days.

These three books provide complementary views on this same process of spiritual maturation and highlight the opportunity for active wisdom and for becoming more truly ourselves. Readers will engage with them differently, according to their own viewpoint and experience, and I for one have gained much from this reflection, which I commend to you.



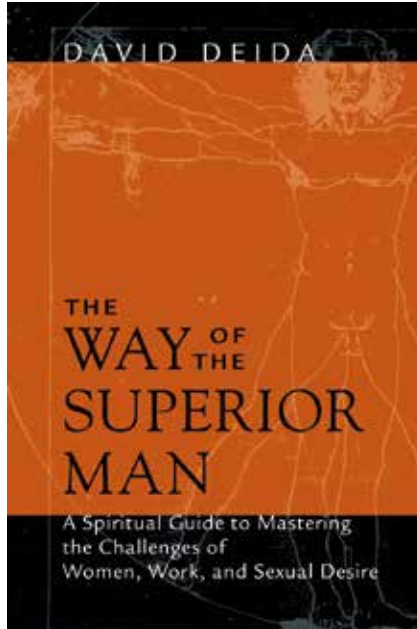
The Art of Loving

David Lorimer

THE WAY OF THE SUPERIOR MAN

David Deida

Sounds True, 2004, 201 pp., \$17.95, p/b.



The interface between spirituality and sexuality is a road less travelled in Western culture. While Indian and Chinese civilisation have long traditions in this respect through Tantra and Taoism, the West finds it a challenging area but one that is currently being re-envisioned by a number of pioneers. More widely, our relationship to sexuality mirrors that towards the body, the feminine and Nature. The evolution of our thinking is brilliantly documented in Riane Eisler's masterly work *Sacred Pleasure*, which extends her discussion of the dominator and partnership models of society described in *The Chalice and the Blade*. Other spiritual teachers who have written seriously in this area are Osho, Barry Long, Adi Da and Dieter Duham, whose book *Terra Nova* I reviewed in a previous issue.

David Deida is the author of a number of books on sacred sexuality, including *Intimate Communion* and the corresponding book for women, *Dear Lover*. It would be misleading, however, to give the impression that this book is limited to spirituality and sexuality. Rather, it is a spiritual guide to mastering the challenges of women, work and sexual desire, to living the masculine life freely and to the full. The eight parts cover a man's way, dealing with women, working with polarity and energy, your dark side, feminine attractiveness, bodily practices and men and women's yoga of intimacy. Since the 1960s, men have been encouraged to embrace the feminine and women the masculine, but this has had a fallout in terms of the evolution of our intimate relationships which can

easily become a 50-50 situation where there is a loss of masculine and feminine polarity between partners and therefore a kind of neutrality in the relationship. For Deida, the masculine and feminine poles represent the quest for freedom and love respectively, but a man's mission nevertheless remains central to his life. He encourages men to commit themselves beyond fear, giving their gifts both to the world and to their woman. This means they will be fully alive, open and present, in touch with their deepest desire also represented in their purpose.

Deida is very good advice for men who have trouble dealing with the emotions of their partners and their immediate expressions of feeling. This is where men can open their own hearts to love rather than try to fix the woman: 'penetrating her closure with your fearless presence,' praising and appreciating her rather than expecting her to change. Each serves the other in growth and love. He suggests that 'the best way you can serve your woman is by helping her to surrender, to trust the force of love, so that she can open her heart, be the love that she is, and give this love which naturally overflows from her happiness.' None of this involves analysing blocks. Men need to remain strong and stable in their presence, maintaining full consciousness in all situations and remaining in masculine clarity and decisiveness so that she can relax and trust. Ultimately, Deida argues, the search for love and freedom is the same destination of the unbounded and infinite ground of being that we are.

This involves letting go of boundaries, loving with abandon and dissolving in the immense force of loving that corresponds to the death or transcendence of ego. By dying into love, there is no need to hold onto yourself. This is perhaps the deepest insight of the book, feeling your partner while unobstructedly extending your love beyond yourself. This is what he calls intimate communion or deep oneness, which is also our 'ultimate desire for the union of consciousness with its own luminosity.' The consciousness of the masculine matches the energy of the feminine, power and trust meet in devotional surrender to divine love through the body. I was also struck by Deida's remarks on the correspondence between radiance and beauty, which is an expression of life itself where the woman is open, trusting, connected and loving.

One should not have to wait until later life before absorbing the essential insights of this book, and it is significant that prominent women writers like Marianne Williamson, Mariana Caplan and Marci Shimoff have also endorsed the book along with Tony Robbins and Ken Wilber. Deida helps men to understand women much better while also helping them understand themselves and their potential for real integration and intimacy.