

book reviews

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science-philosophy of science

Planting New Seeds in Quantum Fields

Martin Lockley

LIFE AS ENERGY: OPENING THE MIND TO A NEW SCIENCE OF LIFE

Alexis Mari Pietak

Floris Books 2011, 280 pp., £16.99, £20, p/b- ISBN 978-086315-797-4

This interesting and innovative book has much to offer. Author and biophysicist Alexis Mari Pietak challenges us to adopt different mindsets in her attempts to apply the principles of quantum mechanics to leaf growth, and generalise her physics thinking to ideas of thermodynamically optimal ecosystems and the central notion of *Life as Energy*. Few of us are simultaneously experts in quantum physics and plant morphogenesis, so in places the discourse is a little abstract and perhaps difficult for the non-specialist. Moreover, we cannot directly observe quantum field energy the way we actually see plants grow into visible form. Thus, while intuitively satisfying, to infer that energy fields have 'structure' or organisation that correlates with the intricate form of growing plants and other complex organisms, there is still a conceptual gap between the intangible, invisible domain of energy fields and the tangible world of botanical growth which we humans have exploited since the start of the agricultural revolution. Ostensibly therefore, biology has yet to make the energetic quantum leap to a new field of thinking, despite a few pioneers whose sparsely published works have too often been overlooked.

Pietak's early chapter generalisations point out the currently deficient status of the life sciences and science in general. Quoting Brian Goodwin, Rupert Sheldrake (SMN members), and other like-minded biologists, we are reminded, in her words, that biology remains in the constraining, even sterilising and devastating, grip of

three '-isms' (materialism, mechanism and reductionism) which have more or less ignored or denigrated the idea of vitalism, energy fields, morphic resonance, emergent properties etc. [Pietak's '*New Science of Life*' subtitle is evidently a tribute to Sheldrake's landmark, but controversial book]. Clearly the life sciences could benefit from new holistic mindsets such as the blend of imagination and rationality described as *imaginative rationality* (Pietak's italics) "used all the time in physics [as] a viable alternative to the thinking habits that have taken over the life sciences." However, this subtle, but perhaps justified, dig at the life sciences may oversimplify the problem. If life is an emergent phenomenon, might it not require other, emergent species of imaginative rationality subtly different from those that have advanced physics from the mechanistic to the quantum paradigm? [As I shall suggest below, anthroposophical biology has something pertinent to offer this discussion]. Rather late in the book Pietak introduces the notion of emergent energy, characteristic of certain types of closed organic systems (organisms), at the same time giving us pertinent, citations for seminal *Life as Energy* studies. The general science reader is probably aware that such 'vital' emergent energy ostensibly 'defies' the second law of thermodynamics by demonstrating how life's remarkable growth abilities resist, at least locally and temporarily, the trend towards entropy or dissipative, lowest-energy states (sometimes referred to as "heat death"). Life does this by creating what might be called islands or fields of entropy-resisting disequilibrium.

Quantum thinking requires abstract mindsets appropriate to microscopic, subatomic scales, whereas thermodynamic thinking applies to macroscopic and universal scales. In her poetically titled chapter (3) *A Swim in the Ocean of Thought*, Pietak reminds us that science is riddled with "conceptual metaphors" and that we can use several to good advantage. For example, 'heat' can be conceived as the subatomic excitation of atoms, or as the flow of heat on macroscopic scales. In her lengthy and technical middle chapters

Pietak attempts to apply the tenets of both these physical disciplines to organic systems. In chapter 4, *A Walk in the Mind Garden*, she runs through quantum energy states, fields and the difference between 'stuff-based' and 'stuffless' waves, showing how higher energy wave states generate increased complexity. Although we intuitively know this applies to the structure and behavior of higher organisms, it is helpful to have Pietak point out scientific, quantum correlates. The thrust of chapter 5, *Organic Mechanics*, [although the title is something of a semantic oxymoron] builds a case for the role of various energy fields in the morphogenesis of leaves, which she divides into four morphological categories from linear to sub circular (needle, blade, fishbone and rotator) each inferred to have been generated by increasingly complex energy fields. Here I was impressed by the similarity between these categories and those identified by anthroposophical biologists who recognise the sprouting (blade-like), segmenting, swelling (circular) and stemming phases of leaf development, identified through detailed studies of generations of actual plant growth (see **Network, 102 & 103**, for review of *Metamorphosis* and references therein). While the anthroposophists do not explain morphogenesis in terms of quantum field states, their diagrams really are like complex phase diagrams, showing how leaf development fits coherently into dynamic organisational fields, in which each leaf is itself an energetic expression, with its anterior and posterior polarities and expansion and contraction dynamics. Conversely, while Pietak infers fields and polarities that could account for leaf morphogenesis, her examples are taken rather randomly from the botanical world and the correlations between leaf and likely field characteristics appear inferred and intuitive, rather than empirically derived.

It would be quite wonderful to integrate these two approaches- these two conceptual metaphors! An example might serve to suggest the potential. The anthroposophists have shown that in typical herbaceous flowering plant, only the first formed

leaves reach the full stemming stage: subsequent leaves, express in reverse order, only attaining the swelling, then segmenting and finally only the sprouting phase, before the flower and seed stages. Thus, each leaf in the whole plant sequence is progressively less-developed (more juvenile). This is a function of timing (heterochrony) which presumably physicists can also address. In Pietak's scheme each leaf in this reverse sequence would represent a simpler, less complex energy state. Thus, by her definition, the first leaves express higher energy states while the later ones express progressively lower energy states, leading, incidentally, to the seed and its stored or conserved energy. In this regard I submit that Pietak has the opportunity to apply her 'imaginative' ideas to plant studies where the leaves are already understood as expressions of coherent, morphogenetic energy regimes. Pietak knows this intuitively and scientifically when she points out that "the plant is a discrete state of emergent energy" within "a collective of plants ... seen as the emergent system-of systems" or what she calls *the great conceptual fractal*. I would only add that the anthroposophists have already worked out (empirically charted) a large number of the aforementioned conceptual fractals pertaining to the growth of leaves and leaf sequences within the plant, and in examples of ecological plant succession.

So the potential for integration of these different conceptual (metaphoric) approaches

does not end here. Like Pietak, the anthroposophists have already understood much about plant community succession, biodynamic agriculture and so forth. By understanding plant morphogenesis in different environmental settings one may understand the health of the environment as Pietak independently proposes in her later chapters. Again Pietak's novel contribution is to sketch the energetics of plant communities in different stages of development. As plant or organic systems become more complex they develop emergent properties, which include the ability to store energy (heat) that is not immediately dissipated by thermodynamic forces (entropy), which ultimately leads to death. She calls this *emergature* (a combination of emergence and temperature)! While there may be no meter to read the emergature of a plant community with absolute precision, Pietak's "imaginatively rational" understanding of biophysics suggests she is on the right track. No doubt many SMN members will recall the similar work of Mae-Wan Ho on coherence and stored energy in organic systems.

Ultimately I share Pietak's hope that "this work will provide a new paradigm" not only for understanding *Life as Energy*, but also for a more "sustainable integration of human activities with the natural world." Pietak's work parallels many studies by SMN members (Goodwin, Ho, Sheldrake) and shares with these the desire to promote a new holistic and organic science of life that dethrones and reinvents the old '-isms.' Like Ho, Pietak goes deep into the quantum and thermodynamics underpinnings of the energetics of living systems, and she is surely right that an adequate understanding of life cannot ignore modern physics, with all its dynamic implications. In conclusion *Life as Energy* is a bold, ambitious and visionary attempt to again shake biology out of the materialistic doldrums. Pietak is not the first to suggest the need for a *New Science of Life*, but she is definitely among a rather small community of pioneers, and her contributions in this book are innovative, important and 'imaginative' in the best sense of the word. The quantum paradigm is conceptually popular, especially in consciousness studies. It is high time these quantum seeds bore fruit in the garden of the life sciences.

Professor Martin Lockley teaches palaentology and consciousness studies at the University of Colorado and is author of How Humanity Came into Being: the Evolution of Consciousness

Schrödinger's Intellectual Legacy

David Lorimer

WHAT IS LIFE?

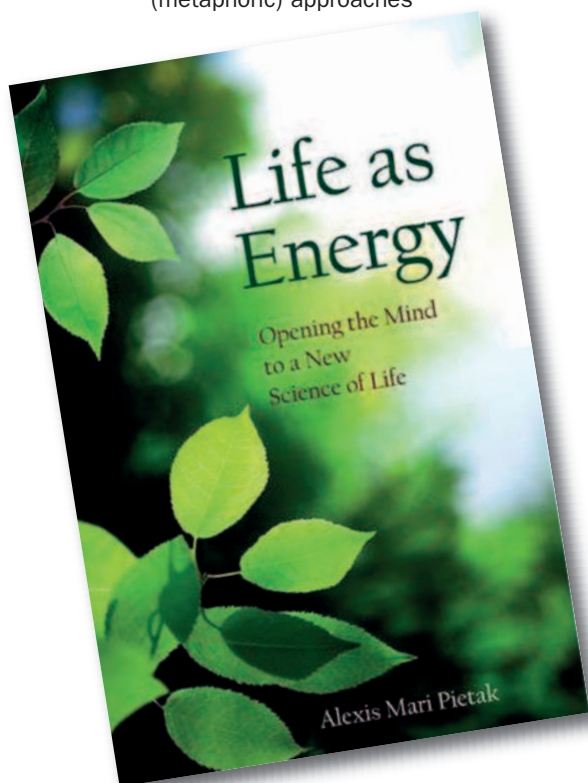
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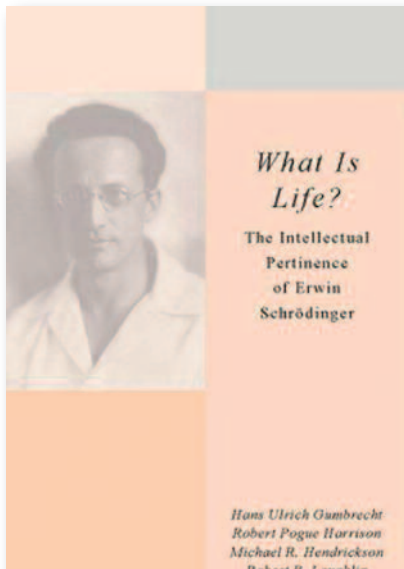
Stanford University Press, 2011,
145 pp., \$18.95,
p/b - ISBN 978-0-8047-6916-7

The title of this book echoes a famous series of lectures given at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1943 and printed with another famous series, *Mind and Matter*. This book consists of five short monographs on different aspects of Schrödinger's thought. He received the Nobel Prize for physics in 1933 and is perhaps best remembered for his thought experiment involving a cat, but this book shows that his legacy is a great deal wider. He was never afraid to push the boundaries of his thinking more deeply into the mystery of existence, going beyond his field into philosophy and biology.

One sees the influence of Indian thought and Schopenhauer in his contention that individual consciousnesses are a fragment or microcosm of a single transcendent consciousness - a Universal Mind. It is interesting that in his essay on mind and matter he quotes Jung as saying that all science is a function of the soul, in which all knowledge is rooted. In spite of this (one might say 'subject of cognition and sentience') the remorseless focus on objectivity has made the subject retreat into the background, as if non-existent. Hence those who focus on the third-person perspective can forget that this actually depends upon first-person experience. This blind spot can be thought of as a form of not knowing, or not being aware that we do not know, and represents a disconnection between our lived experience and objective scientific or philosophical representation. Sir Charles Sherrington also realised this, and was another strong influence on Schrödinger's thought. Heidegger and Wittgenstein are mentioned in this connection as other examples of thinkers who seek to go beyond the picture they have of reality.

The next chapter explains some of the politics behind the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics, which resulted in a sidelining of Schrödinger described here as an intellectual mugging when it was declared that Schrödinger's deterministic wave equation was incompatible with quantum mechanics. It is interesting that





Murray Gell-Mann, in his 1976 Nobel acceptance speech, claimed that Niels Bohr had brainwashed a whole generation of physicists into believing that the problem of interpretation of quantum mechanics had been solved 50 years ago. Bohm was similarly sidelined.

The book now moves on to the legacy of *What is Life?* and its relevance to cancer biology. Here one sees how Schrödinger's metaphors exerted a huge influence on the development of molecular biology in being preformationist (implying linear causality and a centralised pre-programme for the organism in the form of a master molecule), genocentric and reductionist. Schrödinger's lectures were delivered 10 years before the discovery of DNA, but nevertheless shaped the thinking that emerged out of it.

However, a second set of ideas in this same series of lectures provided another conceptual framework enabling people to break out of the limitations of the first one. Schrödinger was considering the high degree of organisation of cellular life in the light of the second law of thermodynamics which suggested a universe of increased entropy and disorder. This line of thinking developed into the thermodynamics of open systems far from equilibrium (Prigogine's dissipative structures) and the emergence of connectivity, complexity theory, networks, distributed causality and self-organisation in the biological world. In this respect, Schrödinger provided the antidote to the narrowness of the first set of ideas, the antithesis to his thesis, resulting in a higher-level synthesis.

The chapter explains the structure of thinking of Crick's Central Dogma and the metaphors underlying it, with special reference to cancer biology. It is now understood that genes operate

in a context and that the expression of a particular gene depends critically on the state of other genes in its network, which means that intervention in a complex nonlinear network does not actually lead to localised change but rather a disequilibrium whereby the whole network tries to compensate in order to restore itself to the previous state. With the proliferation of so-called cancer genes, it is now becoming apparent that individual tumours are a unique pattern of genetic mutations. In this way, linear and mechanistic thinking reaches a dead end.

This situation has demanded what Hendrickson calls a holistic turn and the reintroduction of the organism into a new form of systems biology. At a philosophical level, one realises that metaphors in science are necessary 'yet potentially dangerous.' They can lead to reification, whereby the organism is characterised not simply as being like a machine, but actually as a machine. The language of the genetic programme and master molecule is deterministic rather than probabilistic, and a new set of metaphors has emerged which more accurately reflects the complex state of affairs. The final chapter refers briefly to Schrödinger's life, but his real legacy is his work. For those who have read Schrödinger's lectures, I recommend this book as a sophisticated discussion of the issues he raises, while for those who haven't, I suggest you first read the originals.

Darwin, Evolution and Christianity

Max Payne

DARWIN'S PIOUS IDEA

Conor Cunningham

Eerdmans 2010, 543 pp., \$19.95,
p/b - ISBN 978-0-8028-4838-3

DARWINISM AND THE DIVINE

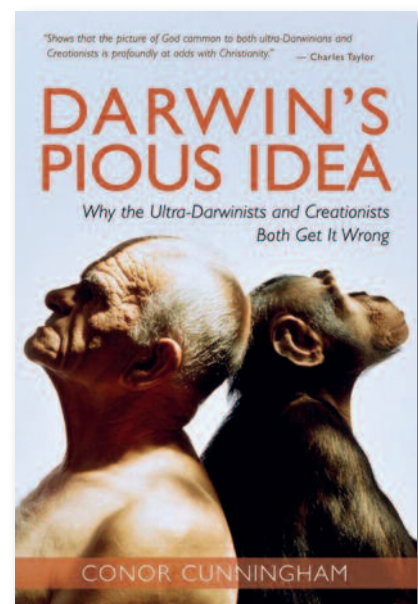
Alister E. McGrath

Wiley Blackwell, 2010, 298 pp.,
£18.99, p/b -
ISBN 978-1-4443-3344-2

150 years ago Darwin's "*Origin of Species*", and Lyell's "*Geology*" disproved the literal truth of the book of *Genesis*. Christian theology has been in a crisis ever since. Both these books seek to solve the problem by driving a middle path between Creationists who deny evolutionary science, and the New Atheists who argue that science disproves all religion. They reveal the difficulties of this path, more perhaps than the authors intended.

Cunningham attacks the ultra Darwinist position on two grounds. Cooperation is at least as fundamental to evolution as the ruthless competition of the "selfish gene", the single cell unites with others to form the multi-celled body, and most species are interdependent with others. What is more, evolution does not appear random, but appears to be guided by purposeful paradigms which produce similar results from different starting points. The similarities between the eyes of humans and octopi would be an example. He also opposes the New Atheists' materialist reductionism. He follows Michael Polanyi is arguing that the scientist's objective "facts" are the product of the scientist's mind, and that consciousness is a superior realm of reality to matter.

So far so good, but then both he and McGrath proceed to deal with the central question of the Book of Genesis. For 3,000 years, or thereabouts, this scripture has been taken to mean what it says by believers and critics alike. By a series of tortuous and unconvincing arguments Cunningham and McGrath reinterpret it to mean, not that God created the world in 6 days, but that He was the immanent guiding force behind planetary evolution from the beginning of time. They do not use the word "immanent", because it is forbidden by orthodox theology, but that is what they mean. It may be questioned why they should bother with an ancient piece of Semitic mythology anyway, but Genesis contains the story of the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. This is an essential element in St. Paul's doctrine that the crucifixion of Jesus was an act of Atonement for the inherited sins of Mankind, and orthodox theology hinges on this.



Again both authors' interpretation of the Fall means standing the original meaning of the text on its head.

Other, here unacknowledged, thinkers have perceived a Divine nismus in the upswing of biological evolution – Bergson, Teilhard de Chardin, Sri Aurobindo . But such an optimistic view of reality has to confront the problem of evil. Aurobindo does it by appealing to the terrible vision in the Gita of Krishna as world destroyer. McGrath tackles this issue most clearly, and head on. Not only is there the unmerited suffering of innocent human beings throughout history, but an immanent God must be responsible for the sufferings of all sentient life throughout the billions of years of evolutionary history, and the extinction of whole species. His answer is the Stalin defence. The horror of the purges and forced collectivisation built an industrialised Soviet Union under efficient monolithic leadership. This repelled the Nazi invasion, and finally defeated it. Therefore Stalin is justified. In the same way all the sufferings of life in evolutionary time have led to the appearance of the power of human thought and to free will: therefore God is justified, and the problem of evil solved. This is a very good argument, but the Christian God is supposed to be a loving Father who cares for each individual. This concept sits ill with the idea of God as a Cosmic commissar.

The Middle Ages solved this problem. For them the sufferings of the virtuous in this brief life on earth would be compensated by the eternal felicities of Heaven. Strangely neither author makes much mention of the afterlife, yet as Cunningham points out, consciousness is more important than matter. The evolution of consciousness must therefore be more important than the evolution of

the physical body through geological time. There is no mention of that issue here. To Western eyes the popular aspects of Buddhism and Hinduism often seem bizarre, if not childish, but those religions also contain the belief in the evolution of consciousness from the animal to the human, and beyond the human to para-human levels of enlightenment. It must be added that modern cosmology pictures the evolution of the universe from a "big bang" of almost infinite energy into today's myriad of galaxies, stars and planets. The relation between evolution and the Divine must be something vaster than these books suggest.

A Better Notion of God

David Lorimer

THE PURPOSE-GUIDED UNIVERSE

Bernard Haisch (SMN)

The Career Press, 2010,
222 pp., \$19.99,
h/b – ISBN 978-1-60163-122-0

Bernard Haisch is an astrophysicist who was also editor-in-chief of the *Journal for Scientific Exploration*. This book follows up his earlier work, *The God Theory*, with a reconciliation of science and spirituality within a view where consciousness ultimately creates reality and manifests itself in a sense of purpose. I say science and spirituality rather than science and religion, because the author agrees with many of the criticisms by prominent atheists of traditional religious structures but does not see the need to throw the baby out with the bathwater. He points out that human misuse of religion and the existence of God are two very different things.

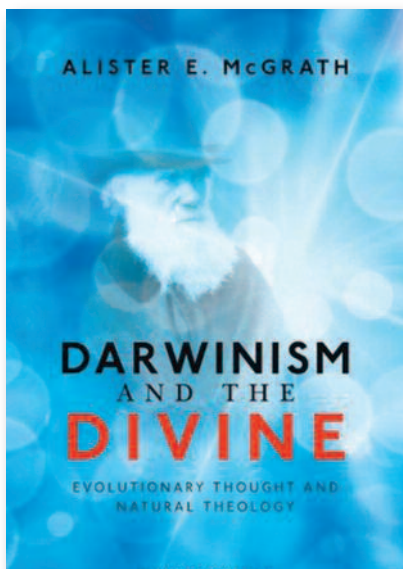
He steers a fine line in avoiding theories of intelligent design, building on the work of Sir James Jeans and Sir Arthur Eddington. When it comes to fine tuning, Bernie proposes three possible explanations: the first is that the laws and constants of the universe are a lucky accident, the second that it is a matter of statistics and that there are all sorts of universes with different laws and constants. This is known as the multiverse theory. Thirdly, it is a matter of intelligence whereby the evolutionary process enables it to experience its creative potential and a huge variety of forms. The interesting part of the argument is that each of these explanations implies a leap of faith, or postulates a certain assumption. In the second case, the assumption is that there is a multitude of other unseen

universes, which Bernie regards as a bigger assumption than one intelligence being behind all (as he observes, both theories go beyond current science). He then seeks to justify his own choice of the third possibility as rational and consistent with science and philosophy.

He argues that quantum mechanics now necessarily includes consciousness, quoting the recent work by Anthony Leggett showing that measurement creates reality, and that reality does not exist when we are not observing it. This means that consciousness creates observed reality at the quantum level, which makes it plausible that 'a transcendent consciousness is the underlying cause of the Universe.' Although this view cannot be proven, Bernie insists that it is no less logical than the statistical inference for a multiverse embraced by distinguished astronomers like Lord Martin Rees.

An important component of the argument is a study of perennial philosophy and the nature of mystical experience. Indeed, the theory of the perennial philosophy is itself derived from the study of mystical experience. Perennial philosophy assumes the existence of other levels of reality and that the human spirit is in essence identical with the ground of being or God. Furthermore, it is possible to perceive and realise this oneness. Bernie discusses the writings of Sir Arthur Eddington as well as his role in proving the validity of relativity theory. Eddington was led by what he called an Inner Light in his quest for both scientific and spiritual truth. He concluded that ultimate reality was spiritual and that the laws of nature were the creation of a spiritual mind. This corresponds to the conclusion that Bernie arrives at on the basis of more recent research. He also draws on Vedanta and Meister Eckhart as well as the more recent work of Eckhart Tolle.

On this basis, he postulates that our great life purpose is to create God's experience as incarnations in physical form, echoing similar ideas from Neale Donald Walsch. We are the means whereby God experiences his own potential. Not only us, but every sentient being. This entails the conversion of potential into experience, where a key element is the evolution of life forms and the corresponding complexification of consciousness. This culminates in unitive knowledge of God, where the individual expression of life realises itself as one with infinite intelligence or Universal Mind. God's consciousness knows itself consciously, which Thomas Troward calls the Great Recognition. It is a



point of transcendence, moving beyond ordinary concepts of God to the Absolute represented by the Godhead. Meister Eckhart writes particularly eloquently about this. Bernie's overall theory is that the laws of nature in our universe are thoughts of the eternal intelligence, that creation implies what we call both physical and nonphysical realms and that everything in our universe is ultimately a product of consciousness.

On a practical level, the idea that God lives through us can be the foundation of a humane and optimistic spiritual worldview. We are never separate from God, even if we think we are, but gradually we can come to reunite with the Source. In this sense, heaven is 'a complete awakening from the delusion of separation from God and thus reunion with God.' This is direct knowledge beyond abstract reason. The strength and cogency of this book lies in its bringing together the implications of quantum mechanics and fine tuning with the perennial philosophy, both of which are evidence-based at their own level. This allows Bernie to conclude that we live in a purpose guided Universe governed by the laws of science, if you where there is no conflict between matter and forces on the one hand and purpose of the other. This is an important realisation, all the more so given the reluctance of many scientists to discuss purpose. As the subtitle suggests, this gives us reason to believe in Einstein, Darwin and God.

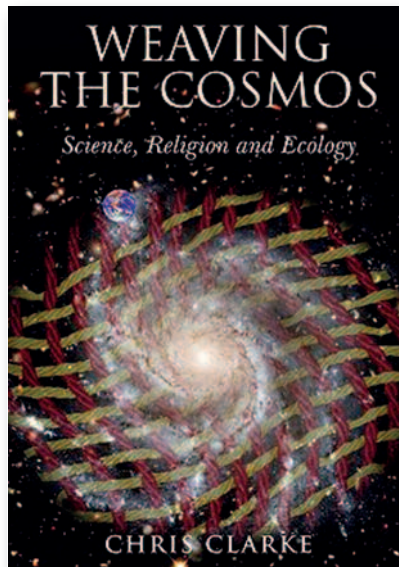
Science, Religion and Ecology

David Lorimer

WEAVING THE COSMOS Chris Clarke (SMN)

O Books, 2010, 223 pp., £14.99, p/b
– ISBN 978-1-84694-320-1

This is Chris' third and most ambitious book, bringing together his principal interests in science, religion and ecology on both a personal and intellectual level. He speaks as a mathematical physicist who has a firm grasp of the history of science and religion but who has also established an intimate connection with Nature, especially with trees in the woodlands near his home. As the title suggests, the aim is to bring together complementary aspects of reality and ways of knowing: science and religion through ecology, intuition and rationality through wisdom, matter and spirit through being. He also makes use of the myths of Psyche, Pan and Eros, and Apollo, Gaia and Artemis to



represent the struggle for unity-in-difference at the individual and cosmic levels. And he adds to this mix an analysis of context-dependent logic, also represented as a triad, where the third term provides a reconciliation of the first two. The major task for contemporary humanity is to become more aware of and embody these complementary aspects of reality and existence.

Chris covers an impressive range of issues and his overall vision is of 'a new sort of humanity inhabiting a restored earth', involving a new story to live by which is at once passionate, credible and transformative. Humanity is both ingenious and collectively irresponsible, and the stakes could not be higher. So a new vision and story is imperative, as Thomas Berry and Matthew Fox have also argued. Stephan Harding in his *Animate Earth* has articulated a similar need to reconnect with Nature as a way of redefining our relationship with the Earth. For Chris, the essence of religion is unity and love, but narrower understandings have tended to predominate in the form of propositional assent to creeds. This reflects the kind of God criticised by Dawkins (Chris sympathises with this) which, as he points out, is just the kind of 'petty God of factual propositions' that Meister Eckhart also wanted to get rid of over 700 years ago. We find this sense of love and unity in all types of mystical experience, representing the deeper levels of religion where we gain a greater insight into wholeness. We are arguably evolving in this direction where Chris defines love as 'the desire to enter into and participate in a greater whole', and the ultimate definition of religion as 'willed and discerning participation in the mutual love of the greatest whole.'

Both science and religion have their structures of authority and orthodoxy represented by councils. Chris picks Nicaea in 325 and the Fifth Solvay Conference in Copenhagen in 1927 as paradigmatic. This leads into a discussion of the history of spirit and matter going back to Plato and bringing us once again to Eckhart and his profound understanding of being, which can be experienced in silence. The next chapter addresses logic, introducing the ideas of Matte Blanco on symmetric and asymmetric logics and the logic by which we live, which he calls bilogic. The operation of these various logics is context-dependent where the contexts are constantly changing and overlapping and Gödel's realm of the unprovable constantly eludes our capacity to grasp it, as is also the case with the Greek notion of *aletheia*, truth that is constantly disclosing itself.

Chris introduces into his discussion of quantum theory the work of Frederic Parker-Rhodes, an early Member of the Network whom he met in Cambridge. One of his books was *The Theory of Indistinguishables*, where he argues that the features of the fundamental entities in physics become progressively fewer so that there is literally nothing to distinguish one electron from another; in which case what does it mean to say that two electrons have changed places? Parker-Rhodes further proposes that the state reached by uncovering the fundamental entities of physics and the deepest centre of mystical experience is also indistinguishable and he calls this the inchoate. I suspect Eckhart and perhaps Bohm would have concurred. The dynamic of this system is one of emergence and creativity representing the unfolding of being and the apprehension of meaning.

The final two chapters bring us back to humans and ecology; also to the reconciliation of intuitive and rational ways of knowing as a way of redefining our relationship with the Earth beyond that of a detached observer and artful manipulator. The current environmental crisis encourages us to come to a new and harmonious relationship with the Earth and there is some evidence that this is already happening with socio-ecological movements such as the Transition Town Movement. It is here that ecology can help heal the rift between science and religion through the development of an 'ecological self' embedded in practice as well as theory. These help people acquire a deeper sense of love and unity. It is not inevitable that humanity will rise to our current

challenges but we certainly have the capacity to do so, and Chris' book is an important intellectual and practical contribution to this emerging process and deserves to be widely read.

medicine-health

The Medical Cartel

David Lorimer

NATURAL CURES "THEY" DON'T WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT

Kevin Trudeau

Alliance Publishing Group, 2004,
572 pp., \$29.95,
h/b - ISBN 0-975-5995-1-8

In 2006 I reviewed an important book on diet and health, *The China Study* by Thomas Campbell, where it was apparent that China was experiencing a nutrition transition from diseases characterising undernourishment to the classic diseases of civilisation endemic in advanced countries. The third part of that book detailed the political intrigue that surrounds the food industry and food regulation in the United States, with revolving doors between political office, lobby groups and high-level positions within the industry. In other words, a high degree of corruption was involved. Kevin Trudeau was initially unable to get this book published, with many publishers claiming that it was too long and would never sell. So he published it himself and it became a bestseller, clocking up over 20 million copies. Because he has become a well-known whistleblower with respect to the food and pharmaceutical industries, he has been at the receiving end of a negative publicity campaign designed to discredit him and his work. As someone observed, people only shoot up, they don't shoot down - if one puts one's head above the parapet, one must expect to be shot at.

The book begins with an account of Kevin's personal experience of a severe mitral valve prolapse in his heart. He was recommended experimental drugs and surgery, and told that he had short life expectancy. His researches led him to a Dr. Tang who was able to treat him by natural methods for this condition. Nevertheless, because this treatment had not been authorised by the FDA, the condition remains officially incurable in the United States. After returning to the medical doctors who originally diagnosed his heart problem, he was told that he

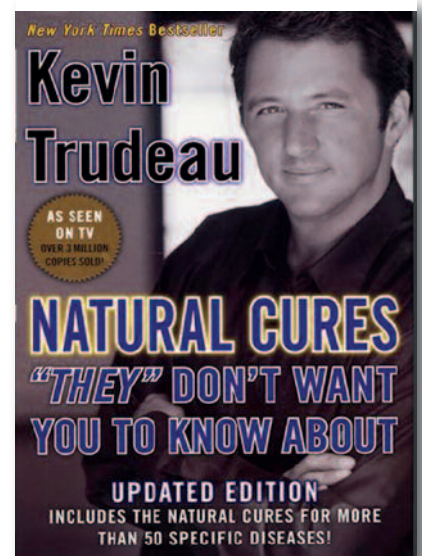
must have received a misdiagnosis, and the examining doctor showed no interest in the cure he had undertaken. Kevin reached the conclusion that the medical establishment systematically deny and debunk natural cures, which means that many people continue to suffer and die unnecessarily. The reason for this is that the medical system is dominated by large pharmaceutical companies who also fund much of the research and support medical schools. Doctors are therefore trained to think that drugs cure diseases and know little or nothing about the natural cures detailed in this book. Because of the law, no claims can be made about such treatments, while medically treated illnesses result in 250,000 deaths in the United States every year. Paradoxically, more and more people in United States are sick in spite of recent medical advances.

This situation is detailed early in the book, and the reason for the failure of drugs and surgery to prevent illness is that they do not address the cause, even if modern medicine works extremely well in emergency crisis situations. Only the body can cure itself, and natural methods support the healing process. The people referred to as "they" in the title are rather the pharmaceutical companies, food companies, trade associations, medical charities and foundations, lobbyists and government agencies. None of these groups has an interest in the development of natural cures; indeed they seek to suppress them at every opportunity. The tactics used by the FDA and the FTC are explained, with the underlying agenda of showing that drugs are effective and safe and that natural treatments are ineffective and dangerous. Kevin has first-hand experience of underhand FTC tactics which often results in the silencing of individuals in his case or the shutting down of businesses. In addition, this cartel seeks to control vitamins and supplements through the Codex Alimentarius, playing on alleged safety concerns in the name of protecting the public. The bottom line is the huge amount of money generated by drugs, which results in attempts to maintain and extend a monopolistic power.

Kevin explains the overall naturopathic philosophy and the role of toxins and the undermining of the immune system. He sees four principal reasons for disease, namely excessive toxins, nutritional deficiencies, exposure to electromagnetic chaos, and mental and emotional stress. One of the principal toxins is the drugs

themselves, along with many other chemicals and additives in our food. Toxins will tend to make the body more acidic and therefore correspondingly more susceptible to disease. He goes on to discuss the importance of proper food, exercise, rest and the need for a positive mental attitude. The next chapter explains how to maintain one's health, with a great deal of a specific and useful advice, which any holistic practitioner will recognise as sound. A very long chapter is entitled "Not Convinced?" and contains great deal more data to back up the earlier claims in the book. This is followed by frequently asked questions and a further chapter of bibliography under the various headings and questions plus some analysis of natural cures for specific diseases. So readers are thoroughly informed by the time they reach this point in the book. There is then some information about www.naturalcures.com, further material from newsletters and an extensive appendix on the way in which the FDA treated a producer of some special bread.

The battle over health continues, and this book is a significant contribution to the arguments for an approach based on natural cures. Eventually, governments will come to understand that there are cheaper ways of promoting and maintaining health than the current system, whose costs are set to increase inexorably. As many people have pointed out, we actually have a disease service rather than a health service. This is complicated by the complex web of financial interests that maintain the present system, but the costs of ill-health will eventually force a reconsideration of the food we eat and the ways in which it is produced. We need a food and agriculture that promotes both the health of the individual and the



health of the planet; our present system does neither and is therefore inherently destructive. Just as Colin Tudge argues in his book reviewed later in this issue, we need biological efficiency rather than cash efficiency, recognising that good health is in fact an important component of overall wealth.

Breathwork - The New Frontier in Self-Exploration

Gunnel Minett

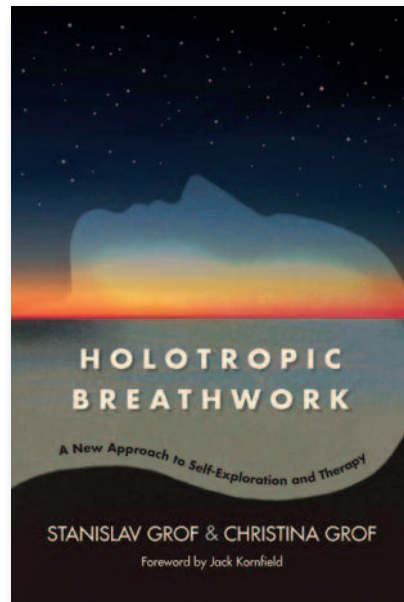
HOLOTROPIC BREATHWORK, A New Approach to Self-Exploration and Therapy Stanislav Grof & Christina Grof

State University of New York Press, 2010, 221 pp., illustrated, £14.25, p/b - ISBN 978-1-4384-3394-3,

Breathwork is the generic term for a range of therapy techniques based on the modification of the normal breathing pattern. Among the more widespread techniques are; certain Yoga techniques such as Pranayama and other exercises in Hatha Yoga, the ancient Chinese technique of Chi Gong, neo-Reichian breathing (developed initially by Wilhelm Reich), Rebirthing, (initially developed by Leonard Orr, Sondra Ray and others), and a number of Guided Breathwork techniques developed from the Rebirthing technique but with different theory and therapeutic framework, as well as Holotropic Breathwork, developed by Stanislav and Christina Grof. What they have in common is the utilisation of the breath to initiate a therapeutic process aimed at healing both body and mind.

It has been known throughout human history that by changing the breathing pattern we can initiate what are commonly called 'altered states of consciousness'. It has been practiced in shamanic traditions all over the world and has survived in its purest form in the Eastern traditions where breathing techniques are well integrated in various healing traditions. In the West a number of modern Breathwork techniques emerged in the 1970s, many of them associated with the 'New Age' movement. Among these new techniques Holotropic Breathwork is one of the most established and widespread.

For anyone interested in Holotropic Breathwork this book offers a very extensive and detailed overview. Holotropic as well as other forms of



Breathwork offer a completely new approach to psychotherapy, offering a body-oriented approach (using the breath to initiate the therapeutic process). Still, as the authors point out, Holotropic Breathwork builds on earlier discoveries made by Freud, Jung and others. Particularly interesting here is the recognition and use by Holotropic Breathwork of the transpersonal aspect of psychotherapy developed by Jung, which conventional psychotherapy generally does not recognise.

Apart from an overview of the theoretical framework, the book also offers a number of practical details of how to conduct a session. One of the essential parts of Holotropic Breathwork is that the breathing is combined with music and body work. The music is used to trigger the unconscious to bring up memories and other experiences of a transpersonal kind. The music needs to be played very loudly and ideally consists of unfamiliar material, mainly 'world music'. The actual breathing session is usually quite cathartic with screaming, violent body movements and other ways of acting out of trauma. This means that Holotropic Breathwork requires a particular environment and the authors go into great detail as to how to achieve this and why it is necessary. Most sessions are conducted in groups run by facilitators, with the participants taking turns to assist the person who is breathing.

The basic principle of Holotropic Breathwork is that the changed breathing pattern initiates a natural healing process. A key concept here is the idea that the person involved in the process knows best how to heal their past trauma. Provided that the environment is safe and

supportive the breather will be able to go through this process and achieve a positive result. This unguided approach means that the length of a session varies and is determined by what the process brings up. Sessions generally last between three to five hours.

Although the book goes into great detail regarding the Holotropic technique, it contains only two pages, in an appendix, dealing with other breathing techniques. This is disappointing after nearly 40 years of the parallel development of a number of Breathwork techniques. There's a missed opportunity here for a comparative review of the role of Breathwork in psychotherapy and how to optimise the technique. According to the authors the music is essential to achieve the intended results. However, the effects are the same in Rebirthing based sessions, where music is not part of the process, the process usually lasts only one hour and the session is generally very quiet.

Holotropic theory prescribes that the breathing pattern should be left unguided and allowed to find its own rhythm whereas in Rebirthing the emphasis is on guiding the breathing in order to achieve optimal openness, relaxation and release. One result is that cramps and painful experiences are more typical in Holotropic than other forms of Guided Breathwork. The authors rightly point out that hyperventilation, which often leads to painful cramps, needs to be better researched. According to conventional medicine hyperventilation should be treated with medication to avoid causing serious harm to the patient. However, within both the Holotropic and Rebirthing based techniques this is believed to be not always the case. In an article I wrote for the Holotropic Breathwork Associations magazine, the Inner Door, I differentiated between Hyperventilation and Superventilation. In my view, one of the main differences between Hyper and Superventilation is that the latter lacks the anxiety that usually accompanies Hyperventilation. The safe environment ensured during a Breathwork session enables people to cope with this natural change in breathing pattern, which when triggered by a traumatic event and in the absence of assistance, will lead to Hyperventilation.

One of the main differences in the approach between the Holotropic and Rebirthing based techniques, regarding cramps and cathartic aspects, is that the latter focuses on guiding the breath so that cramps and emotional outbursts are expressed entirely through breathing

rather than via acting out as in Holotropic Breathwork. By simply providing support to intensifying the breathing in a open way such experiences can be experienced as intensely as in Holotropic Breathwork.

This belief in the unguided natural healing process in Holotropic Breathwork and Leonard Orr's version of Rebirthing also needs to be more critically reviewed. Firstly it is very difficult to not guide the 'natural healing process'. By simply reading this book, or attending a Holotropic Breathwork group and getting the basics explained at the beginning, will set an agenda for the actual process. Secondly, based on my 30 plus years of experience with Breathwork, my conclusion is that when the breathwork process alone is regarded as sufficient it tends to diminish the positive outcome of the process.

As the authors rightly point out Leonard Orr's theoretical framework is too simplistic to be taken seriously. Rather than being a fresh contribution to psychotherapy, Orr's approach has lead to cult-like groups with very clear, albeit strange beliefs (such as physical immortality). This is why most of the currently successful Rebirthing-based Breathwork techniques have moved away from Orr and developed their versions of the breathing technique and own theoretical framework, which is far closer to conventional psychotherapy and often includes the latest developments in Psychobiology and Neuroscience. So for Stanislav and Christina Grof to dismiss all Rebirthing-based techniques because of Orr's is to simply ignore the development of Breathwork that has taken place in most parts of the world outside USA.

In summary this book offers a very comprehensive overview of Holotropic Breathwork. Its main weaknesses are the absence of comparisons with other similar techniques and a stronger effort to anchor the theory of Holotropic Breathwork with the ever-growing research in Neuroscience and Psychobiology. These fields do offer very interesting empirical support for some of the various other forms of Breathwork. In my view Breathwork does genuinely represent a new frontier in psychotherapy, but in order for it to truly realise this claim, the various techniques will need to move away from competition and into cooperation, both with each other and with psychotherapy as a whole.

Gunnel Minett is the author of Exhale: an Overview of Breathwork.

Is Epigenetics the New Frontier in Medicine?

Gunnel Minett

THE ULTIMATE MYSTERY OF INHERITANCE – EPIGENETICS

Richard C Francis

W.W. Norton, New York, 2011, 233 pp., p/b - ISBN 978-0-393-07005-7, £18.90

Epigenetics has become something of a buzz words in biomedicine. Epigenetic means literally "above the gene". It refers to the recent discoveries regarding gene regulation showing that epigenetic alterations can have an impact in addition to gene mutation. It shows that the environment can affect the expression of the genes, in particular if it occurs early in life. Previously it was assumed that the only thing we inherited from our parents were genes, transferred biologically, and that the environment would not have much influence over our genes. But later research has shown that also environmentally induced epigenetic differences can play an important role.

One such example given in the book is identical twins who, despite their identical genes, develop differently later in life. Their susceptibility to diseases such as cancer and dementia vary widely, which are thought to have a large hereditary component. Other examples include; nutrition during pregnancy (from the Dutch famine during WW2) influencing obesity levels, athletes taking steroids (i.e. how an individual's changes in physiology can actually be transferred

to future generations), the Tasmanian Devil, recently near total extinction developing a new form of cancer as a consequence of epigenetic factors, orphan gorillas lacking parental skills, to mention a few.

It also deals with the perhaps the most challenging question in this field of science – how does a small cluster of identical stem cells actually become a person. The answer to this does not just depend on scientific evidence but also on more philosophical positions as to precisely when an individual person's life begins. Here too, Epigenetics seems to provide the most compelling evidence for what this process consists of and what influences it.

Perhaps the most positive revelations in the book are the possibilities Epigenetics has opened for new forms cancer treatment. Research has shown that using stem cells can help cancer cells 'communicate' better with their environment and thereby return to normal. A very promising result.

Perhaps the best aspect of this book is that it is written by a freelance writer with a PhD in neurobiology. This combination means that even a complete lay person in this field can understand the arguments presented. In fact, given the clear and accessible way the book is structured and presented, it's difficult to put down. It's like the most exciting of thrillers; we enter a completely new world, only in this case the main characters are the genes: their behaviour sends signals which influence our world and our wellbeing.

philosophy-religion

The Glory of Life

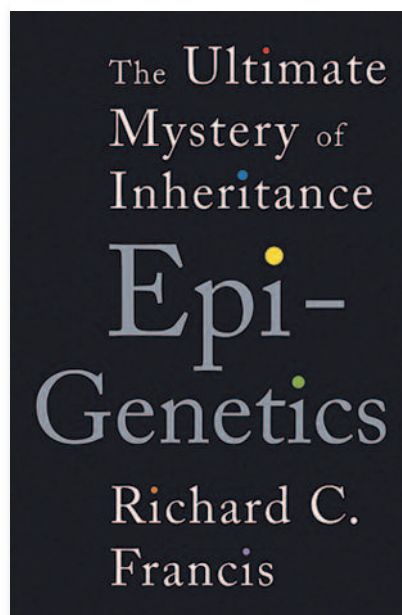
David Lorimer

THE LOTUS AND THE MUD

Henryk Skolimowski (SMN)

Creative Fire Press, 2011, 231 pp., p/b, no price given – ISBN 978-1-22593-429

It is now 30 years since the publication of Henryk's pioneering book on eco-philosophy, which he has been extending and elaborating ever since, culminating in his most recent work about light. This fascinating autobiography charts his life and the evolution of his thinking, providing a rounded self-portrait, which, as the publisher observes, represents 'a life of courage, integrity, vision and substance.' Henryk celebrated his



80th birthday last year with a small group of friends, and I was privileged to be present. His story begins with the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, depicted in graphic and shattering detail. He lost both his brother and his mother during the war - his mother contracted typhoid from caring for her own mother. Partly as a result of there being no glass in the windows of their classroom during the winter of 1945, Henryk discovered the public library, where all the windows were intact.

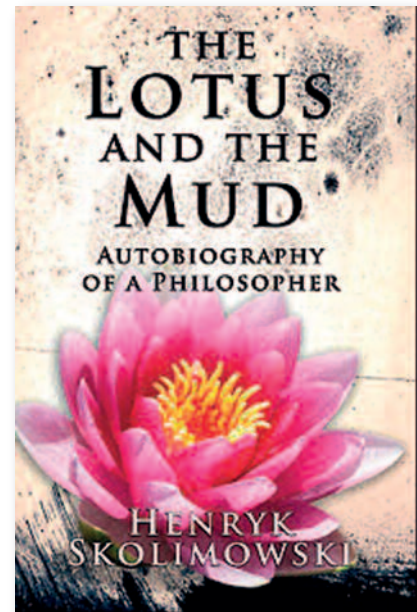
It was the beginning of his epic intellectual and spiritual journey, asking himself the perennial questions, what is a man and what is human destiny? He describes his excitement at discovering Plutarch, French and Russian literature, ancient Greek literature then, crucially, Plato. He also read books on psychology, delving into the ideas of Freud, Jung and Adler. Music also played an important part of his life, as did theatre. He had to show himself competent in Marxist philosophy and describes an oral examination where he quoted at ever greater length from a recent work by Stalin, obliging the examiner to give him an 'excellent' grade. Gradually, he was able to read philosophy under the guidance of distinguished Polish philosophers, especially to Tadeusz Kotarbinski. He found his way out of the cage by winning competitions that enabled him to attend conferences abroad. He won first prize in an essay competition in spite of the fact that it would not please the Marxists in Moscow. This provided him with his first international platform, where he presented in both English and Russian. Here he found that 'courage and a certain fierceness are indispensable for a philosopher worthy of his salt.'

In his next chapter, Henryk describes his experiences in Oxford from 1959, firstly at St Antony's College with Sir William Deakin and then with Sir Freddy Ayer and Lord Anthony Quinton at New College. He captures the spirit of Oxford embodied in these men and in Sir Isaiah Berlin, with whom he had many conversations, although Henryk did most of the listening and Sir Isaiah most of the talking. He writes that Oxford conversation is lively and scintillating, but more often sparkling than profound - brilliant, independent and slightly flippant. Later on, he compares the minds of Sir Isaiah and Sir Karl Popper, with whom he also had seminars. Popper's intellect was penetrating like a drill, while Berlin was scintillating, continually bursting with ever-new effervescent flowers, jumping from one subject to another in a movable feast of ideas. With

Popper, you had to discuss his ideas, and on one occasion Henryk criticised his idea of approximation to truth as implying the relativity of truth, which provoked an explosion on Popper's part. It was about this time that Thomas Kuhn published *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, and Henryk witnessed Popper criticising the book before he had even read it.

From Oxford, Henryk moved on to Los Angeles, where he found the flower children and the swinging 60s - it was here that he gradually came to the conclusion that something had gone badly wrong with Western civilisation, and that this was based on secular assumptions laid down in the 17th century. He also had experiences in the Arizona desert, spent time at a Kibbutz, went to Findhorn and Auroville, and later to Dartington. He had a direct encounter with the failed utopia of communism and more generally with capitalism, both of which he thinks have failed for the same reason as different versions of crass materialism. This goes some way to explaining why he was exploring the potential of alternative lifestyles and communities as different forms of social organisation. He devotes the next chapter to a more extended discussion of the assumptions underlying what he sees as the decay of Western civilisation. This includes reconstructed dialogues drawn from conversations that many conferences focusing on the nature of scientific rationality and objectivity.

Other key influences have been people he met, including Fritz Schumacher, The Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa and the Saint of Kanchipuram. This leads him to ask about the function of saints, who demonstrate indomitable courage and fierce determination not to succumb to ordinary life. For Henryk, they represent the terminus of human development as embodiments of freedom, simplicity, peace, serenity and radiance. There are people who have transformed themselves into their potential divinity, selflessly serving others. India and especially the Himalayas have exerted a profound influence on his life, partly owing to the spiritual background of the culture but also the sheer grandeur and beauty of the mountains. They encourage us to enlarge our vision and extend our limits, giving us a sense of infinity and greatness that puts our ordinary lives into perspective. I can recognise this effect from the Bulgarian Rila Mountains. In the forests, he discovers people with a reverential attitude to the sacredness of nature, which he later expresses in his own



philosophy. In India, he writes, a person of spiritual aspirations does not have to apologise for his existence - hence his feeling of being at home.

Towards the end of the book, he explains his philosophy of light, which he also seeks to express in his marble sculptures. Here he coins the new and expansive terms of Lumenology as the most comprehensive knowledge of light and Lumenarchy to signify the power and glory of Light. This leads to an attitude of enthusiasm and celebration at the glory of light and life. Interested readers are referred to his recent book *Let There Be Light*, reviewed here last year. The last chapter includes a new article reflecting on his philosophical legacy, following a path from his critique of technology to eco-philosophy. He has written a series of books articulating this new philosophy as well as a new language and preparing the ground for what he sees as the resurrection of Socratic living wisdom philosophy, reminding us that humans are or can be cosmic beings rather than selfish individuals. The book concludes with a series of photographs and an exhortation that we should seek out wisdom rather than information, light rather than technology. It is an inspiring life and an inspiring message, encouraging readers on a path of both expansion and depth. The book demonstrates how Henryk has made a significant contribution to Western culture in a lifetime devoted to living philosophy. I should also mention his new book of poetry, *Celebrating Light and Hope*, which contains many beautiful poems, expressing his philosophy in another form.

A Universal Cosmology

Richard Michell

MARTINUS, DARWIN AND INTELLIGENT DESIGN – A New Theory of Evolution

Ole Therkelsen

Världsbild Förlag, Stockholm 2010, 305 pp., \$29, p/b - ISBN 978-91 85132-85-0

This is a remarkable book and a timely one. It is topical on two counts. Firstly, 2009 marks a double Darwin anniversary; it is 200 years since his birth and 150 years since the publication of *On the Origin of Species*. Secondly, it addresses itself to the contemporary version of the perennial debate about fundamental issues currently taking place within a postmodern context that is suspicious of overarching narratives, be they religious or scientific.

The title of this book is in itself intriguing, as it juxtaposes three very disparate elements. *Darwin* is an eloquent symbol for the power of a great idea and its part in creating our modern post-religious sensibility. *Intelligent design* alerts us to the reluctance among many people, particularly those to whom a religious world-view remains meaningful, to wholeheartedly accept evolution as an explanation of our origins. And *Martinus* (1890-1981) is, to begin with, the name of a little-known Danish writer.

And yet this book deals primarily with Martinus, using Darwinism and its critics as a foil against which to bring out the stupendous cosmic vision that we owe to this Danish seer. It is time he was more widely known, not least in the English-speaking world. Martinus developed a cosmic model that can sharpen our awareness of what it means to be human and deepen the sense of mystery about our existence that a superficial scientism appears to have banished. And yet he was neither a philosopher, nor a scientist nor even an imaginative novelist. He was a man of little schooling who experienced a momentous enlightenment in his thirtieth year which never left him throughout his long life. He spent the rest of it, some sixty years, in expounding his ever-present vision. There seems no better word for it, for his cosmic model claims to be neither theory nor speculation, but a straightforward description of the world in its totality (not just the physical world that is the legitimate object of science) as seen from the perspective of infinity and eternity. It is this latter viewpoint that saves his vision from becoming

just another meta-ideology: indeed, it respects our humanistic sensitivities while honouring our link to an open-ended matrix of experience.

It would be easy, if premature, to dismiss his work on the basis of its origin, which smacks of "revelation", a source that is rightly rejected as a basis of knowledge. However, if we venture to examine his ideas, we will find ourselves seeing our familiar world in a fascinating new light. His cosmic model bears the hallmarks of elegance, harmony, simplicity and coherence that we look for in a good scientific theory. It presents a satisfying explanation of the underlying structure of the universe on the basis of a very few fundamental principles – William of Ockham would have approved. Moreover, it offers us concepts and approaches that have the power to harmonise the most disparate competing claims of science and religion (in their best aspects) to give us a broad picture of reality. The sheer optimism of his world picture is exhilarating, as is its grounding in the twin elements of eternity and infinity (so troublesome to science and religion alike) and its surprising take on the vexed question of consciousness.

One aspect of Martinus' work does need explanation. He places it in a spiritual context, while making a sharp distinction between his spiritual science and religions. He would thus appear to plunge into the morass of untestable assertions that bedevil any discussion of spirituality. And yet, his writings breathe an empiricism that is both astonishing and beguiling – he makes us blink and look anew at what we imagined reality to be. But the avowed pantheism of this cosmic model will appeal no less to those of a secular cast of mind, simply because it transcends such categories and reconfigures them within a broader context. We should not stumble over words, but see what he means by them. After all, he had to draw the words available in his surrounding culture to give expression to a vision that by its nature represents the very crucible of pre-verbal experience.

It is as if Martinus' personal consciousness had been raised to a point at which we hear the living universe speaking through him about itself. And yet he is no mouthpiece of dubious "higher beings", but steadfastly remains his own source: he describes reality almost prosaically, *if sub specie aeternitatis*, and yet in a way that resolves the deepest puzzles of existence in an appealingly human way. Simply to allow these thought pictures to pass before our inner vision is a deeply

stimulating experience: there emerges a way of understanding the world which is entirely consistent with our scientific mindset while allowing us to see pre-scientific, religious and mythological world-views as symbolic expressions of a vast underlying reality that surrounds us today as much as it ever did.

He throws detailed light onto our pre-natal and post-mortal existence in a way that weaves the periscope of a human life into a richly meaningful tapestry and shows us how we can resolve the conundrums of time and eternity in an intuitively satisfying way.

His description of the evolution of human sexuality is perhaps one of his most intriguing contributions. Our contemporary culture, characterised as it is by changing patterns of sexuality and gender, gains in depth when seen from the perspective of a gradual transformation away from the male and female states to a new kind of human being who combines the best aspects of both sexes, in a process that will gradually give rise to a transfigured human body.

His insights into the nature of health and disease are scarcely controversial in an age so aware of psychosomatic relationships. He effectively scotches the myth that ill-health strikes randomly and shows us convincingly that we can indeed be the masters of our fate, and not least of our health. In short, Martinus cosmology is a deeply inspiring well of insights into the human condition and our profound interconnections with the entire cosmos through space and time.

From a humanistic angle, Martinus' cosmic model offers a perspective that avoids the twin pitfalls of a theistic threat to our hard-won individual autonomy (characteristic of religion) and a narrow interpretation of reality (typical of scientism) that ignores the fundamentally provisional nature of the scientific enterprise. It consequently fits happily into the enlightenment project that lies at the heart of Western culture while lending it wings to expand into breathtakingly limitless dimensions.

Before Darwin, so much of life appeared inexplicable that it seemed reasonable to accept the existence of a deity. In a post-Darwinian world, we can see through the fallacy of explaining the unknown by something even more unknown. The triumphant march of science since his time has bequeathed to us a rich explanatory matrix rooted in a reasoned observation of reality. It has perhaps been less successful in describing a universe in which human beings can feel truly at home. That is where Martinus comes in. His vision gives

us the tools to reinterpret our scientific world-view, and not least the powerful explanatory principle of evolution, so that we begin to sense our central role as knowers within an evolving cosmos of which we are, as individuals, an indispensable and eternal part.

Spirituality Meets the Enlightenment

Stefan Krall

SPIRITUALITÄT – WARUM WIR DIE AUFKLÄRUNG WEITERFÜHREN MÜSSEN (Spirituality – Why the Enlightenment has to be continued)

Harald Walach (SMN)

Drachen Verlag, Klein Jasedow, 2007, 271 pp., £29.80 - ISBN 978-3927369-56-6

The Enlightenment was necessary to overcome a long period of religious dogmatism which was hindering modern science to develop. But the Enlightenment was so successful that it became to a certain extent itself a doctrine and became dogmatic. Modern science is predominantly materialistic and has separated totally from religion. The author Harald Walach studied clinical psychology and philosophy and is now Professor at the University Viadrana in Frankfurt (Oder) in Germany. His hypothesis is that we have to continue the Enlightenment to overcome the purely materialistic world view. In his book he describes how mystics as Hugo de Balma, Thomas Aquinas and Meister Eckhart came to a far deeper insight in the truth behind material things through meditation and intuition. He proclaims that we have to develop a new form of undogmatic spirituality as a counter-movement to doctrines and a possible way to find back to the sources of religion. The Enlightenment has to integrate religion, otherwise it will be faced with religious fundamentalism.

In six chapters, Walach explains his way to undogmatic spirituality and its discrimination from esoteric and other doctrines. He is in line with modern science insofar that he prefers a monistic and not a dualistic worldview. Together with a physicist he developed the weak quantum theory which is in his eyes in a position to explain even parapsychology.

The book is an excellent starting point to discuss spirituality from a different angle. But one problem with

insights through meditation remains. What is true and what is false? Walach writes that a person who is practising deep and real meditation knows what is right and wrong. But how can I know that a person who proclaims to know the truth really knows the truth? There are so many self-proclaimed gurus.

Another problem is that Walach points out that intuition through meditation is a very sophisticated technique and not easy to learn. But he says that all people should practise this type of meditation to change the world. That sounds more than unrealistic. Sometimes intuition is in my eyes also possible if one takes really the time to reflect things in this hectic world.

Finally it is doubtful that a way back to religion is attractive to many (young) people and that it is the only way to avoid fundamentalism. But anyhow the book is excellent written and gives many new ideas to reflect. It will be published soon in English by the Springer publishing company.

psychology-consciousness studies

Kensho - The Transition from Neuroscientist to Philosopher

Peter Fenwick

SELFLESS INSIGHTS

James H. Austin (SMN)

MIT Press, 2009, 352 pp., £19.44, h/b, £10.85 p/b - ISBN 978-0-262-01259-1

A delight has been on my bookcase for over a year, and I feel very guilty at not having shared it with you before now. I am of course referring to *Selfless Insight: Zen and the Meditative Transformations of Consciousness*, by James Austin. Those of you who have read James's other two Zen books – *Zen and the Brain*, 1998, and *Zen Brain Reflections*, 2006, will be pleased that this is not quite so thick and heavy, although saddened that the pages are fewer. However, as we know, good things often come in smaller packets, and that is certainly true about this book.

It was again a real pleasure to be able to absorb this book over the last year. In his thorough way, James reviews his present understanding of the Zen meditative process, but after each thought he gives the reference to either *Zen Brain Reflections*, or

Zen and the Brain. Thus the three books are woven into one seamless text and provide a master class in the integration of Zen with neuroscience. Those of you who have read fMRI expert Chris Frith's *Making up the Mind – How the Brain Creates our Mental World*, will know that there is some doubt about whether agency, the ability to act voluntarily, in fact exists. However, there is less doubt about our ability to direct attention. Iain McGilchrist points out in his book *The Master and his Emissary* that the universe we inhabit is created by the use of attention. So it is no surprise that James rates attention very highly and starts his book with a clear discussion of attentional mechanisms. He describes receptive meditation, a more open, universal, bare awareness, or more 'other referential, ' and concentrated meditation, more deliberate, more self-referential, one-pointed attention. The key to Zen is the cleaning of perception by stilling the mind and he comments that the first taste of Nirvana is reported to arise out of the deeper stage of concentration and attention.

Neuroscience continually moves on, and so does James's thinking in his understanding of neuroscience in relation to Zen. This book emphasises two of the major systems in the brain; the allocentric system, that is, the system that characterises the outside world, the 'not me', the distant, the 'other', the thing; and the egocentric system which is all to do with me, myself, my moods, my thoughts, my idea, my feelings, my body image, anything centred on me. And here the great leap forward in James's understanding has occurred. He suggests that Zen kensho is the collapse of the egocentric system, if only temporarily, allowing the allocentric system to shine forth in all the trueness of the other. He points out that with regard to truth, Pascall said "We know truth not only by reason but by the heart. It is from this last that we know first principles."

He then quotes Keats' *Ode to a Grecian Urn*, saying "Beauty is truth, truth beauty – that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know." He goes on to quote Coleridge "The beautiful arises from the perceived harmony of an object, whether sight or sound, with the inborn and constitutive rules of the judgment and imagination: and it is always intuitive." Zen, James says, prefers silence, quiet mindful observations. In solitude, beauty strikes immediately. Beauty's aesthetic judgements have universal

harmonious cause, as does the essence of Zen. In this book, one can see further James's movement from the neuroscientist to the philosopher-mystic and this adds a depth of understanding and a rare quality of intuition to what he writes.

Much of the book is centred around Kensho, the moment of Zen illumination, which James experienced on the London Transport system – apparently a fertile field for ecstatic transformations. He writes as only someone who has experienced can write. "Kensho conveys an impression of authenticity. At that moment, at the phenomenal level, the experience comprehends it as 'ultimate reality.'" He suggests that "Such an episode would unfold as follows. 1. The mental field opens up with major fresh intuitive qualities, transparent clarity, efficient processing, and a total release from the clutter of prior, burdensome, self-centred content. 2. In combination, these additions and subtractions reinforce the entire mental experience in an affirmative direction." Like many other authors who have described the effects of an illumination, he details the changes in appearance that it brings about. It is said that the enlightened move differently, and look different, which allows them to be recognised for what they are.

This book is a wonderful scientific complement to John Crook's *World Crisis and Buddhist Humanism*, in which he, like James Austin, examines the fall of the ego at the moment of enlightenment. The Buddha then saw a new and unified world without the ego, and had a deeper understanding of reality. A new philosophical movement, the Direct Path method, is arising in the West. Amongst its practitioners are a number of Westerners (for example Merrill Wolff, and more recently Tony Parsons, Rupert Spira, Jeff Foster, and Alain Forget), some of whom have followed more traditional Zen methods, and others who have applied the very essence of Zen to their elimination of the personal ego. Through rigorous discipline of self-observation they have come to understand from a practical point of view that what science is telling us about the nature of our experienced world is correct. Our experienced world is a mental construct. The latest work on attribution theory shows how the brain constructs our reality, makes us feel that we move and think and choose when in fact these processes are grounded deeply within our neurophysiology and there is little that the self-constructed image of self can do.

The Direct Path and Zen (are they not the same?) lead us through the steps of ego etiolation and disintegration until finally it collapses and there shines through the absolute nature of reality. This is called 'bare awareness.' With the subject/object mode of perception destroyed, bare awareness links all perception together in a field of unity and love. And that, it seems to me, is the true message of Kensho. James, in this book gives it the underpinning of neuroscience.

*Peter Fenwick is
President of the Network.*

A Crusade to Liberate Therapy

Isabel Clarke

IN, AGAINST AND BEYOND THERAPY: critical essays towards a 'post-professional era'

Richard House (SMN)

PPCS Books, 2010, 378 pp., £20,
p/b - ISBN 978 1 906254 32 2

In traditional societies, most people do not need to agonise about their role in life and their place in society. It was determined for them by birth; they follow the family's occupation, marry the individual chosen for them and generally fit into their allotted place. It has never been that simple for everyone. Some people inevitably fall through society's cracks. The younger sons of the fairy tales are sent out into the dark forest, inadequately equipped, to seek their fortune. The individual unwilling to be constrained by the limits imposed seeks to transcend them by initiative – the heroes and misfits common to all ages. Our society is different. We are all heroes, misfits or have dropped through the cracks, as the containment offered in past ages has all but evaporated, and we are on our own; lonely individuals inventing themselves. And yet, there is always the drive to recreate containment, security, institutions that will temper this harsh fate. And there are therapists to help us find our way, whether seriously lost or just in need of direction. This is the context of Richard House's volume of collected essays.

The volume clearly documents House's crusade, over decades, against the professionalisation and state regulation of therapy, in favour of a more intuitive, right brain, postmodern, understanding of the practice. The book starts with a very helpful account of House's personal experience of enculturation into the

world of therapy; disillusionment with creeping professionalisation, and making common cause with the alternative body, the Independent Practitioners' Network. Richard Mowbray's manifesto of this movement, and Ian Parker's work of deconstruction of diagnosis figure prominently in all that follows – namely a somewhat miscellaneous collection of book reviews and critical essays, delineating House's position on various linked topics. These include, individual therapy, the regulation of the profession, professional training and research (where he advocates narrative and participatory approaches).

As a call to arms for the independent and alternative practitioner, this book is a powerful resource. The work's ability to reach out beyond the bunker towards a more general audience is somewhat limited by House's relentlessly polemical approach. Even when expressing his abundant admiration for Georg Groddeck's embodied thinking, for instance, he is constantly swiping at Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT).

This is a pity, as there are important arguments buried amid the flying missiles. The balance between art and science in the practice of therapy. Therapy as spiritual activity. The tension between vested interests and creative practice. Critique of the medicalising and pathologising of reaction to life's adversities represented by Ian Parker's work on deconstructing psychopathology and Bracken and Thomas's critique of the medicalisation of trauma.

The partisanship goes along with the book's role as a manifesto and rallying cry for a beleaguered faction. In the true spirit of postmodern contextualisation, I must declare my own position as a representative of the (by House) derided CBT; a practitioner embedded in the NHS, so equipped with official certifications galore.

In other respects we are not so far apart. Both critics of the status quo, we share a passion to dismantle medicalisation and unmask the hollowness of diagnosis as applied to mental distress (Clarke, I. 2009). We both respect the spiritual; the other 'way of knowing' (Clarke, C. 2005 – much cited in the volume under review). While House criticises from the outside, I operate from within, because I work with those at the sharp end of the mental health spectrum. There are hardy souls who choose to work in isolation with profoundly disturbed and risky individuals, but I am not one of them – I value the safety of everyone concerned too much.

The real difference between us concerns logic. Human beings are stuck, by our very constitution, uncomfortably between two contradictory logics. House champions the intuitive; the dominant paradigm is the scientific. In reality we need both. I explore the roots of this eternal balancing act in the way our brains are wired up (Clarke 2008, 2010). Such ambiguity sits uneasily with the steamroller of polemic. The intuitive and the rational need each other. Pursuit of the intuitive and non rational, if not constantly rebalanced with reference to the rational, can lead into dangerous territory. A spurious certainty, a fundamentalism can creep in. House himself quotes George Steiner's reference to the 'drug of truth'.

This is not to say that the need for balance is never noted in this long and diverse volume. There is partial recognition of the paradox of arguing against the need for regulation to prevent abuse, while acknowledging that therapists do not really know what they are doing as they operate within the obscurity of human relating. The chapter by service users on the dangers inherent in being a therapy client because of the power gradient, also sits uneasily with opposition to all regulation.

The reality is that the Health Profession's Council has taken on the regulation of the professions of counselling and psychotherapy whether we like it or not (and most of us do not like it one bit!) I would agree that the human potential movement should not become swept up in this. I would argue for a distinction between practitioners operating within the orbit of the NHS and providing therapy to those whose everyday functioning is temporarily impaired, and those providing a private service of self exploration. After all, it is reasonable to demand accountability where public money is being spent.

In conclusion, this book is a resource and a compendium of important issues. The central message is well summarised by C.G. Jung: 'learn your theories as well as you can, but put them aside when you touch the miracle of the living soul' (quoted by House, p.279) – a both-and if ever there was.

Clarke, I. (Ed.) (2010) *Psychosis and Spirituality: consolidating the new paradigm*. Chichester: Wiley

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Research Vol.63. Huntington NY State: Nova Science Publishers Inc.

Clarke, I. (2008) *Madness, Mystery and the Survival of God*. Winchester: OBooks.

Clarke, C. (Ed.) (2005) *Ways of Knowing: science and mysticism today*. Exeter: Imprint Academic.

Isabel Clarke is a consultant clinical psychologist working in acute care in the NHS. She is editor of CBT for Acute Inpatient Mental Health Units (Routledge, 2008; with Hannah Wilson), Psychosis and Spirituality; consolidating the new paradigm (Wiley, 2010) and author of Madness, Mystery and the Survival of God (O Books, 2008).

Psycho-Therapeutics

David Lorimer

THE LAW OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

Thomas Jay Hudson

Filiquarian Publishing, 2007, 260 pp., p/b, available from Amazon – ISBN 1-59986-873-3

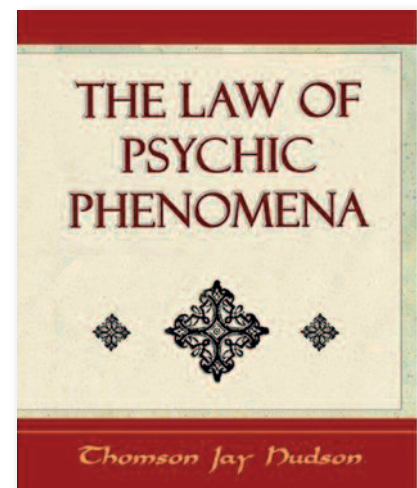
Readers may recall my review in the last issue of a number of New Thought books, including those by Thomas Troward and Charles Haanel. Both these writers refer in glowing terms to this book by Thomas Jay Hudson, published in 1890, the same year as William James's *Principles of Psychology*. So I thought I had better read it, and I have not been disappointed. It was striking that both Troward and Haanel assumed the existence of telepathy in their model of how the mind worked, and this book helps explain the theoretical background, written as it was only eight years after the founding of the Society for Psychical Research and referring to *Phantasms of the Living* - the monumental work published by Gurney, Myers and Podmore in 1886. The model proposed by Hudson was taken over and further elaborated by Troward and Haanel.

The book is subtitled 'a working hypothesis for the systematic study of hypnotism, spiritism and mental therapeutics'. This is based on three propositions: that man has two minds, one objective and the other subjective; that the subjective mind is constantly amenable to control by suggestion; and that the subjective mind is incapable of inductive reasoning. A fourth proposition is added later in the book, namely that the subjective mind has absolute control of the functions, conditions and sensations of the body. Hudson defines the difference between the

two minds, that the objective mind uses the five physical senses, and its highest function is reasoning. The subjective mind, on the other hand, is the seat of emotions, the storehouse of memory and it perceives by intuition. It performs best when people are in a passive and receptive state. Moreover, this subjective mind has psychic capacities, many of which are examined in later chapters.

Around this time there was great interest in the phenomenon of hypnotism, and there were three prominent schools. The word hypnotism was coined by Dr Braid of Manchester. The oldest school were the Mesmerists, then there was the Paris school of Charcot, where Freud studied, and finally the Nancy school. The difference between these last two is that the Paris School regarded hypnotism as a purely physical abnormal or diseased nervous condition, while the Nancy school held that suggestion is a necessary factor in the induction of hypnosis, and was open to the existence of psychic phenomena, unlike their counterparts in Paris. Hudson finds the Nancy school the most persuasive, and much of the evidence he presents would be inexplicable in physiological terms. He not only deals with clairvoyance and telepathy, but also with calculating prodigies where the information cannot possibly be generated through reason.

Interestingly, he discusses what would now be known as the experimenter or sheep/goat effect produced by what he called an adverse suggestion in the presence of avowed sceptics. The sceptics always conclude that the failure of the experiment proves their case, when it actually demonstrates the power of this adverse suggestion. Here the rational mind is set up in conflict with the intuition and is operating on the conviction that telepathy and allied phenomena are



impossible. This doubt undermines the condition of faith necessary for the successful operation of intuitive capacity. Hudson also points out examples of what came to be known as the placebo effect, commenting that the power of drugs to heal disease may be due in part to the mental impression created upon the mind of the patient by the physician. Faith or belief will favour success. Paracelsus is quoted as saying that faith produces miracles, whether it is true or false faith.

The latter part of the book considers various systems of healing or what was then called psychotherapeutics, which he considers in the light of his fundamental hypothesis. He discusses cases where the symptoms of disease can be induced in hypnotic subjects by suggestion, thus indicating the power of the subjective mind over the body. Hudson sees Jesus as the prototype of the mental and physical healer with his profound understanding of the nature of faith. In the case of healing, the suggestion is given by another and is called heterosuggestion. However, it is also possible for people to suggest things to themselves, so that the objective mind operates on the subjective mind through autosuggestion.

In proposing a new system of mental therapeutics, Hudson assumes our telepathic capacity as a communion of subjective minds, based on the extensive research already available at that time. Here, mental receptivity or passivity is also important. Some particularly interesting cases are cited, showing that suggestions made before falling asleep can be communicated through dreams. In one instance, S.H Butcher formulated the intention to appear in the bedroom of some neighbours at one in the morning, which he duly did at the appointed hour according to the account of the neighbours concerned. This suggests to Hudson that the subjective mind is amenable to control by suggestion during natural sleep as well as hypnotic sleep. This line of thinking was pursued in a series of dream telepathy experiments by Montague Ullman.

The psychic powers of the subjective mind suggest to Hudson that it partakes of the nature and attributes of the Divine Mind, a hypothesis also reiterated by Troward and Haanel. Interestingly, the extraordinary capacities of the subjective mind lead Hudson to conclude that so-called spirit guides are in fact the subjective mind, but he also postulates the equivalence of this subjective mind with the soul. On

the other hand, he sees the objective mind as a function of the physical brain, which is why it possesses none of the psychic capacity demonstrated by the subjective mind. However, Hudson reckons that the subjective mind should be subject to the positive domination of objective reason. I think I have said enough to convey the impression that this is an important book in the history of psychology and psychical research, and well worth reading.

A Way through the Wood

David Fontana

OUR PATHWAY OF BEING

Jenny Masefield

Janus Publishing Company, London 2010. xvii + 312 pp. £11.95 p/b – ISBN 978 1 85756 614 7

In his Foreword David Lorimer writes that the author 'poses the very questions that readers themselves will want to explore, and answers them through the texts selected from a wide variety of sources'. He goes on to tell us that these sources are drawn from all the main religious traditions of the world, together with some of the mystery traditions. This is an excellent brief introduction to what the book is about, and to the kind of help and guidance it is likely to offer the reader.

Essentially, Jenny Masefield follows what we might term a paper trail, a trail that does indeed, as David Lorimer tells us, take in exerts from texts drawn from all the major religious traditions of the world. She allows one exert to lead to another in a way that makes for fascinating and illuminating reading. Each of the exerts, which are interleaved with the author's own observations and conclusions, contributes towards the construction of a view of reality that goes far beyond the restricted picture presented to us by so much of material science. The reader can follow this paper trail piece by piece throughout the book, or use the book as excellent reference material, dipping into the various chapters in response to his or her particular interests. Either way, many readers will want to keep the book handy and dip into it frequently to stimulate interest and new ideas.

The ground covered by Jenny Masefield includes reincarnation, karma and its consequences, chosen lives in childhood, spirits and inspiration, mediums and their messages, possession, out-of body experiences, death and dying, afterlife judgement, the early levels of

the afterlife, and finally the concept of God. It is fair to say that the author's own interests and perhaps belief systems are very much apparent in the selection of these areas and of the texts relevant to them, and equally fair to say that not every reader will agree with her selection. Many of the areas involved raise highly contentious issues, and in choosing them and dealing with them the author tends to take the truth of her texts as read rather than to attempt any critical appraisal of them. In my view this does detract somewhat from the value of the book. Certainly her chosen texts remind us of the importance of debating the arguments for the reality of such things as reincarnation and chosen lives and the fruits of karma, but so much in the spiritual life (including afterlife experiences) is influenced by the individual's cultural background, and so much depends upon how we interpret the wealth of (often conflicting) evidence available to us.

For example, an extensive survey that two SPR colleagues and I carried out into mediumship some years ago revealed that at least half our sample reported they had never received evidence from spirit communicators in favour of reincarnation. Having worked with mediums for some 40 years, I have also found some of them make clear that if they were not alert to the possibility, they could easily misinterpret memories retained by spirit communicators from their life on earth as memories of past lives of their own. In addition, some of these communicators have informed mediums they have 'never heard' of reincarnation. Others have suggested reincarnation is a matter of choice, while others have claimed it is only possible from the lower levels of the afterlife, where some individuals are only too anxious to rush back into material existence. None of this provides us with a conclusive argument against reincarnation, but it does demonstrate that the picture may be very much more varied and complex than at first sight appears – a picture that becomes even more complex if we taken into account the almost exponential increase in world population.

Similarly, the concept of karma may have seemed to make good sense in past centuries, when populations were much smaller and less geographically mobile than they are now, making it possible for individuals to encounter repeated patterns of experience that appeared to offer opportunities for past-life mistakes to be redressed. However, our highly complex, over-populated,

rapidly changing, and socially and geographically mobile world make it difficult to see how a straight karmic relationship from lifetime to lifetime could operate. Such variables clearly upset the social order in which karma, at least in its usually understood form, could be the general rule of life.

Arguments could also be raised against other areas of the book, but such arguments do not detract from the book's highly stimulating and thought-provoking nature. Full of ideas, bright with scholarship and for the most part well-written, it inevitably leaves the reader wanting to debate with the author, an experience that would doubtless be as rewarding as the book itself. For these various reasons I rate this book highly, and recommend it strongly. It is a valuable and important addition to the literature, and I congratulate the author on her achievement.

David Fontana is the author of 'Is There an Afterlife?' and 'Beyond Death'. He was a professor of psychology and former President of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR).

A New Mythology for our Times

David Lorimer

THE ARCHETYPAL COSMOS

Kieron Le Grice (SMN)

Floris Books, 2010, 328 pp., £16.99, p/b – ISBN 978-086315-775-2

Some readers will have read Richard Tarnas' *The Passion of the Western Mind*, and his more recent book, *Cosmos and Psyche*, where he outlines the kind of archetypal cosmology elaborated in this new book. Many people, especially scientists, any association with astrology is off-putting, but one needs to understand the differences between popular and archetypal astrology in order to do the argument justice. Following my review of Rick's book, I also printed a critique by John Rowan, to which Kieron Le Grice replied in the following issue. Readers will have to make up their own minds about the merits of archetypal astrology, but there is no doubt that it seeks to address an enormously significant issue, namely the relationship between what we call inner and outer aspects of reality. Since the 17th century and especially in the philosophy of Descartes, these are sharply demarcated into *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, and much philosophical energy has been

expended on working out how mind and matter can possibly interact. It may well be that we have simply misconstrued this relationship, and that the outer is a much closer reflection of the inner than we normally realise, as suggested by what Jung calls synchronicity. Correspondingly, we have created dichotomies between subject and object, and nature and spirit.

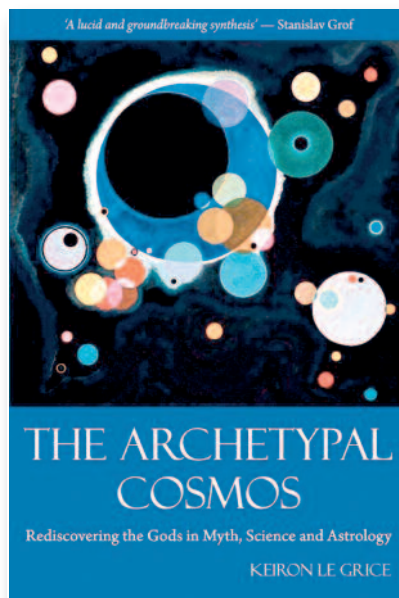
Readers will be familiar with calls for a new world-view, and this book elaborates just such a perspective. The architecture of the argument is carefully and systematically laid out to guide the reader towards a new understanding. The work of Joseph Campbell is important in this respect in that he redefined the status of myth and mythology – people tend to dismiss myths as lies instead of understanding the power of their symbolism. Many thinkers have also called for a new story or a new myth in the widest sense. Kieron identifies five functions of myth: mystical or metaphysical, cosmological, sociological, and pedagogical or psychological. It follows that any adequate new story must fulfil these functions and be progressive rather than regressive. The process must also correspond to the dynamics of individuation in the journey from ego to Self, representing not only a personal centre but 'a centre that connects one to being as a whole.' This is a living rather than abstract relationship to the divine and implies a new form of spiritual realisation.

The next chapter explains the fundamental principles of archetypal astrology based on the work of CG Jung and others, giving an explanation of the elements of human personality according to symbolic astrology. The author also discusses the evolutionary

significance of the hero myth in uniting the personal with the transpersonal, the individual with the universal, the conscious with the unconscious, and the masculine and feminine. In this sense, representative lives like those of Goethe, Nietzsche, Jung and Campbell are a pre-figuration of wider human possibilities, although arguably with an over-masculine emphasis. The map provided by archetypal astrology can shed some light on one's life patterns, both with respect to the time of birth (natal astrology) and to the timing of one's experiences represented by transit astrology. Such maps can provide an extra perspective on life, similar to consulting the I Ching.

An important part of Kieron's overall argument is the consonance of archetypal astrology with the new paradigms of holism and organicism. It goes without saying that archetypal astrology contradicts a mechanistic and reductionist worldview. No materialistic thinker will be convinced by these arguments, and will probably be underinformed about the implications of the new scientific models discussed here. These imply a wider understanding of rationality and include systems theory, self-organisation, process philosophy and synchronicity. They also embrace meaning and purpose, symbolism and geometry. The next step is to understand self-organisation in relation to what Kieron calls the Cosmic Mind. Mind can be understood in an evolutionary and systems context, as suggested by such thinkers as Fritjof Capra, David Bohm, Rupert Sheldrake, Ervin Laszlo, Brian Swimme, Thomas Berry, James Hillman and Gregory Bateson. The outer aspect of this uses the language of Gaia, while the inner is reflected in the unity of mystical experience. Teilhard de Chardin proposes that 'coextensive with their Without, there is a Within to things.' This proposition underlies Kieron's whole argument, and it is by his own admission a theoretical conjecture. He reinforces it with an explanation of transpersonal psychology and the collective unconscious, drawing on the work of Stanislav Grof, postulating, like Tarnas, the underlying identity of psyche and cosmos.

The next step is a further discussion of the dynamic ground in Bohm's theory of the implicate order, suggesting a form of dual aspect monism where mind and matter have a common origin. Kieron arrives at a formula where the dynamic ground of energy is the generative matrix of existence unfolding according to an underlying pattern of self



organisation into the explicate realms of psyche and cosmos. Expressed spiritually, Spirit is the divine ground of everything, its unfolding is ordered by the universal logos, and this creates the *unus mundus* of the physical cosmos and psyche, a correspondence of outer and inner space. This is linked in Kieron's argument with the symbolic significance of planetary positions. He brings together the oneness of *Atman* and *Brahman* with a psychological understanding of individuation and evolution which our individual lives reflect and embody in a form of cosmological dynamics were self-realisation enables us to reach a wider and deeper cosmological identity.

The book takes the reader on an epic journey through many contrasting landscapes of thought. In the final chapter, Kieron draws on the work of Jean Gebser, with his mapping of various phases in the evolution of consciousness, moving towards what he calls integral consciousness. He shows how his thought is consistent with Gebser's formulations in its integral structure and awareness of both the ground of being and the evolutionary journey. While acknowledging the demythologisation process of the last 200 years, he nevertheless shows how archetypal astrology can fulfil the four functions of a mythology specified by Campbell. It is the responsibility of every aware person to become what Edward Edinger calls a carrier of the consciousness of wholeness, because only in this way can the world itself become whole and a new era unfolds. The book is a brilliant synthesis of new ideas, and readers will have to decide for themselves whether the argument is ultimately compelling. It is certainly stated in a comprehensive manner. For a rather different view, see Gunnell Minett below.

Where do we go from Here?

Gunnell Minett

Much of the turbulence many experience in today's society is often ascribed to the weakening role of religion and shared cultural values. These things, which previously acted as our moral compass for generations, do not seem to apply to today's world. Some call it the 'post-modern' society where religious, cultural, scientific, ecological and other beliefs and values seem locked in a constant battle for supremacy both nationally and internationally.

We need a new world myth to unite around, argues Le Grice in this book.

An archetypal myth that can be shared by scientists, religious leaders and believers in a variety of theories, from atheism to New Age and astrology. A view that will bring together psyche, spirituality, mythology, metaphysics, science and cosmos as a whole.

In this book Le Grice sets out to suggest such a new world myth. He presents a number of very compelling arguments in favour of such a thing from a range of prominent thinkers, such as; Carl Jung, Teilhard de Chardin, Friedrich Nietzsche, Ken Wilber, Richard Tarnas, Ervin Laszlo, Stanislav Grof, as well as scientists such as; James Lovelock, David Bohm, Ilya Prigogine, to mention just a few.

His basis for this new world myth is, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, astrology, which he links to all his references (even if he is sometimes asking the reader to stretch their imaginations in so doing). To give just a few examples, Le Grice compares Jung's ideas of archetypes and synchronicity with the star constellations that form the basis of astrology. He also compares Grof's birth matrix, i.e. the individual experiences before and after birth, which, according to Grof, have a major influence on everyone's life, with the importance of their star constellation at birth. Another example is the special and ominous star constellation that coincided with the latest financial crisis and the much more positive constellation that was in place when the first astronauts set foot on the moon.

Even if all the arguments are very well presented and compelling, it is questionable if they really stand up to deeper review. Even if, for instance, Grof's theories of birth experiences are well established in themselves, they do not automatically present evidence in favour of astrology. And, perhaps more importantly, if the star constellation at birth determines much of the outcome of a person's life, there needs to be at least a brief mention of free will, traumas later in life, accidents causing premature birth, caesarean section and other factors that argue against this. In the absence of this, it will be a struggle to convince many people to adopt this new world view.

Similarly, it is equally questionable to refer to astrology for issues such as a financial crisis or space travel. There are a number of very convincing explanations of the latest financial crisis relating to history, political mistakes, personal greed, flock mentality, etc. To refer only to astrology is to miss an opportunity to learn from previous mistakes which is something we human beings are far

too often guilty of. The same applies to the reference to space travel, which indeed was a positive achievement. Still rather than seeing it as a sign of a "remarkable expansion in our knowledge of the psyche" (p.290) as the author does, one can equally see it as emerging from a background of cold war competition and personal striving for historical recognition at any cost. In addition – there is no explanation of the fact that the actual time for the first launch was determined far more by the weather in Florida than planetary movements.

In summary - presenting compelling evidence of correlations is not the same as establishing a causal link; evidence of a mechanism as to how one leads to the other is also required. But perhaps more questionable, given the author's ambition, is to present a world view that (while interesting in itself) is replete with archetypal symbols and astrology. This is hardly going to convince scientists to abandon their rather more rigid ways of reasoning. In particular not when Le Grice also names scientists such as biologist Richard Dawkins and philosopher Daniel Dennett as 'leading crusaders' for 'demythologising sceptical atheism' and argues that, "... sceptical atheism – the product of deficient mental consciousness – is equally singular, myopic, and fundamentalist in its unquestioned servitude to the cults of reason and scientism" (p.277). Instead this indicates a certain level of elitism and lecturing-to-the-ignorant rather than a real attempt to unite all groups of society around a new world view.

Although the main part of the argument in this book is very compelling and interesting, the attempt to include astrology in the proposed new world view seems a step too far. And if convincing someone who agrees with most of the argument has failed, the struggle to win over materialists, with a very different outlook on life, definitely seems an ambition too far.

The Social Brain

David Lorimer

MIND AND LOVE

Lloyd Fell (SMN)

Biosong, 2010, 266 pp.,
£12.24 from Lulu.com,
p/b – ISBN 978-1-4466-4333-4

I had the pleasure of meeting the author at the Sydney group of the SMN in March (and again at the Mystics and Scientists conference), and readers will find an account of

his recent lecture in the news section. This book is the fruit of 30 years reflection, bringing together developments in social neuroscience with the biological theories of Maturana and Varela, with a particular emphasis on autopoiesis - the way in which we create ourselves and meaning, largely through conversation and social interaction. Lloyd sees our minds as a fusion of love and will, more specifically as 'the property of our being which connects us to one another and our world in such a way that we can maintain our autonomous existence and create the meaning we need.' This means managing the unavoidable tension between being oneself and belonging to the world, or, as I put it in my educational project, the capacity to stand out and to fit in. We all need to be both autonomous and connected.

The structure of the book is based around seven aspects of knowing: autonomy, connection, proactive perception, 'emotioning', acceptance, conversation and unity or mindfulness. Each of these aspects has its own blind spot. When we fail to recognise our autonomy, we think of ourselves as determined by outside influences and look outside for a corresponding security. When we deny emotional interconnectedness, we place too much emphasis on abstract rationality and denigrate imagination. When we misrepresent knowledge, we overestimate expertise and underestimate the power of conversation in creating culture.

There is an interesting chapter on seeing and hearing, pointing out that perception and illusion are in fact the same process, as Richard Gregory suggested. Thoreau is quoted as saying that it is not what you look at that matters, it's what you see, while Mark Twain quipped that you can't depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus. In a visually dominated culture like our own, it is easy to forget the importance of listening, as Yehudi Menuhin observes when he says that it is not sufficient to touch and see to begin to comprehend the mystery of life, but rather we need to hear, to listen, and in this way Unite heart and mind and soul. This reminds us of our multifaceted capacities.

Another interesting chapter discusses the limits of language and metaphors, quoting Wittgenstein as saying that the limits of my language are the limits of my mind. I'm not sure if he is correct here, because it seems that he's referring to explicit rather than what Sir Michael Polanyi called tacit knowledge, which we may not be able to express in words.

Metaphors are even more powerful since they 'define our reality, shape our thoughts, our plans and our expectations, and form the basis for our actions.' They are intimately connected to our sense of meaning and indeed our very self-identity. For this reason, Lloyd seeks to embrace what he calls the whole spectrum of knowing, a continuum from knowing to not knowing, from physical to spiritual, from material to nonmaterial. Chris Clarke advances a similar argument but in a rather different form in his book also reviewed in this issue.

One legacy of mechanistic thinking, as Mary Midgley and Iain McGilchrist have also pointed out, is the depreciation of feeling and emotion characteristic of right hemisphere thinking. Yet, as Lloyd insists, it is our emotional connections that make life meaningful. Indeed, thinking and feeling are inseparable, and we now know a great deal more about molecules of emotion and the importance of oxytocin. The brain is not only a means of cognition but also the social organ, as modern neuroscience has demonstrated. Culture itself is the product of a co-creative process involving different forms of social interaction. Think of the Paris salons of the 18th century, Enlightenment literary and debating societies and 19th century groups for self-improvement - I was just reading in Andrew Carnegie's autobiography about the impact of just such a club to which he belonged in New York. More recently, we have David Bohm's dialogue groups and conversation cafés as new ways of interacting more creatively and democratically. We are coming to realise the importance of meaning and the devastating effects of a culture of meaninglessness as implied by mechanistic science. We cannot live without connection to each other, to

the depths within and to Nature, and books like this are a timely reminder of the many levels at which we live, encouraging us to make these connections.

The Continued Project for a Scientific Psychology

Gunnel Minett

THE NEUROSCIENCE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY, HEALING THE SOCIAL BRAIN

Louis Cozolino (with foreword by Daniel J Siegel), Second Edition

W.W. Norton & Company, 2010, New York and London, www.wwnorton.com, 459pp., £28.00, h/b - ISBN 978 0393 70642 0

The very last sentence of this book offers a very good summary of what this book is about. Cozolino writes: "From my perspective, the value of neuroscience for psychotherapists is not to explain away the mind or generate new forms of therapy, but to help us grasp the neurobiological substrates of the talking cure in an optimistic and enthusiastic continuation of Freud's Project for a Scientific Psychology".

Not only does the book offer a very thorough overview of the latest developments in neurobiology, it also gives clear links back to Sigmund Freud's work as a neuroscientist that lead to the formation of modern psychotherapy. Although Freud moved away from studying the brain to exploring how the 'talking cure' could influence and change a person's mental state in a positive way, his work was always based on his previous research on the brain.

For a long time his followers have continued down the road of exploring various forms of psychotherapy, some more removed from Freud's neuroscience roots than others. But, as Cozolino points out in this book, the optimal approach to modern psychotherapy is to make the most of our rapidly growing knowledge of how the brain works; to acquire a basic understanding of interpersonal neurobiology. By mixing his overview of the latest neuroscientific developments and theories with practical examples from his own practice as psychotherapist, Cozolino illustrates this beyond any doubt.

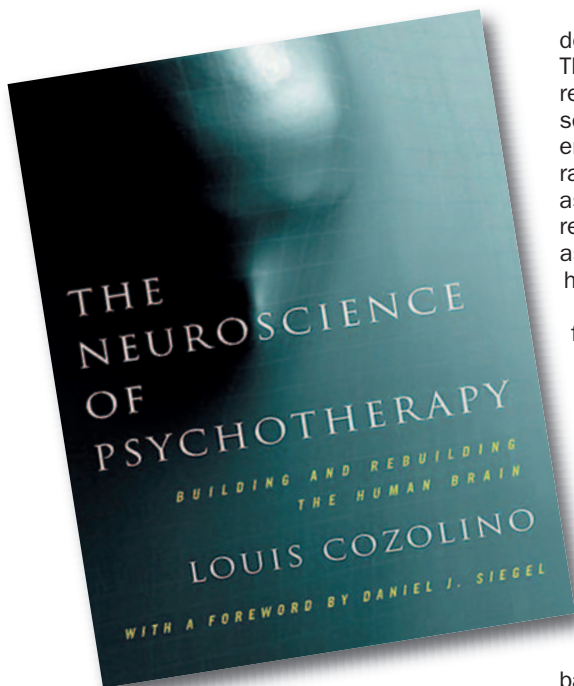
On the one hand Cozolino points to research by Orinsky and Howard which concluded that: "the quality of the emotional connection between patient and therapist was far more



important than the therapist's theoretical orientation". At the same time he also presents very clear evidence that knowing the theory makes a huge difference and argues that: "All forms of therapy are successful to the degree to which they have found a way to tap into processes that build and modify neural structures within the brain". He also argues that, rather than telling the patients what their problems are, with the right understanding of neuroscience, the therapist can instead explain how we all function.

Because psychotherapy is very much a question of finding the right approach to each individual case, it certainly helps to know how the brain works and what influences the mind. For psychotherapy to be successful it is essential to know how to work optimally with the brain and to utilise and stimulate neuroplasticity to change relevant neural circuits. Regardless of whether the approach is 'talk therapy' or a medical intervention, the end result is still the same. For behaviour to change, it will require changes in the neural pathways, and being up to date with the latest research in this field is definitely a big plus.

Even if this book is a second edition, the update is so significant that it is worth getting this second edition. One reason for this is the rapid changes in this field. In addition to presenting the newest research it also offers an excellent overview of neurobiology which makes it essential reading for all psychotherapists.



Beyond the Body

Gunnel Minett

SOUL FLIGHT - Astral Projection & the Magical Universe

Donald Tyson

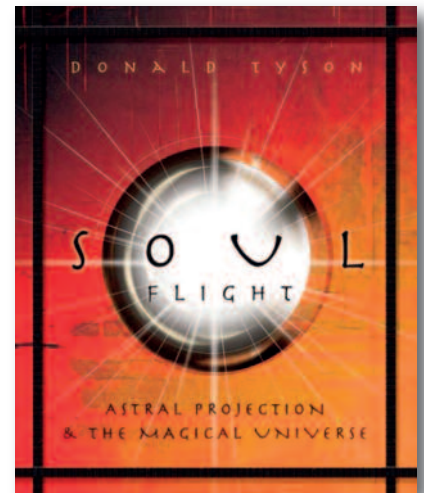
Llewellyn Publications, Minnesota, www.llewellyn.com, 2007, paperback, 341 p £ 16.99
ISBN 978-0-7387-1087-7

As an overview of astral projection or travelling this book does its task. In the first part of the book the reader is presented with a brief history of shamanic rituals, witchcraft, folklore around fairies, religion, bilocation, spiritualism, theosophy all the way to CIA research on remote viewing and UFO abduction. Just browsing through the headlines of the first part gives a clear indication of how central the concept of astral projection is, and has been, to human beliefs throughout history.

It is not so clear that the book brings much new knowledge into this field. Even if the second part of this book offers detailed information on how to learn astral projection it leaves many questions unanswered. Why this is the case is not entirely clear. The author hints in several places that he knows the full truth behind astral projection but without going into further details. In particular, hints as to how quantum physics may play a role in the apparent ability to appear in more than one place at a time were very interesting. But for some reason the author chose not to develop this any further.

We also learn that astral travelling does not involve the body as such. The author is very clear that the body remains in one place and it is somehow only our awareness of our environment that changes. But again, rather than attempting an explanation as to how this is possible, all we really learn is that it is not the same as dreaming even if the two states have many similarities.

Being an absolute amateur in this field (apart from some personal 'odd' experiences) it is difficult to evaluate the information given in the book. The only area where I can make any kind of comparison with other books on this subject is the chapter on Runes. My reaction here is that there seem to be two versions of the history of runes. On the one hand there is what can be described as a 'New Age' version which tends to be quite different from the other version based on history from the countries where runes were used the most. Perhaps this has something to do



with the fact that the use and understanding of runes was shrouded in secrecy. This was usually only taught during initiations of selected people. At the same time runes seem to have been an early version of graffiti, describing who was killed and who they killed in early Nordic battles.

It must be assumed that the old secret teachings of astral projection, witchcraft, and runes, etc .. have somehow survived in their original potent form and that this is the teaching the author has been tapping into in this book. Perhaps it is due to its traditional way of teaching to the initiated only that the book holds back somewhat in describing the techniques in fuller detail. Still as an overview it is well worth a read, even if I personally would be tempted to go easy on the practice part without further guidance.

Electricity and Possession

Alan Sanderson

RAPID ENTITY ATTACHMENT RELEASE

Athanasios N. Komianos

Corfu Greece, 2011, 208 pp., - ISBN 978-1-4467-7216-4

This publication, on the use of electrical acupuncture (EA), for entity release, has been awaited for several years. The author is a hypnotherapist, with a special interest in past life regression therapy. The cover states: "This book is a manual for open-minded, professional therapists to assist their clients in gaining rapid relief from serious and debilitating psychosomatic conditions. Rapid Entity Attachment Release is a new multi-dimensional approach and a radical breakthrough in producing swift and lasting relief."

We are reminded in the opening pages of Carl Wickland successful use

of static electricity in driving out possessing spirits. This provides the rationale for Mr Komianos' use of non-invasive EA. The first 110 pages are taken up with historical information and an introduction to EA for entity release. Then come six case studies, two of them verbatim. EA was used, in five of these, to complement the hypnotherapeutic approach. I was only persuaded in one case that this was the essential factor. Perhaps I am too demanding. However, I think the procedure has promise.

Even though this book does not live up to its claims, it serves a valuable function in bringing a new method of working to our attention. There is much still to do, but I believe Mr Komianos may well prove his case.

ecology-futures studies

The Missing Feedback Loop

David Lorimer

CASSANDRA'S DILEMMA

Alan AtKisson

Earthscan, 2010, 226 pp., £18.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-84971-172-2

THE SUSTAINABILITY TRANSFORMATION

Alan AtKisson

Earthscan, 2010, 323 pp., £19.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-84971-244-6

The first edition of *Cassandra's Dilemma* – subtitled 'how to be an optimist in a pessimist's world' – came out in 1999 and rapidly became a best-seller. Readers may recall that Cassandra's prophecies were always true, but she was cursed so that no one believed her. A similar fate has befallen ecological prophets who understand that humanity (or the human, socially constructed 'World') is on a collision course with Nature on the basis of their understanding of current trends. They warn people about what is happening but the vast majority either do not or will not respond. Cassandras are in a no-win situation: if their warnings are right, then catastrophe ensues, but if they are wrong, then people blame them for exaggerating the dangers. A successful outcome is a failed prediction of disaster because corrective action is taken. In his preface to the second edition, the author remarks that many of the

trends he analysed detailing the effects of humanity's impact on the Earth have moved from the future to the present tense.

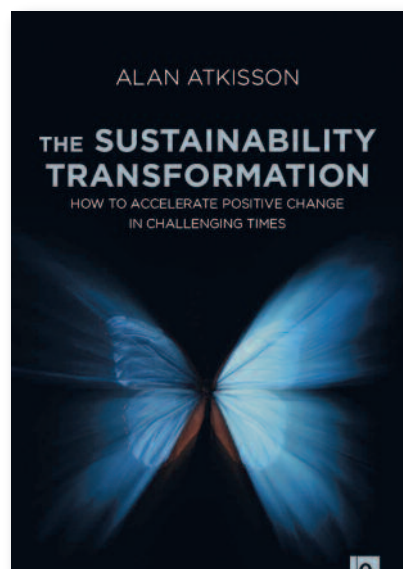
It is common to hear that the dire predictions of *The Limits to Growth*, published 40 years ago, have not come about, but this ignores the underlying systems logic of unrestrained growth leading to overshoot and collapse – only the timing is uncertain. The critical need, and indeed message of the book, is to understand global dynamics in terms of complex, interconnected systems. In this case we have the interplay between ecological, economic and political systems, where the dynamics of the economics and politics prevail. As Elliot Richardson put it, people are not prepared to accept the kind of political leadership required to address these challenges. Al Gore is even more emphatic when he says that the maximum that is politically feasible or even imaginable falls short of what is ecologically necessary. A further significant factor is that the feedback from the Earth that might galvanise the necessary action is too slow. Here Cassandras try to provide the missing feedback loop through their vociferous warnings. But how much power do individuals have when the drivers are immense and impersonal, and many, like population increase, are already locked in for the next 40 years?

One critical distinction suggested by the author is between growth and development: there are clear limits to growth, but no limits to development. This idea is gaining ground with the emergence of new forms of measurement featuring well-being as well as consumption. Another fruitful distinction helps explain contrasting responses to our environmental challenges. Individualists believe in human ingenuity and the resilience of

Nature, while Egalitarians argue that Nature is buckling under human pressure and must be protected. Hierarchists believe in regulation and control. The main standoff occurs between the first two types, and it is easier politically to muddle through and hope for the best, at least in the short-term, especially since our economic and political systems are both geared to the short-term. It is clear that business as usual prevails because we have not yet experienced what the author felicitously terms the 'minimum necessary catastrophe' to force a change of course.

The second book continues with a detailed explanation of AtKisson's policy solution in the form of the sustainability transformation, a way of accelerating positive change. We know that sustainable practices are the condition of social survival but we also realise that the unsustainable systems currently in place will take some shifting and that the World system will need reinventing through our conscious intervention. It is an inspiring and practical agenda based on what he calls ISIS – Indicators, Systems, Innovations and Strategy. Instead of standing back and wringing one's hands, one can be part of this larger NGO movement. The Indicator 'Compass' has the four axes of Nature, Economy, Society and Wellbeing, which can be used as an assessment tool in various contexts.

Another model is the 'Amoeba' of cultural change, depicting different fundamental attitudes affecting decisions to adopt, ignore or resist any particular innovation. These include iconoclasts, reactionaries, laggards, curmudgeons, controllers, innovators, change agents, transformers, mainstreamers and even spiritual recluses. Each of these categories is explained in more detail, for instance one recognises curmudgeons by frequent expressions of convinced pessimism and derisive laughter aimed at your naive efforts. The amoeba acronym itself stands for Adapting the innovation, Mobilising the change agents, Organising the transformers, Easy does it to the mainstreamers, Build momentum at the margins, and Avoid the reactionaries, laggards and curmudgeons. All these interactions occur within a context of power, which is sometimes underestimated and misunderstood by green activists. However, successful sustainable development 'depends absolutely on an open-eyed understanding of the dynamics of power'. The change agents also have a power of their own in terms of invitation, volunteering, facilitating, simplicity, creativity, patience and even the power of not seeking power.



Throughout both books, there are delightful vignettes from AtKisson's diary when he is attending meetings in various parts of the world. He is also a blues guitarist, and sometimes a desperate situation calls for some humour - one of his songs is 'Dead Planet Blues', which is a regular request at his conference appearances. Both books are highly engaging and informative, so I would particularly recommend reading *Believing Cassandra* and see if it helps make you more of an optimist in a pessimist's world. As Paul Hawken observes in the Foreword, the book is like a neurotransmitter signalling to humanity what to do and what not to do.

An Agrarian Renaissance

David Lorimer

GOOD FOOD FOR EVERYONE FOREVER

Colin Tudge

Pari Press, 2011, 174 pp., £9.99, p/b – ISBN 978-88-95604-13-8

This is a revised and updated version of Colin's earlier book *Feeding People is Easy*, and introduces his new Campaign for Real Farming, involving the radical idea of a People's takeover of the world's food supply and the establishment of a College for Enlightened Agriculture. His basic argument is that everyone on the planet could be fed properly and abundantly without cruelty to animals or destroying the environment. The current food system is the exact reverse, involving mistreatment of animals and destruction of the resource base on which our food depends. This is largely the result of existing economic and political structures, and the policies that derive from them. The main drivers of the current system are governments, corporates and banks, operating on the basis of neo-liberalism and finance capitalism. These groups are convinced that our current economic system actually works, and that more the same desirable, even if it is moving us towards ultimate collapse of the systems on which we depend.

We know that the global population will reach about 9 billion people by 2050, which is 2 billion more than the current population. Colin sets out the current situation and the main trends creating the future. He points out that modern crops are already living at the physiological limits and insists, correctly in my view, that genetic engineering cannot and will not provide an instant fix. The good news is that increasing numbers of people are becoming aware of the

situation and realising that an alternative agricultural and economic system must be established. However, this will only come about with a critical mass insisting on action, but this is unlikely to occur until the present system reaches a more critical point. The trouble is, that, by and large, power hungry people are in charge of the system.

We actually need to go back to first principles and start with three questions: what is necessary? What is possible? And what is right? The current food system is not delivering what is necessary, with 1 billion people undernourished and over 1 billion overnourished. Nor does it address the third moral question of what is right. For instance, under our current system, livestock consume 50% of the world's wheat and barley, 80% of the days, and 90% of the soya. At this rate, by 2050, livestock will be consuming enough cereal to feed 4 billion people. This means, as I pointed out in my review of *The Meat Crisis* in the last issue, that we cannot continue to increase our consumption of meat at the projected rate. Happily, the interests of the planet coincide with those of our health if we eat plenty of plants, not much meat and maximum variety.

If we are to provide good food for everybody indefinitely, then we need productive, sustainable and resilient farms on a much smaller scale than today. Industrial farming insists on further centralisation, enlargement and concentration. It is not actually designed to produce good food for everyone, but the cheapest possible whatever the ultimate cost. The main object is to produce maximum profits in minimum time by maximising turnover, adding 'value' and minimising costs. This translates into what Colin calls cash efficiency, which is absolutely not the same as biological efficiency. This latter term means producing as much good food as possible by minimally destructive means. Sound biology implies respect for the physical needs of human beings, as well as of crops and livestock. Much current food is not biologically sound, and has been shown to lead to the obesity crisis – junk food contains few if any micronutrients along with high levels of salt, sugar and calories. Colin provides plenty of evidence to back up his argument. Agriculture is not simply a business like any other, but makes a unique contribution to culture.

His solution is Renaissance rather than revolution, involving a People's takeover of the world's food supply. We need to rethink the economy and governance, activating democracy beyond its current form of what Quentin Hogg called elective

dictatorship. He advocates entering an age of biology based on a new understanding of our relationship with nature and a corresponding holistic science or science assisted craft. Traditional agriculture is in fact 'an exercise in applied biology, carried out with proper humility.' Traditional farmers are in a sense craftspeople. This brings Colin to the Campaign for Real Farming, building on the philosophy of Fritz Schumacher. Arguably, the Renaissance he calls for is already happening at a local level in many parts of the world, but most of the power and money remains within the current system, especially since food companies provide funds to elect politicians. It has to be, literally, a grassroots revolution, also propagated through the Internet with examples of best practice. Colin has certainly made a start, but there is a long way to go. See his website www.campaignforrealfarming.org for further information and ways in which you can become involved.

Radical Transparency

David Lorimer

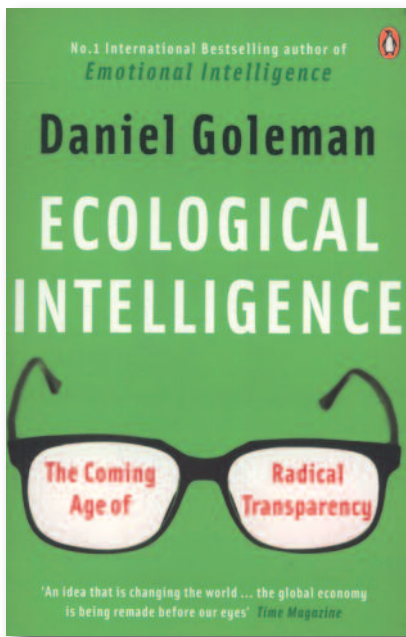
ECOLOGICAL INTELLIGENCE

Daniel Goleman

Penguin, 2010, 276 pp., £9.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-141-09309-1

Daniel Goleman is best known for his work on emotional intelligence, which he then developed into a theory of social intelligence. He introduces the idea of ecological intelligence, not so much as a capacity but as a means of knowing more about what we buy and therefore being able to apply our values to our consumption. Industrial ecology can now give us a complete life cycle assessment of the impact of products from manufacturer to disposal. This enables us to make choices based on full information and play our part in helping create a more sustainable society. It is surprising to learn that the cotton made into a T-shirt to 2700 L to grow, and even more so to read that between 4,000 and 6,000 t of sunscreen is washed off swimmers each year and contributes to the growth of a virus that attacks coral reefs. Few people would know to give this a second thought. We haven't noticed many of the hidden costs of what we buy. This is one way in which we are implicated in the environmental problems which we ourselves berate. It is not enough to blame these activities on corporate behaviour.

Ecological intelligence implies both knowledge and empathy, based on



the realisation that we are embedded in ecological systems. We now need a more intelligent collective response to our predicament. One example is the use of antibiotics in farm factories which lead to the breeding of resistant bacteria that eventually make the antibiotics redundant and necessitate a stronger version. Awareness of this fact would increase resistance to such factory farming methods. Joseph Stiglitz has shown how information can shape the operation of markets, especially when sellers know more than buyers and can withhold information in order to maintain a competitive advantage. Once this information becomes available, transparency is increased and consumers can make a more informed choice. This process is being facilitated by websites such as GoodGuide who provide the necessary background information. The more consumers know, the more informed choices will become, and this will then drive the market to make changes in accordance with the preferences expressed. This in turn will bring together ethics and good business practice. So changes in brand preferences can be fed back to the company to encourage them to modify the product. For the purposes of consumer information, a traffic light system can simplify the translation process.

Social networks can also function to pass ethical messages around. People won't necessarily buy the cheapest item, but two-thirds of shoppers are prepared to pay more to make an ethical choice, so the emergence of radical transparency enables them to do this more easily. This proportion may well be set to increase among the young. There is an interesting discussion of the

shampoo market, analysing different price points and also discussing the nature of the chemicals that make it up. Many of the ingredients are potentially carcinogenic, but few consumers are aware of this and decisions to purchase are more strongly correlated with emotions than cognition - this new discipline is called neuroeconomics. Being aware of this can potentially enable us to make more rational decisions.

Over the next 20 years, we will have the opportunity of making upgrades to products a great deal more sustainable than they currently are. It is not enough to minimise ecological impact, we must seek to manufacture more sustainable products. In addition, life cycle assessment will enable governments to impose taxes that fairly reflect environmental damage. This creates a form of incentive through regulation. With radical transparency, companies will find that they can more easily retain customers by looking after the environment - they can gain market share through ecologically superior products. So shareholder value may be more closely aligned with public good. The book breaks a new frontier in bringing together business and the environment with our consumption patterns.

general

Practical Wisdom

David Lorimer

SUCCESS INTELLIGENCE

Robert Holden

Hay House, 2008, 352 pp., £9.99, p/b - ISBN 978-1-84850-167-6

IT'S YOUR CHOICE

Annie Cap

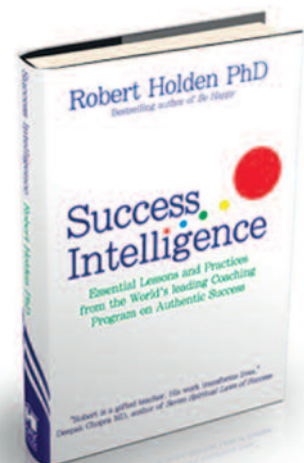
Paragon Publishing, 2010, 229 pp., £15.99, p/b - ISBN 978-1-907611-20-9

These are both excellent books in their own way, written by two people with very different backgrounds and experience. Robert Holden is the Director of The Happiness Object and Success Intelligence and work on TV documentaries as well as with many companies. Annie also has a corporate background in telecommunications, but is now working as a business coach and helping people recover from chronic illnesses. Holden's story begins with his alcoholic father, who spent the last nine years of his life homeless. His early career was meteoric and

highly active, typical of the manic society in which we live, exceeding the speed limit of intelligence and common sense. We are caught up in busyness and lose our connection to what is really important and real. He refers to a cartoon of a man sitting in his own coffin with the computer on his lap, answering e-mails, with the caption 'even on your deathbed the inbox will still be full.' The coaching he does can take people beyond this busyness and can be an opportunity to look more deeply and have an important conversation which we would normally be too busy to have. The reader can also participate in the process by answering various questions at the end of each chapter.

Holden knows the world of work very well, and suggests that the modern formula reads: more success plus greater speed plus fewer resources plus constant uncertainty plus increased competition. Some people just get out, like Michael playing acoustic guitar in the subway in New York, when he used to work eight days a week for a high six-figure salary. Another client said that he worked full-time, and lived part-time, so the question becomes how one can work not harder but more smartly. His case histories add texture and substance to his discussion. Robert puts great emphasis on self-knowledge as a primary key to Success Intelligence, quoting Lao Tsu as saying 'knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom.' So we have to ask ourselves about our relationship to ourselves, i.e. our self-image in relation to perception, beliefs, thoughts, communication, behaviour and decisions.

The seven parts to the book discuss vision, potential, wisdom, relationships, courage, grace and renaissance. They all encourage the



reader to go deeper. Holden puts spiritual goals, i.e. vision and values at the centre, with other goals surrounding them: character or being, achievement or doing, acquisition or having, relationship or giving, present time or now, and destination or going. This enables people to have a more integral approach and make sure that we do not lose sight of our higher needs, such as our need to give and receive love. We also find that relationships are important in all contexts, which means that good communication is vital. Holden observes that if people invested more in their work relationships, they might not have to work so hard. He also suggests that we need a failure policy, by which he means the capacity to see value in temporary reverses or mistakes. This encourages us to see success as a journey rather than the destination, living in the present rather continually deferring our sense of success and existing in a stressful state of permanent impatience. He has a very amusing single sentence description of the typical manic day, followed by wonderful quotation from St Francis de Sales: 'half an hour's meditation each day is essential – except when you're very busy. Then a full hour is needed.' One can sum this up by saying that we are so busy doing and striving to acquire that we forget our sense of being. This book shows us how to recover it.

Annie Cap's book introduces what she calls The Iceberg Process as a way of uncovering and transforming hidden patterns and blocks. She draws on a deeper aspect of her spiritual intelligence, with penetrating quotes in bold italics throughout the book, for instance: 'every thought, every action accumulates. Every thought, every action sets into place the chain of events. You create your life, take it responsibly! Put the responsibility where it resides – within you. Not your God, your guide, your spouse or partner, YOU.' Annie reminds us that our lives are the results of the choices we have made, and that we can always make new choices and change direction. This begins with noticing one's language at the tip of the iceberg. What metaphors does this suggest in terms of the programmes we may be running? Our thinking sets in motion the inner process involving the law of attraction, which Annie explains very clearly, along with the blocks that prevent us from allowing our dreams to come true. What we attract is a match for the frequency of vibration we give out, even if we are unaware of this.

The second part of the book explores how we understand ourselves, and has a helpful section

on the internal critic, with a chart of replacement phrases which we can use as affirmations to change our programmes or belief systems. Before we can create anything new, we need to conceive of it as possible and not simply project our past onto our future: 'instead of creating a life that matches our dreams, we create a life that fits within our beliefs.' This process can also apply to illnesses, where biography becomes biology, as Caroline Myss puts it. We can choose to change our expectations and attitudes, taking more responsibility and making more conscious choices. Ultimately, this is about how we feel, and Annie rightly points out that how we want to feel is the real desire rather than the attainment of the object itself.

The last two chapters discuss why change is difficult and how to deal with it, and outlines various practical strategies for bringing about change. We have to be willing to move out of our comfort zone and take risks, we can dream-build and expand our imagination, we can reflect on what we say, think, believe and feel. We can move through the process of acceptance and forgiveness, and learn how better to handle the subconscious. The most helpful guidelines are a summary of how to use The Iceberg Process, and how to practise Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) through acupuncture meridian tapping. This technique can have extraordinary and immediate results, as I have learned from listening to a seminar by Roger Callahan. A huge amount of valuable experience is packed into this insightful book, which can be used as a study manual for transformative change. We all reach points in life where we need to clear out some blockages in order to move on to the next stage, and Annie provides some vital signposts.

Love and How to Get Through It

Gunnel Minett

HELP! – How to Become Slightly Happier and Get a Bit More Done

Olive Burkeman

Canongate, London, 2011
www.meetatthegate.com,
273 pp., £12.99,
p/b - ISBN 978 0 85786 025 5

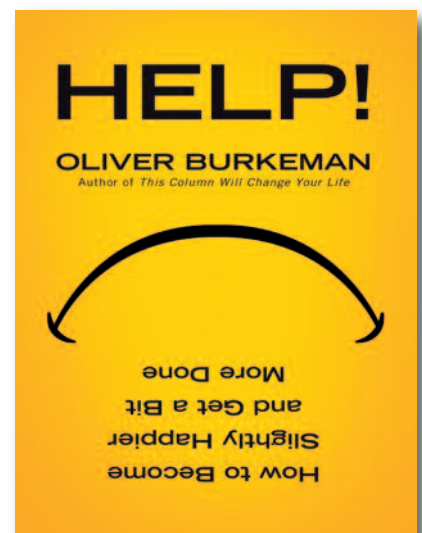
This book is a collection of Guardian columns by the Guardian feature and column writer Oliver Burkeman. The columns cover a number of subjects that most of us encounter on a daily basis. They stretch from 'How to be

liked', 'Why money messes with our heads', 'Why Sunday is the most depressing day of the week', 'The hidden pleasures of worry' to 'The amazing powers of kitchen timers' and 'The joys of filing'. In short, it deals with everyday issues that we all may contemplate at times.

It is not clear if the book is intended as a 'self-help' book or if its aim is to make fun of many of the self-help gurus and their messages to the world. The author's own explanation is that he set out to solve the problem of human happiness well aware of the fact that the topic already had received an inordinate amount of attention from some of history's greatest thinkers – such as Aristotle and Paul McKenna. As a consequence he did not really imagine that he was going to make any staggering new breakthroughs. He confesses in the introduction that he was half joking which of course also meant that he was half serious. Happiness is after all a very important aspect of life, if not the most important.

Jokingly or not, the book actually comes across as a very useful self-help book. The main reason is that it questions a number of the clichés which self-help gurus feed us with via an endless stream of books and expensive courses. For instance Burkeman questions why we always have to become the best of the best in our self-help attempts when statistics will show that setting our goals too high usually has a negative effect. He also points to a number of useful suggestions from self-helpers that focus on helping us to improve the small things in life: he points out that these can have great results by making us feel more in charge and up-to-speed with the chores we need to do on a daily basis.

This is where the kitchen timer and filing systems come in. Learning time management is a relatively straight



forward task that can open up our daily schedule and give us a sense of being in charge and able to better divide our time between relaxation and work.

The fact that the book is very light hearted and witty also helps to create a sense of perspective on daily life. Laughter is a well known cure for most ailments. So perhaps the real key to happiness is to find the right balance between seriousness and laughter, just as long as we are serious enough when learning about the proper way to file papers and the correct use of the kitchen timer.

A Rational Contemplation?

Shakti Maira

BEAUTY

Roger Scruton

Oxford University Press, UK, 2009,
240 pp, £10.99, p/b -
ISBN 978-0199559527

Roger Scruton's book, simply entitled *Beauty*, is a spirited and passionate call for understanding the importance of beauty and to place "this experience in the centre of our lives." For, he says, "without the conscious pursuit of beauty we risk falling into a world of addictive pleasures and routine desecration, a world in which the worthwhileness of human life is no longer clearly perceivable."

It would have helped enormously if Scruton had actually started with what he finally says, with clarity, in the last chapter 'Concluding Thoughts'; "I have not said what beauty *is*", as beauty is "not about 'things in the world' but about a particular experience of them, and about the pursuit of meaning that springs from that experience."

Unfortunately, much of the book that precedes this, particularly the early chapters, is rambling and somewhat convoluted. Scruton starts by saying that "we discern beauty in concrete objects and abstract ideas, in works of Nature and works of art, in things, animals and people, in objects, qualities and action..." For him the key to the experience of beauty is an act of rational judgment and 'Judging Beauty' is his very first chapter. In this he suggests that, "beauty is a matter of appearance, not of being; and...in exploring beauty we are investigating the sentiments of people, rather than the deep structure of the world." And further, that the judgment "focuses on the *object judged*, not the subject who judges." Scruton even has a perception of beauty at times being

"dangerous", "corrupting" and "immoral", and cautions against aiming in every case for beauty, or "supreme beauty", so as not to end up "with aesthetic overload" as "the beauty of each... would be at war with the beauty of the rest."

A key limitation of Scruton's work is his insistence on approaching the deep subject of beauty so narrowly. He pointedly claims the perch of a philosopher and in a quite reductionist way refuses to be concerned with psychological or evolutionary explanations of the sense (or experience and meaning) of beauty. As a result, rather than bringing a more complete understanding to the beauty experience - why and how it happens, Scruton wades in the rather tired arguments and understanding of Western philosophy, fraught with the old problems of reason versus emotion, the senses and, of course, desire. Much too much emphasis is placed on the idea of "selfless" and "disinterested" contemplation, and there is a rather astonishing distaste and discomfort with function, utility and desire. Yet, his insights into pornography, kitsch and the very morality of beauty are stirring - pointers to the intrinsically relational foundations of beauty and the importance of healthy relationality.

While Scruton rightly stresses that beauty is an experience, he reduces the experience to a rational contemplation. Surely the experience of beauty is an interplay, a dance perhaps, which involves the senses, emotions and thoughts - rational and otherwise? This is something that the Eastern philosophies have, in my opinion, a better and more useful understanding of, with their emphasis on the absence of grasping and holding on - rather than on an absence of desire and functionality.

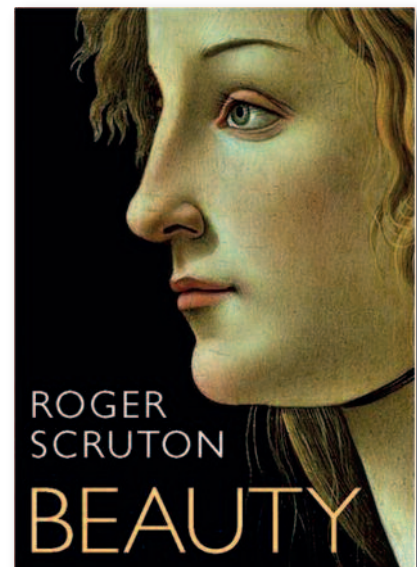
People can and do experience 'deep beauty', where there is great joy and bliss, absorption and a sense of integration and wholeness, where they feel momentarily lifted beyond their usual fragmented selves. Deep beauty experiences are imbued with feelings of harmony and balance, and of proportionality and rhythm. I have asked many groups of people, in India and recently in the UK, to describe what they feel in the beauty experience and have found a great commonality across cultures: pleasure, gladness, wellness, delight, joy, spaciousness, connectedness, timelessness, integration and wholeness. (In the Indian view, these experiences of profound and absorbing beauty induce *ananda* - a deeply meaningful, transformative bliss.)

As an artist, I particularly enjoyed

Mr. Scruton's analysis of the predicaments of contemporary art. Yet, despite the occasional attempts to span cultures, with a picture of a Buddha included in the book's illustrations, it almost seems written primarily for English gentlemen - to be read with suitable philosophic "disinterestedness" over a nice cup of Ceylon tea. Scruton's passion for the art he adores is palpable, and he gives many examples from Western music, literature, art and architecture. But it must be said that what may "look right" to him and to others within his cultural context, may not, to me, from a different cultural tradition. They may not evoke the beauty experience for me.

It is not in the art objects that there is commonality across cultures, but in their aesthetic understandings and in the experience itself. When Scruton explicates "expression" in art via emotion and intuition, I found strong resonances with the classical Indian aesthetic concepts of *rasa* and *dhvani*. Though it must be said that while for Scruton, expression is about individualism and uniqueness, the drift in the Indian imagination is in the opposite direction - towards glimpses of the universal and the undifferentiated ground of all reality.

This book brings much needed attention to the subject of beauty. It should form part of a new dialogue that broadens and deepens this search - and please let's make it less anthropocentric, and move beyond the "rational soul" construct, and consider the intelligence of Nature. We need to understand that there may be very good reasons why complex systems - humans, cells, Nature and climate - are imbued with beauty, and that there is a deeper beauty, beyond appearances. That might, as Scruton suggests, embody its self, in matter and form.



What is needed is a new and more integrated understanding of beauty – that builds upon the growing understanding in many disciplines about all things being fundamentally relational. We need to know whether beauty is the harmony and rhythm, the joy and wellness of all relational goodness. Scruton does say, “beauty is... firmly rooted in the scheme of things as goodness”. We sorely need more of this beauty, in art, in everyday life, and in all our social systems.

Shakti Maira is an artist, philosopher and educationist based in New Delhi, India. He is author of Towards Ananda: Rethinking Indian Art and Aesthetics. This review first appeared in Resurgence

Cultural Navel-Gazing

Lance Butler

THE DEATH OF FRENCH CULTURE

Donald Morrison and Antoine Compagnon

Polity, 2010, 200 pp., £12.99, p/b - 978-0-7456-4994-8

A defining feature of modern French culture is that it is the sort of culture in which questions about culture are constantly being asked. The French are very French: they are not particularly European in the EU sense and are entirely focussed on their own way of doing things. Under Louis XIV or Napoleon this often provided models for the world to follow, but in the long period of relative decline since 1945 such focus has become a species of navel-gazing - they even have a widely-used word for it: *le nombrilisme* (*nombril*: the navel.)

The main problem around the ‘death’ of French culture, canvassed since the 1970s in dozens of books, newspaper articles and television programmes, can be summarised in one word: English. Fiction is still written and published in Paris - nearly eight hundred new novels every autumn, surely more than in the days of Balzac or Flaubert - and hundreds of films are made in France every year, but they are in French and so have almost no international impact. Of the eight-hundred novels only three or four will be translated; of the films only a few will catch a world audience by, for instance, re-telling the Edith Piaf story.

Music and painting are less linguistic, but here another form of relative disadvantage takes over: London, New York, Hong Kong, even Shanghai are now trading far more in the way of old and new masters and investing more in concert

performances just as they are trading more shares, loans, oil and all the rest. And the antiques trade suffers yet another ‘*inconvenient*’ in the inertia of the French closed-shop which until very recently allowed a small group of traditional dealers to dominate the market.

Altogether things look bad for France. More and more is spent every year by the government to prop up the cultural industries of the country and propagating the language while the invasion of ‘Anglo-Saxon’ pop-music, so painfully apparent in any French supermarket, and the steady spread of Macdonalds ‘restaurants’ through ‘*l’Hexagone*’ are only the more obvious symptoms of a losing battle. When Donald Morrison made the cover of Time magazine in 2007, proclaiming his 3,000-word article on the death of French culture inside, he provoked a furious and lengthy debate, mostly in France itself; his book is a recapitulation and extension of that article as well as a debate in itself because the French Americanophile academic Antoine Compagnon is allowed a reply. The two essays are utterly typical of their origins and symptomatic. Compagnon’s piece is well-written, sharp yet leisurely, theoretical, measured, intellectual, slightly boring, a bit ivory-tower. Also very badly translated. Morrison’s piece is heavily numbers-based, a bit hearty, pragmatic, sympathetic but clearly going for a win. “Get real my French friends” you hear him cry.

There’s lots of culture in France and a huge budget to support it, but we’ve all been globalised now; the effect in France is increasingly one of a cultural *reservation* as in the term ‘Native-American Reservation.’ That’s OK if you see yourself as a *region* like Catalonia or a small country like Denmark; then you can enjoy your culture but needn’t make too much of a fuss about it considering, for better or worse, that it is no longer a global player. And you produce songs, novels and films in English, or well-prepared for translation, dubbing and so on. The French have started to do this too but they are coming down from much higher altitudes and it will I think be centuries before they give up what has become an unequal struggle.

One of the most interesting things for British readers of this book is the implicit comparison with the UK. We don’t subsidise culture very much, don’t protect our language, believe in capitalist forces, let things happen. We are neither better nor worse than the French, just different, but the relative decline from which we too have suffered has left us with some advantages. Of course the English language, but not only that; we also,

be it humbly spoken, have a better sense of perspective, a better sense of humour even, which help us through times of lesser power and give us a less inflated idea of our specialness.

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Undermining 9/11 Conspiracy Theory

Tod Fletcher

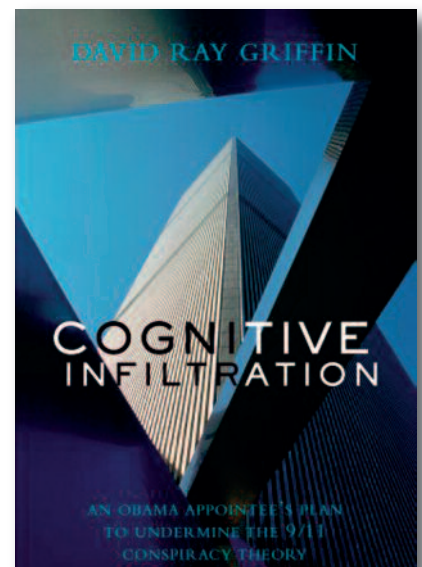
COGNITIVE INFILTRATION

David Ray Griffin

Olive Branch Press, 2010, 196 pp., £13.60, p/b - ISBN 978-1-566-5682-1-0

Shortly after taking office on January 20, 2009 President Obama appointed Harvard law professor (and personal friend) Cass Sunstein to the post of administrator of the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. In June 2009 Sunstein published an essay in The Journal of Political Philosophy entitled “Conspiracy Theories: Causes and Cures,” in which he provided an “analysis” of conspiracy theories, viewing them, as his title indicated, as “caused” by “informational isolation” and requiring “cures”, i.e., elimination. The article led to an outcry by civil libertarians of all political stripes, who especially singled out for protest Sunstein’s call for covert “cognitive infiltration” by government agents of organisations the government deems “conspiracist”.

Because Sunstein explicitly states that “9/11 conspiracy theories” are his main focus, virtually all interpreters have agreed that Sunstein’s call for what is essentially another Cointelpro Operation is directed specifically against the 9/11



truth movement. (Cointelpro, or “Counter Intelligence Program”, was the FBI’s name for its high-priority operations to infiltrate, provoke, undermine and disable civil rights, socialist, antiwar, black power and Native American movements during the late 1950s and the 1960s.) The fantastic picture Sunstein paints of the 9/11 truth movement as “harmful,” “dangerous,” and likely to resort to “terrorism” suggests that he is serving a function similar to Philip Zelikow’s during the Bush/Cheney years; in his own way, Sunstein too is a “myth-maker.”

In his new book *COGNITIVE INFILTRATION* David Ray Griffin has provided the first truly adequate response to Sunstein’s deeply-flawed and legally-questionable arguments. Griffin penetrates the obfuscation and phony scholarship employed by Sunstein to create the illusion of a rational critique of the 9/11 truth movement’s alternative account of the events of September 11, 2001. Griffin presents a series of ten theses put forward by Sunstein, and shows that each is fundamentally flawed. Further, he demonstrates that Sunstein is unable to avoid numerous self-contradictions, either explicit or implied, that together amount to an internal, hidden counter-argument to his own position, which Griffin, in a novel and entertaining approach, brings out as an ironic “esoteric” meaning of Sunstein’s essay.

Griffin demonstrates that Sunstein is completely unable to refute the major positions of the 9/11 truth movement, and doesn’t actually even try to do so. Instead, Sunstein has produced a pseudo-scholarly fake “analysis” as a basis for a call for the government to infiltrate and neutralise the movement through activities which create “cognitive diversity,” clearly not the least bit different from the FBI’s Cointelpro operations. But in so doing Sunstein has provided Griffin the means to demonstrate yet again that defenders of the official account of 9/11 actually cannot proceed by using reason and fact. They are forced to resort to disinformation, suppression of evidence, lies, illogic, threats and intimidation, always with the same result: failure. The more people study the events of 9/11 the more certain they become that the government

and its media outlets are lying.

Sunstein’s essay appears to reveal that the government response to its ongoing failure will be to resort to illegal activities directed against people who are speaking out about the highest crimes carried out in the corridors of power. The remarkably inept manner in which he makes his case suggests, however, that providing a rationale for such a future policy may not have been his real intention. Rather, it seems plausible that his purpose is to suggest that such actions have not even been considered before, let alone implemented, when in fact such operations have been ongoing since 9/11.

Griffin’s *COGNITIVE INFILTRATION* is a lucid and compelling exposure of the contempt held by the official defenders of the 9/11 myth for dissenters who have seen through their Big Lie. These officials expect that no one will be able to penetrate the murk of Sunstein’s latest defense of the pretext for the US wars of aggression in Afghanistan and Iraq, now covertly expanding into many other countries. But with David Ray Griffin’s book, everyone who is concerned with bringing their carnage and criminality to a stop, as well as to reverse the rapid erosion of civil liberties in this country, will have no difficulty remaining clear-headed in the face of the “cognitive infiltration” carried out by the holders of high office and their agents.

A Spirit of Place

Roy Procter

A PILGRIM IN GLASTONBURY

Barry Taylor

Abbey Press Glastonbury, 2010, 272 pp., £9.99 +p&p, p/b - ISBN 978-0-9533203-6-7

Obtainable via :- www.glastonbury-pilgrim.co.uk.

This book is about experiencing a raising of consciousness and spiritual awareness. It is also about the importance of place and its “energies” in the process. It is not an academic study of consciousness, it is about living and responding in a meaningful way.

Glastonbury is an internationally known spiritual centre, a place of

transformation. The effect of this transformative process is to raise the consciousness and spiritual awareness of those who experience its presence and energy. The way in which this process works is complex and different for each individual. There seems to be an overlighting intelligence that guides the evolution of Glastonbury as a planetary spiritual centre. This “presence” is a key element; but it needs people and their skills to carry out the various supporting functions.

Many people feel a “call” to Glastonbury, often not knowing why or what to do when they get there. Barry Taylor’s book is the story of one person who felt so called. It is also about his developing spiritual awareness and how it eventually manifested resulting in the contributions that he made to facilitate the continuing evolution of Glastonbury as a spiritual centre. One interesting aspect of this story is that the skills he found useful in Glastonbury are not the ones that he expected in relation to his previous training and experience.

The book starts with a brief review of his personal background as a basis for subsequent events. (Earlier he was the managing director of a financial institution). It moves on to the nature of “The Call” to Glastonbury and his emerging response to it. There follows some of the projects he has been involved with in Glastonbury, some fruitful and some not so. Barry, now in his 80’s and still very active, looks into these successes and failures to see what can be learnt.

The book concludes with a vision for the future development of Glastonbury as an important pilgrimage destination, together with some ideas and conclusions reached. The story of this book is much more than just about one man and Glastonbury. It is the story of a developing consciousness and a response. Others will have different experiences; nevertheless its importance is in recognising and responding to a spiritual call and doing something appropriate. It will surely be of interest to the growing number of academics now working in this field of human progress.

*Roy Procter C Eng. FRAeS
is a healer and retired engineer.*

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

**If so, please send them to Olly Robinson at olly@scimednet.org
for publication in the Network Review**