

book reviews

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science-philosophy of science

Technology and the Future

David Lorimer

THE METAPHYSICS OF TECHNOLOGY

David Skrbina

Routledge 2016, 311 pp., £34.99, p/b
– ISBN 978-1-138240-0-25

I met David Skrbina at the 80th birthday celebrations for Henryk Skolimowski in Poland - they had been colleagues together in the philosophy department at the University of Michigan, and Henryk's influence is apparent in this bold and philosophically revolutionary study. Amazingly, this is almost the first book on the metaphysics of technology rather than other philosophical aspects. It has direct relevance for the various technological books that I review in the books in brief under science below, as they relate to the singularity and the development of genetic and nanotechnology - here called GNR (genetics, nanotechnology, robotics). David points out that much thinking about technology is itself technological and relatively uncritical. However, he reminds readers that we cannot in fact escape metaphysics. As far back as 1973, Henryk was writing that 'technology is a historical phenomenon born of a certain idea of nature, of a certain idea of progress.... and also related to specific social ideals and specific ends of human life. By these facts alone, it is laden with elements of traditional metaphysics.'

The first part of the book provides an extensive historical and philosophical background, going back to the Greek concepts of *techne*, *logos* and *theos*, observing that the word itself is an amalgam of the first two. An important overriding concept is that of the *pantechnikon* - the Greeks already saw technology as a world force present in both humans and nature. In this context, the *pantechnikon* is a universal process driving evolution forward, creating higher levels of order, complexity and intelligence along the way (p. 202) and operating as a fundamental law of

nature - both autonomous and inexorable. It seems to have an intrinsic intentionality, expanding and evolving, pressing forward relentlessly and imposing itself ever more powerfully. At first we have automation, then autonomy. Here lies an alarming aspect of David's thesis. He postulates two phases of technological development and determinism, the first anthropogenic - dependence without control - and the second autogenic, when technology will become self making and self evolving. This is what exponents of the singularity expect.

There is a great deal of discussion of leading philosophers and other thinkers who have been proponents for or opponents of technology, notably German thinkers including Heidegger, Jaspers and Borgmann. David covers classical critiques from Athens to Rousseau, Kant, Goethe, Carlyle, Thoreau, Nietzsche and more recent critiques since 1900 including Veblen, Whitehead, Spengler, Ellul and Orwell (interestingly there is no mention of Aldous Huxley). The 60s bring Mumford and Illich and the 70s Skolimowski with his ecological critique. Interestingly, there are very few systematic critiques from the mid-1980s, and David speculates that this may be due to people thinking there is no philosophical problem of technology. This leads on to a more extensive discussion of technological determinism and its implications, especially in the work of Ellul and Roszak. David recalls that the technological system is not only composed of tools, machines and devices, but also procedures, rules and organisational principles. A further chapter discusses replies to and refutations of the deterministic thesis.

The following chapter addresses the consequences of technological development. David sees technology as first having sacrificed human well-being for the sake of its own development, with little regard for humanity or nature (this also reflects mechanistic thinking): technological advance becomes a self-serving end (p. 236). Man-made damage to the environment is technical damage, which we can see



all around us and which is based on our conviction that we can improve on nature. What we have in fact done is disrupt the organic wholeness of the planet for our own short-term benefit. The second case considers the effects of educational technology, which has had no effect on improving literacy and numeracy. Finally, the risks to human health, including cancer, obesity and rising rates of depression. The impact of information technology on health is examined in a separate section, as is the psychological of too much time in front of screens correlated with attention deficit, addiction and sleep disorders. Then we have new forms of crime in terms of cyberwarfare, as well as almost universal surveillance. David goes as far as arguing that technology functions as a virus attacking the moral and psychological basis of our humanity and eroding our critical thinking processes and moral autonomy. This does not mean that technology is evil, but rather powerful and indifferent, hence dangerous.

The final chapter discusses technology and human destiny. Earlier in the book, David wonders if it is inevitable that technological societies will destroy themselves - various threats have been present over the past few decades and are highlighted, among others, by Lord Rees in his book *Our Final Century*. Some people go so far as to speculate that previous civilisations such as Atlantis have in fact destroyed themselves when their technology outstripped their wisdom. David sees signs of decay all around in terms of environmental destruction, declining health and exploding populations. A fundamental question is the extent to which technology improves our quality of life. When one looks back 30 years, one had a great deal more time. The post arrived once a day, and one responded to the odd telephone call. Now, we all carry a technological, psychological and time burden of constant information overload and the expectation that replies will be immediate. It takes an hour or two a day to service this information throughput, and we dare not go off-line on holiday in case we can't catch up again.

So do we have to accept an inexorable technological future? David proposes an act of creative reconstruction with a dramatic retrenchment of the contemporary technosphere, a substantial global population reduction, and the restoration of a majority of the Earth's land to true wilderness. He sees this as the only path to a long-term sustainable future, although he is not optimistic that we will follow through on his proposal. Against this, we are assured that technology is not the problem, it is the solution, and that we must relentlessly continue to advance our technical capabilities. In David's view, this will expose us and the entire planet to increasing peril: rapidly advancing technology will be combined with rapidly declining quality of life. This radical outlook certainly gives pause for thought and encourages readers to take a more critical stance towards technology and its alluring promises.

The Real Dream

David Lorimer

THE COLLAPSE OF MATERIALISM

Philip Comella

Rainbow Ridge Books, 2014, 379 pp., \$19.95, p/b – ISBN 978-1-937907-21-1

The ideology of scientific materialism not only dominates science, but has far-reaching implications for society as well. Yet, since the 1930s, leading physicists have asserted the primacy of mind and consciousness, while our understanding of matter itself has been totally transformed. In this well argued book, lawyer Philip Comella issues a fundamental challenge to this dominant worldview by asserting that the assumption of a mind independent world is flawed, as also proposed in Bernardo Kastrup's *Brief Peaks Beyond* reviewed in No 118, p. 52. Instead, he proposes a universal mind: we are the one mind, and we are dreaming the world. From a philosophical point of view, the interesting implication of this view is that it overcomes the charge of solipsism always levelled against traditional forms of idealism. The postulate of a shared universal mind can explain why we project and perceive the same reality.

Materialism assumes that our essence is a body rather than a mind, but our immediate experience is as a conscious creative mind that also has the capacity to dream. Hence Comella's proposal that both our dreams and everyday experience share a single source, the mind. Sir James Jeans is famous for his remark that the world is beginning to look more like a great thought than a great machine, and here he is quoted as saying that 'creations of an individual mind may reasonably be called less substantial than creations of a universal mind', although arguably the same process is involved. Interestingly, this is

exactly the proposal of Walter Russell in his many books (the author does not seem to be aware of his work), that we live in a creating rather than a creative world and that the process of creating through mind desire is identical in both the universal and individual minds. We can understand this through our own experience of planning events or imagining and materialising or works of art. The power of mind is suggested not only through dreaming, but also through hallucinations, synchronicity, psychokinesis and the placebo effect. Comella quotes a fascinating experience of Goethe when he saw himself coming towards himself on a horse in an unfamiliar suit only to find himself on the same path eight years later wearing the suit he had seen. The mind has the capacity to conjure up multiple possibilities, only one of which will actually happen.

In relation to science, Comella's central and extremely significant point is that by postulating a mind independent world, 'physical reality left itself has no mind, no purpose, and no means to organise itself into the mathematical harmonies that constitute nature.' (p. 79) This obliges scientists to come up with theories to explain how a hypothetically independent world created itself from nothing. This creates a paradox: 'material science separates mind from matter, but then proceeds to catalogue the laws by which this mindless matter organised itself to the limit of mathematical order. Matter is dumb but the laws of nature are brilliant.' Comella's theory is that 'the mind of God is the origin of both the material world and the scientific theories that seek to explain the world's operation.' (p. 79) Without the mind of God, the minds of scientists have to provide theories consistent with their assumptions, which, in the case of multiverses and many worlds theory, violate the law of parsimony in a desperate attempt to avoid postulating a universal mind. As the author points out, matter organising itself into the symmetries of nature leads to a fine tuning problem and ultimately either to the multiverse or an intelligent force in the cosmos, which the premise of scientific materialism already excludes. Moreover, if one assumes that both matter and the laws of nature are given, then there is no need to explain what has been assumed. This all leads Comella to the conclusion that 'we must rise beyond the misperception that the physical world has an existence independent of the mind in order to achieve a unified theory of the cosmos.' (p. 142)

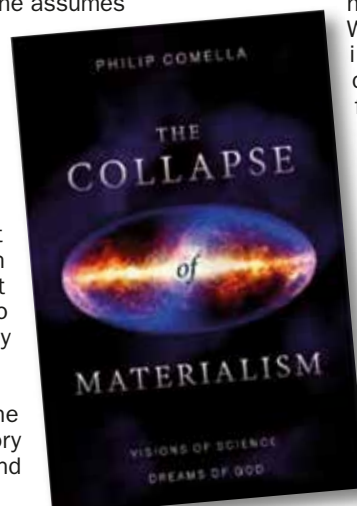
He then examines the implications of his theory for quantum physics and

evolutionary biology. Quantum theory points in the direction of the primacy of mind and consciousness, but as yet has not arrived at the idea that it is our own united mind that is projecting reality. There is still a tendency to think in terms of individual minds. For Comella, 'only the mind can weave this dream into the interlocking, mathematically precise patterns we see out in the world.' (p. 173) It is the mind that imposes the order before the theorising begins and scientists themselves are part of this continual creative process.

Next, Comella applies these ideas to the key elements of Darwinian evolutionary biology. Natural selection is by definition a mindless process, but he argues that the second step in the argument is simply a statement of a certain set of conditions (not an ordering mechanism) after the production of variety. Here he could have enhanced his analysis by including the work of Lovelock and Margulis that postulates a co-evolutionary process between organism and environment through a complex feedback process. In other words, it is not simply the environment imposing conditions on a passive organism. Once again, evolutionary biology provides its own mind component through theorising - Ernst Mayr was uneasy about the use of the word selection as implying any kind of intelligence. In addition, much theorising, including by Richard Dawkins, is a thought experiment working backwards from the outcome or result to postulate a plausible mindless mechanism.

The last part explores the implications of the one shared universal mind hypothesis for our collective future. To the extent that a critical number of us arrive at this insight, the future will be transformed to one of peace and brotherhood. Comella is optimistic about this prospect on the basis of his conviction that we do indeed share one mind and so have the inherent capacity to realise this. Interestingly, Walter Russell reaches an identical conclusion, citing as a fundamental misconception that human bodies have separate minds and souls instead of the One-Mind Soul having innumerable bodies. We have the collective imaginative power to create a future that works for all of us but we must collectively choose to do so in order to dream it into existence. After all, we have dreamed and manifested our existing world in the same way.

As Larry Dossey also argues in his book *One Mind*, there are many pointers to the explanatory power of this idea, which was also developed by



the New Thought movement over a hundred years ago. The best chance of a breakthrough in the direction that Comella suggests is most likely to emerge from a combination of physics and parapsychology rather than biology or philosophy. Even though common sense and science make naive realism seem plausible, the careful thought put into this probing book will make readers think again.

medicine-health

The Neural Correlates of the Heart

Judith Asphar

INTO THE MAGIC SHOP — A Neurosurgeon's Quest to Discover the Mysteries of the Brain and the Secrets of the Heart

James R. Doty MD.

Avery, New York, 2016, 288 pp., \$26,
h/b - ISBN: 978-1-59463-298-3 (p/b
Feb 17)

Part memoir, part confessional, part teaching of mindfulness, **Into the Magic Shop** is a paradoxical story of our times. A childhood shaped by an alcoholic father and severely depressed suicidal mother – understandably resulting in truancy, violence, and failed grades – nevertheless magically morphed into the future James Doty, MD, FACS, FICS, FAANS.

The thirteen chapters of this highly-praised volume are divided into three parts, making an inspiring read. It does however, begin by describing in some detail the “excruciatingly difficult” removal of a malignant tumor – a medulloblastoma – from the brain of a four-year-old boy. “There’s a certain sound the scalp makes when it’s being ripped off a skull—like a large piece of Velcro tearing away from its source.” Touchingly, and tellingly, he adds, “when the brain is exposed you can see it move in rhythm with every heartbeat.” To study those very neural correlates of the heart, in 2005 Jim Doty established CCARE —The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education at Stanford — of which he is the Director

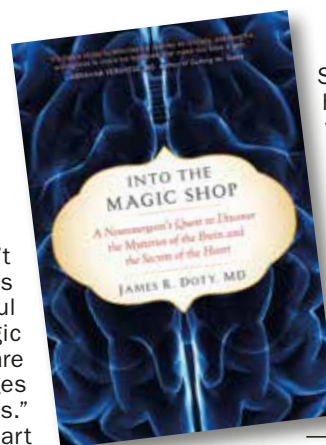
Thanks to a serendipitously “disruptive” meeting when he was twelve years old, Jim was spared from family patterns that most likely would have resulted from an unsafe and unpredictable childhood. Doubtless to help escape the shame and humiliation of extreme poverty, he describes being drawn to the lure of magic from an early age. The fatefully life-changing moment manifested when – as a scared and lonely boy on his bicycle – searching for a particular magic shop in a run-down strip mall, he came upon a woman whose name was

Ruth. Her influence is the warp and weft of his story. An avatar for him, Ruth’s prescience identified Jim’s potential and ended up indelibly shaping his world.

To be sure readers don’t gloss over pivotal lessons learned from his faithful daily visits to the magic shop, four early chapters are set off by gray-colored pages that highlight “Ruth’s Tricks.” They wrap up the first part of the book with: Breath and Relaxation; Taming the Mind; Opening the Heart; and Clarifying Your Intent. Although early on Jim conscientiously followed “Ruth’s Magic,” it cast no spell on his early plight which remained a challenge throughout his school and college training years. Gradually extricating himself by incorporating Ruth’s tools of visualization, intention, and attention, his lowly beginnings were to evolve into dreams of becoming a doctor and earning a million dollars – along with the accompanying Rolex, Porsche, and mansion.

Acceptance at UC Irvine in LA, and Tulane University Medical School in New Orleans was followed by a neurosurgery residency and nine years at Walter Reed, the National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. Not all smooth sailing, though; one night proved particularly fateful. After grueling hospital rounds – at a time when he’d abandoned his mindfulness practice for alcohol, cocaine, and half-naked women – he was kicked out of a strip-club with a car-load of fellow residents. Piled into an old Ford, they crashed headlong into a tree, totaling the vehicle and almost themselves in the process. Close to bleeding to death from abdominal injuries, the doctor became a patient. Watching the surgery from above his body, he was moved through unforgettable blackness to the tell-tale, split-second, slow-motion, illuminated biography – drawn ever deeper into the pure white light of Love. Brought back to life by a pin-prick to his foot, he had experienced first-hand the total acceptance of an NDE — a near-death experience. What did die that night, he recounts, was his belief that Ruth’s magic made him invincible. By his own admission, he still had to learn that the arrogant, egotistical neurosurgeon he would become, had many more years of costly mistakes ahead.

Fast forward to age forty-four and by Chapter 9 —he is a neurosurgeon, at Stanford, a multi-millionaire, married, then divorced and facing failure as a father. Owner of a villa in Florence, a private island in New Zealand, and living alone in his 7,500 square-foot home overlooking the Pacific Ocean – with Porsche, Range-Rover, Ferrari, BMW, and Mercedes too. Hooked by the speed of



Silicon Valley start-ups, his one-night-stands with nameless women were punctuated through the wee-small hours by checking the markets and watching his fortune fluctuate. Unimpeded by having no background in business, “one of the most successful neurosurgeons in Orange County” — who had incidentally

invented a brain monitoring electrode – had won and lost tens of millions. His rescue of Accuray — a cutting-edge radiation oncology company — embroiled him in the dot-com crash. Somehow, he regained enough wealth to fund his future philanthropy by understanding it would only bring happiness if given away.

Peppered with applicable definitions of brain functions as they became increasingly revealed and understood, occasional – somewhat graphic – descriptions of surgeries appear here and there. But, prompted by his own near-death experience, his reflections on the unified intelligence of the mind and the heart and love’s greatest longings proved to be most meaningful for this entrepreneurial physician. Happily remarried, with a new family, and recommitted to his neurological work and research in both New Orleans and Stanford, Jim’s deepening personal practice offers a further lesson. This one a mnemonic — CDEFGHIJKL — a reminder to start the day with powerful intention incorporating: Compassion; Dignity; Equanimity; Forgiveness; Gratitude; Humility; Integrity; Justice; Kindness and once again...Love.

Into the Magic Shop ends where it started, with the “way of doing what Ruth asked me to do, to teach her magic to others.” Now through the eyes of a neuroscientist, the Doty definition of compassion as “an innate instinct” becomes the core mission of his field of influence. It grew most profoundly through a meeting – and a now a close relationship – with the Dalai Lama. After speaking at the School of Medicine, and deeply impressed by Jim’s groundbreaking endeavor, His Holiness chose to make a substantial personal contribution to the establishment of Stanford’s CCARE and its far-reaching research, courses, and certification programs.

Not least, in 2014 with CARE’s Dr. Stewart Mercer in Glasgow and a collaborative event with the University of Edinburgh hosted at Stanford in March 2016, which “will culminate in a distinguished panel addressing the cutting edge of compassion research involving artificial intelligence, machine learning, and robotics:

The Compassionate Robot: Myth, Nightmare, or Solution? This panel will be anchored by Sir Timothy O'Shea, The Principal of University of Edinburgh, who has explored computer-based learning and artificial intelligence in over 100 articles and 10 books. Other distinguished scholars include Jon Oberlander, Professor of Epistemics at the University of Edinburgh, whose work focuses on building machines which can adapt themselves to people, and the Rev. Professor Jane Shaw, Dean for Religious Life and Professor of Religious Studies at Stanford University, who is currently working on a project involving empathy, the arts, and social change.

<http://ccare.stanford.edu/events/perspectives-on-compassion-new-thinking-from-stanford-university-and-the-university-of-edinburgh/>
<http://www.caremeasure.org>
<http://intothemagicshop.com>

Judith Asphar — newly, a great fan of SciMedNet — was a: PR Director of Laura Ashley N.A.; The New York Open Center; The Biological Medicine Network; and Resurgence magazine in the USA. A founding (and environmental) editor of Hearst's Healthy Living magazine. Volunteered for: Friends of the Institute of Noetic Sciences; The Omega Institute; CG Jung Foundation, NY; Suzanne Zeedyk's Science of Human Connection; Hudson Valley Hospice; plus various environmental & renewable energy entities. Endlessly curious about the effect that love – or more commonly, its lack – has on anything! Mostly how it shapes these off-kilter brains of ours that are so swiftly hurtling humanity (and life on Earth) over the cliff, and, in the process busily hurling blame at each other?! Hoping that all you wise ones at SciMed can save us from ourselves before it's too late!

Beyond the Cancer Monopoly?

David Lorimer

THE TRUTH ABOUT CANCER

Ty M. Bollinger
 (www.thetruthaboutcancer.com)

Hay House, 2016, 318 pp., £14.99,
 p/b – ISBN 978-1-78180-761-3

THE CANCER REVOLUTION

Patricia Peat
 and 37 expert contributors
 (www.yestolife.org.uk)

ZeroSumGame, 2016, 309 pp., no price given, p/b – ISBN – 978-1-5262-00327-5

The debate about cancer between conventional and complementary therapies is a highly politicised example of the underlying tension between naturopathic and allopathic or pharmaceutical approaches to health

and medicine. It is a striking historical fact that 100 years ago, the incidence of cancer in the US was 1 in 80, and it is now nearer to 1 in 2 (moreover, costs of treatment in the US are now in the region of \$200,000 a year). It is important to consider why and how this has happened, but also to understand the biological research background. On the one hand, we have the development of the germ theory of disease with Pasteur, and on the other the emphasis on what Antoine Bechamp called the 'terrain', which we would now call the internal ecosystem in which the disease arises. Germ theory on its own represents a reductionist mode, while taking into consideration the terrain as well embodies a holistic approach. In addition, the American medical system was fundamentally altered through the Flexner report of 1910, which encouraged the professionalisation of medicine and the development of conventional orthodoxy primarily based on drugs and surgery. This led to the rise of the pharmaceutical industry, which still dominates the profession, the journals and the regulatory authorities.

In his book, Bollinger tells the story of alternative approaches such as Rife, Hoxsey and Gerson being sidelined and suppressed in spite of promising and sometimes spectacular results. An important theoretical approach which is now finding more flavour is that cancer is primarily a metabolic rather than a genetic condition, a view championed by Paul Seeger and 1931 Nobel Prize winner Otto Warburg. He quotes Warburg as saying that 'cancer has only one prime cause... The replacement of normal oxygen respiration of body cells by an anaerobic cell respiration.' This is the result of a mitochondrial dysfunction characterised by damaged cellular metabolism where otherwise healthy cells switch to an anaerobic state and become cancerous. Interestingly, this process feeds on sugar, encouraging fermentation.

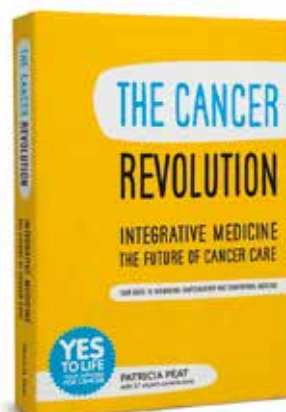
Critics of Bollinger's book point to the confirmation bias inherent in his sample, and it is certainly true that complementary therapies are not uniformly successful. However, both these books stress the importance of prevention in terms of lifestyle factors including diet, detoxification and avoidance of environmental as well as electromagnetic toxins. Bollinger describes a large number of possible interventions with comments by practitioners and those who have benefited from them. Readers will need to exercise a certain caution and discrimination in any

extrapolation from the case histories, even though the overall preventive strategies may be generally valid. The bottom line of his argument is that cancer need not be a death sentence, that conventional therapies may do more harm than good, and that there are many other avenues to consider.

The Cancer Revolution takes an altogether more measured and less confrontational stance, referring early on to integrative oncology, reflecting the role that an overall integrative approach can play within a range of possible treatments. Patricia Peat has a background as an oncological nurse, and began to notice the benefit to some of her patients through adopting alternative modalities. She is passionate about putting the patient in charge of the treatment process. The strength of this book lies in the expertise of the other 37 contributors as well as Patricia's editorial skill. It is primarily aimed at patients, although carers and families can also benefit enormously from the content. Readers are given advice according to the stage and progression of the cancer, and there are a series of therapeutic targets mentioned throughout the book, such as pH balance, detoxification, oxygenation and immune stimulation.

Among the topics covered by a variety of contributors are types of therapy, detailed advice on diet and lifestyle, including exercise, water consumption, juicing, the value of raw food and means of managing stress. Readers are also given advice about how to handle consultations and hospital routines. Experts describe what their interventions can be expected to achieve, while the appendices give information on international clinics, scans and how to find appropriate practitioners. All this is given considerable careful thought with the reader very much in mind. The book is also beautifully produced. The relationship between conventional and complementary therapies is delicately handled, including potential tensions in courses of treatment where antioxidants may or may not play a constructive role, depending on the circumstances. Having said that, the book does make a strong

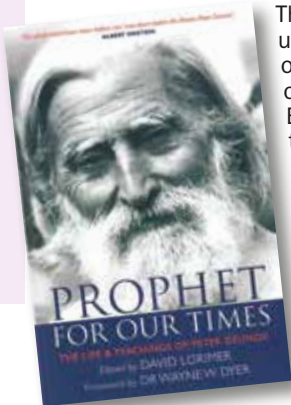
case for integrating complementary approaches into the overall treatment, but that in itself cannot completely resolve the political tension between the approaches outlined above since one is fundamentally about the management of disease symptoms and the other the promotion of health and a resilient immune system.



philosophy-spirituality

A Science for Living

Edi Bilmoria

**PROPHET FOR OUR TIMES:
The Life & Teachings
of Peter Deunov**Edited by David Lorimer (SMN)
Foreword by Dr Wayne W. DyerHay House, 2015, 285 pp., £12.99,
p/b – ISBN 978-1-781805-91-6

This book presents us with a nosegay of the teachings of one whom Einstein said, 'All the world renders homage to me and I render homage to the Master Peter Deunov [Beinsa Douno] from Bulgaria'. When perusing a book about a sage or religious

teacher I always put two questions to myself. The first is, 'what is the motive behind this book; why is the author, or editor writing this book? Is it: 1. From a personal desire to gain publicity and attendant royalties via a wide sale? 2. out of idle curiosity on the back of some cursory research in a library? 3. to denigrate the subject; or 4. from a deep love of the message and the teacher that knows no bounds, so must, perforce, find expression in a book. My second question is, from what plane of consciousness, so to say, has he approached his subject: Is it: A. The purely intellectual, left brain concerned with literal facts, so-called, and a literal interpretation of the words on the page? or B. With an awakened intuition where the words are seen in their symbolic sense as always pointing towards that ineffable essence that can never be imprisoned, but only alluded to in words (the proverbial distinction between gazing at the finger and not to the moon where it is pointing)? I have unfortunately read more than a fair share of 'types 3. and A. books', (they seem to go together) for example, on Blavatsky (incidentally, Peter Deunov's contemporary) who has attracted more than her fair share of writers who used the exotic circumstances of her life as a prop for producing their own nonsensical or scurrilous books; or from the standpoint of a bit of academic research without a clue about the inner meaning of her profound doctrines.

What is the case with *Prophet for Our Times*, edited by David Lorimer with a Foreword by Dr Wayne W. Dyer? There are signs to read. By every objective account they show a lifelong love of the subject and a devotion

to Peter Deunov, their teacher (I did say devotion, not that starry-eyed, idolisation all too common in religious circles). Next, the authors keep their personal commentary in the background allowing the simplicity and directness of the teachings to speak for themselves without interfering interpretations or embellishments. Then, the carefully chosen range of material harvested from Peter Deunov's writings. All this makes it obvious that what we have before us is the fruit of many years of intense application, not just a bit of reading in a library and then polishing off a book in the manner of some authors who fancy themselves authorities on spiritual and religious subjects.

The Introduction gives invaluable insights into Peter Deunov's personal life, mission and consciousness on interpenetrating realms of existence. Like virtually all great teachers he was persecuted, in his case by the Bulgarian clergy (yes, clergy) and accused of corrupting peoples' minds. But which other sage has published a doctoral dissertation on Science and Education, and why not? After all, Peter Deunov is a prophet *for our times* showing us that scholarship and spirituality can, and should go hand-in-hand. Then there are the numerous, authentic and witnessed accounts of what the world calls miracles, but in fact are faculties pertaining to the highest reaches of consciousness and, when under the control of an enlightened being, are the powers (siddhis) paranormal to ordinary mortals, but normal to a Master.

The bulk of the book comprises chapters on: God; The Noetic World; The Divine School; Master and Disciple; Fundamental Principles of Life; The Human Being (including astrological types, Page 118); Methods, Rules and Recommendations for Life; Relations with Nature; and The New Epoch. From this completely organic exposition on deity, cosmos, nature and Man, the middle chapters on what exactly do we mean by the term 'human being', plus the rules and conduct for righteous living are of deepest consequence. The human being is considered from the standpoint of his body and then his 'spiritual anatomy and physiology': consciousness, mind, heart (sorely ignored by science, other than as a muscular pump), will (power), and conduct. Rules for life include diet and fasting, sleep and exercise, work and movement, prayer and mindfulness, breathing and purity. For Peter Deunov, *All sins and crimes of a person can be forgiven but the lie – never. It is the smallest evil from which all other evils spring* (page 160).

The works of the great sages are utterly unique and individual, but all have been written with the pen dipped into the self-same inkwell of

universal truths. I will cite just two pithy aphorisms from this treasure trove of wisdom to demonstrate how Peter Deunov's teaching is entirely in sync with the eternal wisdom tradition. On page 224 quoting from 'Possible Attainments' (1927), Sofia, we read: *Light is a sign of love. When the sun shines on us that shows that God is sending us light. Physical light is a sign of God's love* (my emphasis). Relate this to an extract from the Notebooks of Paul Brunton (also a contemporary of Peter Deunov): *The God in the sun is the "I" in me' – this, put tersely, is the essence of man's relationship to divinity. A whole book may be needed to explain it, a whole lifetime to get direct experience of its truth as insight.* Whilst contemplating the above, note the Almighty Formula (Aaditya Hrudaya) communicated by the Vedic Sage Agastya who appeared to the Lord Rama before the Great War in the Indian epic *Ramayana: O Rama! Listen carefully to this secret. He who worships the sun never comes to grief. Pray to him thus....* The point here is that the sun is not just an enormous thermonuclear furnace fusing some 620 million metric tons of hydrogen per second into helium (its material/chemical aspect), any more than a human being is just a biochemical factory. The Sun has Spirit, Soul and Body, and the physical sun is the closest that ordinary mortals can approach divinity, *physically embodied*.

Next on page 223, the evolutionary process is summarised: *...After them [the plants] came the sons of archangels – the animals; finally came human beings – the image and likeness of God.* Note with every care that human beings (meaning Man the Thinker, not the physical body) have *not* come from the lineage of the apes according to Darwinian theory. Every sage and esoteric philosopher the world over since time immemorial has affirmed, and fully demonstrated, the divine emanation of Man. Unsurprisingly, this aphorism appears in 'Rules of the Occult School' (1923), Sofia. It is Occult Science, not materialistic science, that is matchless on evolution (and consciousness, for that matter). This again is a demonstrable fact and might explain why Peter Deunov opened what he called his Occult School in 1922.

What about the nitty-gritty of mundane existence, not to be belittled? What does Peter Deunov have to say about money, commerce and economics that seem to be the sole concern of governments these days?

Let us sidestep and ask what determines human happiness: our internal thoughts and state of mind, or external circumstances, or both? Action for Happiness (AfH) was founded in 2011 in the UK with His Holiness the Dalai Lama as its patron and now has a Facebook following of 475,000. 59,000

people in 168 countries have taken its pledge 'to create more happiness and less unhappiness in the world around me'¹. AfH has helped launch 'happy cafes' and 1000 happiness clubs all over the country, many in run-down areas. An American counterpart is Project Happiness which has 1.6 million Facebook fans. The movement seems to be gaining global momentum. What is its underlying message? In a nutshell, that the more we know ourselves (not just our bodies) the more connected and happy we will be. Unsurprisingly the movement has attracted adverse criticism, for example a negative *Guardian* article headed 'The sad truth about the Action for Happiness movement' by a reader in clinical (note, clinical) psychology at the University of East London, who maintains that it is a flawed assumption that the source of unhappiness lies inside our heads, implying that the solution lies at the individual level; that the real problems are structural to do with income inequality first. Further scorn has (understandably) been heaped by those who maintain that a person riddled with financial and health worries and sleeping on the streets in a cardboard box would have a difficult job thinking about happiness (but never mind that I have personally witnessed smiles on the faces of countless poverty stricken peasants in the villages of India and not one on the face of cigar-smoking millionaires in their chauffeur-driven Rolls Royces). But the real flaw is the iniquitous, left-brained, binary argument: *either* the internal state, *or* the external conditions.

What then is Peter Deunov's counsel about wealth and prosperity? It is found on page 65, quoted from 'The New Thought' (1932), Sofia, 1947, *Remember that it is not material wealth which gives meaning to life ... Real wealth is hidden within great souls ...* (Elsewhere Peter Deunov advises, *I am not recommending poverty. I recommend three types of wealth: physical, mental and spiritual wealth. When Christ said "Collect treasures" (Matthew 6: 19-21) he meant such kind of treasurers.*²)

There is no denying the role of monetary and economic factors. But it is the change at the individual level that, collectively, engenders that positive change at the political and economic level; the outer is the projection of the inner. Is it not blatantly obvious (even to clinical psychologists) that an unhappy mind-set will only create political change that reflects the mind-sets that created it; so the change is bound to be unconstructive?

1 The Happiness Movement, *Positive News*, Issue 84, first quarter, 2016, pp. 22-25.

2 Beinsa Douno (2016), *The Teacher*, Volume I, The Dawning Epoch, Shining World Press, p. 144. See Network Review, No 121, pp. 45-46.

In closing, it seems to be the fate of all religious teachings that the free bird of enquiry and individual exploration gets caught by succeeding generations and suffocated in an airless cage to become fixed ideologies; whereupon religion degenerates into religiosity, Christianity into 'Churchianity' (as also science has become scientism). The Founders of religions gave out the living message of timeless truths – the Science of Life – but their followers, word-drugged have fossilised the living message into a dogmatic creed. That this may not happen to the teachings of Peter Deunov is our ardent desire. The signs are auspicious. Because the Bulgarian sage has attracted the select few instead of the mass appeal of other religious teachers, his message so far appears not to have been diluted and dissipated (allusions to the Law of Entropy here!), but to have remained in loving and worthy hands – no finer than the writers of this inspiring and eminently practical book based on Peter Deunov's 'scientific experiments' (page 15), not mere theory, on the art and science of living 'for our times', according to the precepts of *esoteric* Christianity freed from the rusty shackles of theological dogma.

Dr Edi Bilimoria is a consultant engineer, pianist and student of the perennial wisdom.

Living beyond the Robotic

Nicholas Colloff

BEYOND THE ROBOT: The Life and Work of Colin Wilson

Gary Lachman (SMN)

Tarcher Pedigree, 2016, 400 pp., \$26, p/b – ISBN 978-0-399173-08-0

What if the world 'as it really is' is the one you see when in your most joyous state of mind? When your perception reaches out and dances; and, everything you see, even the most mundane thing, is full of its own life, resonating harmoniously? And if so, what is it, without or within us, that inhibits our ability to dwell there permanently?

Believing in and articulating the reality of the first proposition and seeking a comprehensive answer to the second was Colin Wilson's life's work. That work was carried out as a writer, working in both fiction and non-fiction, as lecturer and television presenter. The work poured forth, over fifty years, and explored a wide range of subject matter – philosophy,

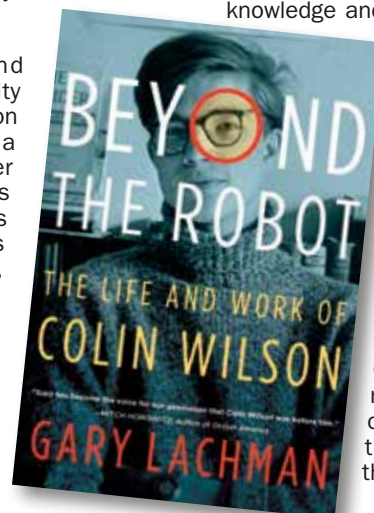
psychology, the occult, crime, sexology, literature, archaeology and science. He ignored T.S. Eliot's advice not to write as much and, as Gary Lachman shows in this exemplary intellectual biography, this veritable flood was shaped by a guiding set of core concerns and corresponding ideas. Why do we not see reality as it really is?

First, because we misconceive perception. It is not simply the passive reception and organisation by association of sense impressions but a reaching out and apprehending of reality that intentionally co-creates what is seen. Second, because this tendency towards a mistaken passivity is reinforced by that part of our mind that Wilson dubbed the 'robot'. The robot has utility. It handles the need we have to analyse, to break down the world into manageable chunks, deal in simple cause and effect and help us navigate, and make habitual, many features of our everyday lives so we run on the rails of certainty. But this helpful servant has a tendency to overreach itself, imagine itself dominant, close off more holistic, vivid and ultimately meaningful ways of seeing. Wilson comes to locate this differentiated mental life in the two halves of the brain. Third, because habit is comfortable, less effort is required and the vast majority of us appear disposed to laziness! Fourth, because we inhabit a culture that has identified the world seen only through the robot's eyes as 'the real world' – fragmented and meaningless – a vision of the world Wilson found in what he dubbed the old existentialism of Sartre or in the literature of Beckett. Such a cultural subscription becomes self-fulfilling – why make an effort if the effort is ultimately futile?

But there are positive reasons too. As Bergson argued and Huxley found in his mescaline experience, the brain as a whole is a necessarily limiting filter. The world seen without a filter may be a dazzling display of intuitive knowledge or the lively unwashed plates in Huxley's sink being of untold significance but this may be equally disabling unless translated into forms of assimilated knowledge and living performance. So

too, though in the past, our ancestors may have had access to a more holistic form of knowing and acting – and Wilson saw the apparently unrepeatable feats of, say, the Pyramids, as evidence of this – this knowledge led to a static form of life.

Our conscious evolution requires a more dynamic, conscious relationship to the unfolding universe; thus, the long journey of



differentiation (and alienation) such that in stepping back from the world, we are propelled towards finding a more creative, dynamic relationship in and to reality. Ultimately the task was to be so in control of one's transcendental ego (to use Husserl's nomenclature) as to be able to navigate between clear seeing and conscious acting such that you stepped permanently beyond the robot or, more accurately, that the robot's necessary functions became wholly transparent within a wider field of apprehended meaning.

These ideas were informed by Wilson's own experience of breakthrough to this more vivid reality and by an informed and experimental practice and Lachman gives us wonderful examples of both of these. So, for example, in the latter case, learning from Maslow that the act of remembering a prior 'peak experience' as being a gateway into a new one or through paying intelligent attention to the clues of synchronicity learning better to navigate one's purpose. Most especially too in engagement with a host of thinkers and imaginative writers. An early wrestling with the Romantics (broadly conceived) that he immortalised in 'The Outsider', his at first lionised then denigrated book, was followed by the key influence of Husserl (on perception, intentionality and phenomenology), of Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Shaw, Wells and Whitehead (on conscious evolution) and James, Maslow and Frankl (on a positive and meaningful psychology) to name but a few!

This is the great virtue of Lachman's book - to anchor it in Wilson as a thinker and explorer about the nature and potentiality of consciousness, both in its positive direction, and Wilson was undoubtedly an optimist, and in his realistic assessment of the ways its evolution and development could be side tracked or thwarted, that, for example, forms the basis of his, undoubtedly relished, interest in crime and sex!

It is true that not everywhere Wilson took his explorations will have the same value for every reader. We may doubt the validity of archaic lost civilisations of telepathic Neanderthal (though personally I am perfectly happy to entertain the speculation and assess the evidence) or we may want to sidestep the criminal mind as a diversion (or descent) too far though Wilson would maintain only one of degree not of kind. Nevertheless, anyone seriously interested in our human potential should find somewhere to inhabit in Wilson's capacious landscape and, in the company of this witty, intelligent, serious and accessible interlocutor, wrestle with a fascinating constellation of ideas. They will emerge challenged and enriched.

Meanwhile, it must be said too that Wilson was never lacking in self-confidence, an attribute, that Lachman confesses, is part of the reason that his home country - where self-deprecation and disguising your intellect are the somewhat stultifying norm - has found it so difficult to embrace him. Lachman's biography, it is hoped, will go some way to addressing this. It is a balanced, sympathetic, and highly lucid one and of a man who obviously exerted a significant and acknowledged influence on the author; and, they share the ability to convey complex ideas simply without ever being simplistic. Wilson, also, emerges as a generous writer willing to help and promote the work of others.

It was probably not the place then to make a critical assessment of Wilson's ideas rather than provide sympathetic exposition but in closing I, myself, do want to suggest a missing dimension. Wilson's emphasis on the active, on the will, concentrating its way to liberation is understandable as is his criticism of the potential passivity of our everyday life but it does so sometimes at the risk of simply devaluing the receptive, the influx of creative grace, gift, that as an essential part of the phenomenology of consciousness as Husserl's out going intentionality. Intention and reception are the yang and yin of becoming (and being whole). Likewise, though a happy Cancerian and loving husband and father, love and compassion as a cultivator of real seeing and acting tends to be more noticeable by their absence (as does in Wilson's key thinkers and writers, unless I am mistaken, any women)! But then we simply have to recognise that our ways to liberation are, in truth, more manifold than any person can, or indeed should, encompass - even as one as gifted and companionable as Wilson.

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There is a demographic revolution going on in the Western world. Several decades back, the label of 'spiritual but not religious' (SBNR) did not exist. Now surveys suggest that up to a quarter of the population endorse that option. Linda Mercadante, a professor of theology, has done a major study in the US to find out more about this group and what they believe. This research is presented and summarised in accessible form in *Belief without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual but not Religious*.

The book is set up in a subtle way that makes the distinction between spirituality and religion both relevant and problematic. It is problematic in that it is often over-simplified as "religion = dogma and convention" and "spirituality = experience and individualism", and this problem is compounded by the fact that SBNR individuals tend to over-simplify in this way. In fact, the distinction is far messier than that. Religion contains liberal, critical and highly individualised forms of belief and worship as well as more exclusivist and dogmatic forms, while spirituality contains varied formulations, some of which have a form of dogmatism and exclusivism of their own in being cocksure of their superiority. I appreciated Mercadante's approach to this breaking this distinction down - it was considerably more nuanced than I have found in most other books on the subject.

Mercadante categorises her SBNR interviewees into five types. *Dissenters* intentionally stay away from institutional religion and are critical of it. They tend to reject particular theological positions, and select a personal worldview that is intentionally contrary to the religion that they grew up with. *Casuals* are not so bothered. Spirituality is neither something that captures their attention nor organises their life. They dip in 'as needed'. Spiritual practices are for them primarily a way toward better health, stress relief and emotional support.

Explorers show a fascination with all things spiritual. They tend to try one thing out and then another, seeking novelty and new experiences. They have no plans to settle anywhere, enjoying the journey without any hope of a destination. *Seekers* are much like explorers, but the difference is that they are looking for a

Seeking the Essence of "Spiritual but not Religious"

Oliver Robinson

BELIEF WITHOUT BORDERS: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual but not Religious

Linda A. Mercadante

Oxford University Press
USA, 352 pp., £19.99 -
ISBN 978-0199931002



spiritual home. *Immigrants* are those who have moved to a new spiritual land and trying to adjust to new identity and community, while still identifying as SBNR. Mercadante found this group struggling with the constancies of religious life, and suggests that something about the independence and freedom of the SBNR designation may make the commitment and group loyalty of a religious community difficult.

In the context of a very hazy division between spirituality and religion, what *does* define being SBNR? Despite the prize attached to being individual and unconventional in the SBNR world, the interviewees in the study showed a clear and common heritage in their beliefs. They were, however, often unaware of this heritage, thinking that their own ideas were new and even unique. In fact, they were drawing on ideas and language from Swedenborgianism, Transcendentalism, Romanticism, spiritualism, esotericism, Theosophy, New Thought and Asian religions. They also were drawing on the Protestant lineage of individual interpretation and allowance of criticism to be part of faith.

In her analysis of the key themes in belief, she picks out as particularly common in the SBNR ethos. Firstly, spirituality is based on a hero myth structure of overcoming the ego through a quest of self-improvement, which requires undertaking a host of therapeutic, artistic and spiritual practices. Secondly, exclusivism – the idea that one idea has the truth – is rejected in favour of a “perennialist” approach that sees all spiritual concepts as relative, but the mystical experience as absolute and truth-giving. Experience in this belief set is the ultimate touchstone, so interpretations and concepts should follow it. Thirdly, the choice to be SBNR is based on perceived ethical shortcomings in religious groups, including prejudice, homophobia and fear of the other. Finally, there is the belief in the validity of syncretism – the bringing together of diverse ideas and practices and integrating them in an individual and improvised personal system. The postmodern values of uncertainty, fluidity, subjectivity and relativism are all richly espoused in SBNR, but typically within a worldview that places spirituality as a higher expression of the sacred than religion. It seems that Mercadante is, as a Christian, slightly irritated by the superiority that she sees hiding behind SBNR’s espoused pluralism, and one can understand why. Overall, the book has a strong balance of description, evaluation and criticism and is, as yet, one of only a few major empirical studies on the SBNR revolution.

Mercadante does a good job of arguing for and against the worth of the SBNR label. On one side, it could be as a

narcissistic descent into spiritual navel-gazing, while on the other, it could be a healthy flood of spiritual passion out of religious institutions into the world at large. In Linda Mercadante’s view (and mine too) it’s probably both.

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Living the Law of Love

David Lorimer

THE ROOT OF WAR IS FEAR – Thomas Merton’s advice to peacemakers Jim Forest

Orbis, 2016, 223 pp., \$25, p/b – ISBN 978-1-62698-197-3

In the final chapter of this powerful and inspiring book, Jim Forest, himself a lifelong peacemaker who met Thomas Merton as a young man, comments that ‘we now find ourselves in a state of fear driven permanent war’, enacting the agenda of a Project for a New American Century with its mantra of the war on terror as a way of driving arms-driven economies fomenting conflict around the world – depressingly, the arms companies overwhelmingly supported Hillary Clinton in the recent US presidential election. If you carry on making weapons – and I understand that the US is currently developing smarter, smaller nuclear arms – they have to be used, otherwise there is no need to produce any more and, it is argued, the arms industry is key to exports (and employment) not only in the US, but also in the UK and France. Clinton was involved in the record-breaking \$80 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia and seemingly quid pro quo donations to the Clinton Foundation. Such systemic and widespread corruption is rather discouraging.

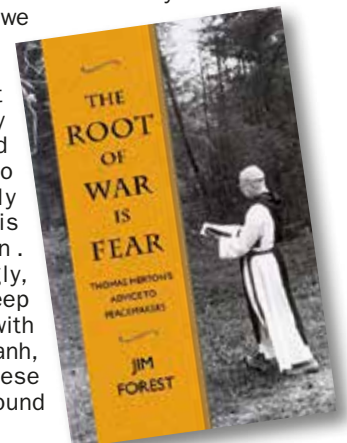
Had Thomas Merton been alive now, he would have been a vociferous critic of the climate of fear that continues to be manufactured by the media. The title of this book corresponds to an essay he wrote in the early 1960s, at the height of the Cold War. One of the great ironies is that what Merton was arguing in 1962, and for which he was censored, had become by 1965 the official policy of the Catholic Church. He remarks that Pope John XXIII would not have got past the censors if he had not been Pope – and Pope Francis is a worthy successor in that respect. Jim tells us that two of the Americans he most admired, besides Lincoln and Martin Luther King are Merton and Dorothy Day.

Throughout the book, Merton’s emphasis is on being true to gospel of love in the New Testament and

correspondingly sceptical of mealy-mouthed compromises justifying violence, especially while not recognising our own complicity. He writes that ‘men have become objects not persons. Now you complain because there is a war, but war is the proper state for a world in which men are a series of numbered bodies. War is the state that now perfectly fits your philosophy of life: you deserve the war for believing the things you believe. Insofar as I tend to believe those same things and act according to such lies, I am part of the complex of responsibilities for the war too.’ (p. 9) Paradoxically, we arm ourselves in order to avoid war and preserve peace, but make enemies in the process so that war becomes unavoidable. Merton is very clear that the only winner in war is war itself. Moreover, this is an externalisation of our thoughts and desires, so if we want a new world, we have to change our predominant thoughts and desires, crucially cultivating a climate of love and trust in order to overcome the prevalent climate of fear.

All this led Merton to embrace nonviolent action. He could not stand by passively and fatalistically, and this created a huge tension with the authorities tried to gag him by arguing that he would make a much better contribution simply through prayer and monastic life. He refuses an ideology of matter, power, quantity, movement, activism and force, embracing instead a ‘life that is essentially non-assertive, non-violent, a life of humility and peace’ as a statement of his position. He felt that adopting such an attitude ‘implies no heroism, no extraordinary insight, no special moral qualities, and no unusual intelligence (p. 93), but it does mean embracing the Sermon on the Mount, a way of forgiveness and non-retaliation, which Christians throughout the ages have found so difficult to practise.

I liked the development of the word peacemaker rather than pacifist, as the former implies an active approach of embodying peace and renouncing violence in our own thinking and feeling. At the time the Vietnam, Merton felt that ‘our external violence in Vietnam is rooted in an inner violence which simply ignores the human reality of those whom we claim to be helping’ (p. 169) – a point graphically illustrated in a photo immediately beneath this quotation. Fascinatingly, he had a deep encounter with Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese monk, at around



this time 'he is more my brother than many nearer to me in race and nationality, because he and I see things in exactly the same way.' (p. 163)

All of this is a powerful message for our own time and a reminder of the importance of living the law of love in our own everyday lives where it is so easy to become caught up in responding to the pervasive climate of fear and violence. I was struck by a passage where Merton writes that the validity of the Church depends precisely on 'spiritual renewal, uninterrupted, continuous, and deep'. (p. 56) This means listening to the voice of conscience rather than external authority, pursuing our work 'not on the results but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself.' Such was the advice given by Merton to the young Jim Forest and from which we ourselves may take heart. Our individual contributions may be small, but they are significant in that it is only we ourselves, working with other like-minded people, who can make them. As Rowan Williams comments, 'Merton's witness for peace is more urgent than ever in a world becoming rapidly more insane and feverishly impatient.'

consciousness studies

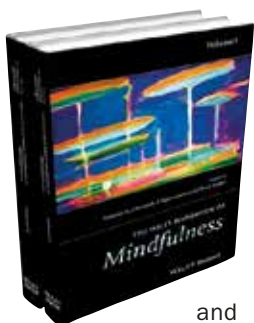
An East-West Balance

Dr Alison Armstrong

THE WILEY BLACKWELL HANDBOOK OF MINDFULNESS

Edited by A. Le, C.T. Ngunnomen, and E.J. Langer

Wiley, 2014, 1,186 pp., £185, h/b – ISBN 978-1-118-29487-1



This edited two volume handbook is written by academics, for academics. It is probably not very accessible to the lay reader, and it is presenting theoretical

and empirical ideas and research, rather than being of practical support to a mindfulness practitioner or teacher.

Overall, what I like the most about the handbook is that it is inclusive of Langer's definition and conceptualisation of mindfulness. This is unsurprising given that Langer is one of the editors, but it is refreshing to have so much written about this "version" of mindfulness. Much less prevalent is the more standard definitions of mindfulness as put forward by Kabat-Zinn and Williams,

and this is unusual in contemporary mindfulness writing. Whilst there is much common ground between the mindfulness perspectives, Langer's is less commonly quoted, but in my opinion should be heard more. A key difference is that she writes about "mindfulness without meditation" rather than emphasising meditation as the means of increasing levels of mindfulness. Langer's work on mindfulness is based on social psychological theories that include:

- Mindfulness as a universal human capacity
- An orientation in the present
- An openness to novelty, and an alertness to distinctions
- A sensitivity to different contexts, and an awareness of multiple perspectives

The other overarching feature of this handbook is that it also explicitly includes, compares and contrasts Eastern and Western definitions and perspectives of mindfulness. It does occasionally feel though as though an author has a deep understanding in either an Eastern or Western framework, and shoe-horns in a perspective of the other to suit the particular stance of these volumes. This is not necessarily problematic, but does at times result in a lack of flowing narrative.

There is a strong thread throughout the handbook of mind-body connection. This is not new, but it is nice that it is so explicit and central to the discussion. This makes the book relevant to those far beyond the argument of which definition of mindfulness is "best", or which intervention is "most effective". This makes the book relevant to anyone interested in human functioning and reducing suffering.

Most chapters feel newly written or conceptualised for this volume, and this is a key selling point. Many other edited volumes seem to simply bring together in one place many papers that are available elsewhere, and regurgitate existing research and views. Some chapters feel like that here, such as the rather over-done writing on Self-Determination Theory (Ch. 12), but most feel fresh, and the handbook is a good showcase for views and perspectives that are possibly less well known in the mainstream.

There is virtually nothing in the book on methodology. This is not strictly a problem, as it is not a book claiming to cover that, but it would be nice to see at least a nod towards exploring methodology, since this is crucial for being able to accurately interpret empirical results, which can only be as good as the research design. All of the editors are Harvard-based, and the high standard I expect from Harvard

academics is reflected in the chapters. It is a slightly dominated by a North American perspective.

There are five sections in the handbook which I will take in turn.

Origins and Theory

This section is excellent, and definitely worth reading if you have been confused about the different approaches to mindfulness and its application in the contemporary context. It slightly feels like it is trying to justify the Langer approach, which is understandable given the dominance of the Kabat-Zinn/Williams approaches. But the core concepts are presented clearly and with an openness to being inclusive of different perspectives.

I particularly enjoyed the chapter on psychological paradigms. As psychologist myself, I took pleasure in the dismantling of silos within psychology, and the clear siting of Langer's perspective within the psychological field. It steps out of being entrapped in categories within the discipline (which itself would imply mindlessness!).

Consciousness, Cognition, and Emotion

There are some excellent chapters in this section, which is unashamedly psychological in focus. Some highlights include breaking down into psychological terms the reasons why one of the core mindfulness practices is breath awareness. This information could be of immense help to newcomers to mindfulness, and also to teachers faced with the difficulty of encouraging students to continue practicing something that has little inherent interest.

There are also chapters on how mindfulness works, drawing from a range of theoretical and empirical sources. In a rare moment of reductionism, deautomatisation is given in one as the key process, even though that itself is described as the combined effect of several other processes. There is a considerable amount written about the related concept of self-regulation. These are not new views, and much has previously been written on these, so it is perhaps a little disappointing that there is not more here that is novel.

Some chapters whilst interesting, have only marginal links to mindfulness, e.g. Ch. 20 on time, which would perhaps be better placed in another volume. And there is an interesting exploration of mindfulness and creativity, but that would sit more comfortably in the section on creativity.

Leadership and Organisational Behaviour

This is a relatively small section of the handbook, but nonetheless a

valid and interesting one. I am not wholly convinced by the perspective on organisational (rather than individual) mindfulness, which feels like an approach to risk management, leadership, or resilience that has been called mindful to fit into the current popularity of mindfulness (Ch. 22). This in fact is backed up in the very next chapter, where Langer herself is quoted as defining organisational mindfulness in terms of individual leaders being mindful themselves, and in promoting and harnessing mindfulness among their staff in a form of distributed mindfulness, rather than claiming an organisation itself can be mindful. This highlights perhaps, a slightly more sociological and cultural stance, which makes a refreshing change from the dominance of psychology.

Possibly the best chapter in this section is titled Mindfulness at Work. A compelling case is made for bringing mindfulness into the workplace, which is possibly of most use and interest to mindfulness teachers who are trying to formulate the concrete benefits of mindfulness to individuals in language that might persuade HR staff to commission mindfulness interventions!

There is a great chapter on Mindfulness in Law, but sadly it does feel out of place here, and would possibly be better in a volume dedicated to mindfulness within specific work contexts.

Health, Well-Being, and Performance

This section is the largest in the book. There are some well-known contributors who do not really have anything new to share that is not written about in many other places (such as Kristeller on mindful eating). And there are some topics very familiar to anyone who has done some reading on mindfulness, such as mindfulness for trauma, PTSD, and anxiety. There is far less written on depression than is normal for a publication of this nature, but that is perhaps because it is a topic very widely covered already, and also might be a reflection of the US context, which has not embraced MBCT as widely as in the UK (MBCT/Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy is an intervention specifically aimed at recurrent depression).

Probably most interesting in this section is the new areas discussed for applying mindfulness; diabetes, and female sexual dysfunction are two examples. There is also a new take on stress, and encouraging "The Art of Stressing Mindfully", which seems much more realistic than suggestions that life can/should be stress-free. This chapter explores the effect of mind-set and the corresponding effect on stress, which opens to a discussion on employing a mindful strategy which includes acknowledging and welcoming stress.

I was glad to see that there were several chapters devoted to mindfulness for healthcare staff. This is particularly important as many will be working in highly stressful situations, and there is strong need for self-care. Mindfulness also offers a more active engagement in the provision of healthcare, by encouraging empathy, active listening, and not being bound by diagnoses.

Education, Creativity, and Coaching

This is a small section, and I would have loved to read more. I especially felt there was a missed opportunity here to give more space to reviewing the theories and empirical work around Langer's popular and controversial book *Mindful Learning*, which is now nearly 20 years old. This book is as important in contemporary education as it was when first published, and I was left wanting more in this section that would build on and reflect on the perspectives on learning and education offered in the book.

Overall, I particularly recommend this handbook for anyone who is sceptical about mindfulness, or is fed up with it being cited as a cure for all ills. It is not a book trying to convince you to practice, or to convince you that mindfulness is a valid concept outside of its religious roots, or that it should be available in all workplaces and in all schools. Instead it is a balanced, well written and approachable presentation of a wide range of facets of mindfulness. It feels refreshingly inclusive of Eastern/Buddhist and Western/psychological views without the evangelising that can be so nauseating in mindfulness books.

Dr Alison Armstrong is a mindfulness facilitator and researcher. She offers mindfulness privately and to employees specifically for stress reduction, resilience, and greater well-being. She is currently writing a book on Coping and Resilience, based on her extensive research on the subject. Her PhD explored mindfulness in relation to sustainable consumption behaviours. Earlier in her career, she was an engineer working on fluid systems, and is a qualified yoga teacher.

Ego-Soul Dynamics

David Lorimer

A NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF HUMAN WELL-BEING

Richard Barrett (SMN)

Fulfilling Books, 2016, 478 pp., no price given, p/b – ISBN 978-1-326-59145-8

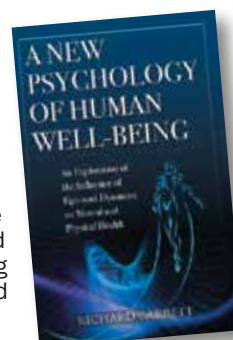
Much contemporary discussion of well-being has focused on happiness, although the work of Martin Seligman in positive psychology has extended to meaning, an interesting comparison with this ground

breaking work by Richard Barrett, where the ego seeks happiness and the soul meaning. As readers of his article above will have seen, he develops a Seven Levels Model incorporating growth in stages of psychological development and operation at corresponding levels of consciousness. His model of health and well-being involves satisfying the ego's needs as well as the soul's desires in a developmental process building on the work of Abraham Maslow. One of his important innovations is the contextualisation of the 3-D ego operating within the energetic field of the 4-D soul. He shows how important it is to master each stage as one progresses in order to maintain one's psychological and physical health.

The 15 chapters explore a larger context for psychology, filtering perception and awareness, motivations of the ego and the soul, stages of psychological development, understanding needs and desires, with a corresponding theory of emotions and feelings. Then there is considerable discussion of the nature of energetic instability and the impact of psychology on physiology at the various stages. This leads finally to a summary of his model. Each chapter contains an admirable summary of the main points.

The deficiency needs of the ego are seen as survival, safety and security. Once one has addressed these issues, one is ready for individuation, shifting the axis of one's life from ego to the soul and focusing more on transformation. Then the fundamental desires of the soul are for self-expression, connection and contribution. Richard aligns this development broadly with age progression, so that one would typically reach the seventh level of service during one 60s. The reader can appreciate that fear and lack tend to dominate the concerns of the ego, while the soul is already tuned into love and connectedness. Numerous studies, some longitudinal, show that giving and receiving of love is the most fundamental human need and is also correlated with longevity.

Richard believes that the soul already lives in a 4-D awareness of love and connectedness where we recognise ourselves as individuated aspects of the same universal energy field of light and love. Significantly, he says that 'what we perceive as bonding and cooperation in our 3-D reality is simply 4-D entities attempting to recreate their 4-D reality of connectedness in 3-D conscious awareness.' (p. 452) Hence 'love conquers all because it brings us into alignment with the energetic reality of our souls and the universal energy field.' In this way, the seven stages of psychological



development are the recovery of the 4-D reality of the soul in 3-D consciousness. This is what is meant by bringing heaven to earth, which is a fundamental impulse in Christianity. On a personal level, this means moving from fear through trust to love and the process of healing can correspondingly represent caring for the soul. This is an inner longing shared by many.

A particularly original chapter is the one where he speculates about the connection between not mastering a particular stage of development and manifesting corresponding diseases some 5 to 10 years later. He analyses the leading causes of death in relation to age. For instance, the seventh stage of psychological development corresponds to service and the use of the upper mental field – here it seems that continuing to make an active contribution and maintaining a strong sense of purpose and will to live can have a preventative effect on brain related disorders. At all stages, it is important to let go of fear and anger resulting in accumulating pain and leading to energetic instability. Richard shows how management of the emotions is a key in this respect, although the fulfilment of the ego's needs and the soul's desires is even more critical. This equally applies to his chapter on suicide and stages of development where people tend to commit suicide 'when they can no longer bear the pain associated with the struggle to get their needs met at the stage of development they have reached.'

It is clear that individual and cultural evolution are linked, and Richard draws on the work of Spiral Dynamics to show parallels with his own model. Recent events have made it only too clear that people are at very different stages of development, but I do agree that the direction of travel is towards being centred in soul consciousness where one is aware of the underlying unity of life and consciousness and henceforth the importance of enacting the golden rule. Real democracy encourages individual psychological development, which tends to be discouraged by authoritarian regimes and it is hard to disagree with his recipe of promoting policies that enable people to satisfy their deficiency needs and expand educational possibilities leading to greater freedom of expression and hence growth. This is an important contribution to the literature of well-being, all the more so because it includes the perspective of the soul.

Busy Bodies make Clever Bodies

Olly Robinson

INTELLIGENCE IN THE FLESH: Why your mind needs your body much more than it thinks

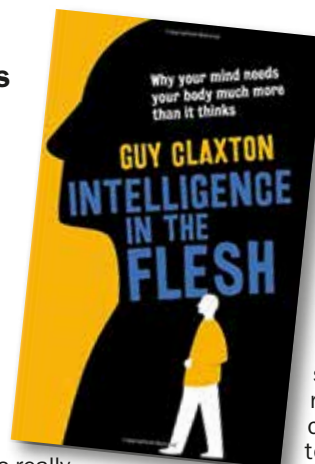
Guy Claxton

Yale University Press, 2016,
344 pp., £12.99, p/b -
ISBN 978-0300223477

The work I do as an academic is really rather unhealthy. It involves countless hours of staring at computer screens, tapping away at keyboards, with my eyes and body stuck in a fixed and rather unnatural posture. Even when I am away from the computer, my attention at work is usually in some cognitive matter, and hence away from my body and environment. This combination of heavy-duty rationality and a lack of bodily movement is tailor-made to cause imbalance. I use dancing to help solve this problem. I go out as regularly as I can to '5 Rhythms' classes, or other ecstatic dance workshops, to help feel physically alive, vital, real, present and full of emotion. Every workshop feels like a remembering of my true embodied self and a temporary release from the fictional junk of my cognitive self-concepts.

Given this passion of mine, I was excited to read Guy Claxton's book *Intelligence in the Flesh*, which synthesises his ideas on how intelligence is a function of the whole body. Claxton relays how society has become more sedentary over time, and its pastimes ever more disembodied. Even things that used to involve complex bodily action, such as cooking, for many now simply involve ripping off a lid and putting a tray in a microwave. Meanwhile, psychology and philosophy have been taking intelligence away from the body for some centuries now. Intelligence tests typically require little if any bodily work or physical activity and instead emphasise abstract reasoning or memory. In sum, culturally and academically, we have been displacing the body as the foundation of wisdom or cleverness. We need to reclaim the wisdom of the body – this is the core message of the book.

For Claxton, the body is the basis of all intelligence. Reason comes from nowhere else, in his view. There is no Platonic realm, no Higher Source, no mind or soul distinct from the complex operations of body. We have evolved physically, we are made for action, and there is no dividing line between brain and body. It is all one intelligent system. The mind and consciousness 'well up' out of the body's working. The whole discussion of how *brain* and *mind* relate, says Claxton, is mistaken.



The *body* is the mind's substrate, not just the brain. Thoughts, feelings, intuitions, values and concerns all are expressions of total bodily events that incorporate the nervous system, immune system, circulatory system and more. Our blood sugar changes in response to thoughts, our thoughts respond to bacteria in our intestine. Hence studies show that people make better decisions when they rely on their physical intuition – their gut feelings. The brain is more like a chat room than a directorate.

Feelings and emotions are the glue that keeps the embodied system together. They bring the whole organism into a kind of action-focused alignment, and demand expression. If feeling is not properly expressed, it becomes confused and loses its natural wisdom. Any divorce of thought from feeling creates a kind of 'clever-stupid' intelligence (which, in my experience, is all too common in academia).

Thinking, from the Claxton's embodied cognition theory, is a series of stories that the body constructs about what is going on in its inner depths. There is no other unconscious than the unconscious depths of the body and our lack of conscious access to its finer workings. This does not leave room for an unconscious that is akin of Jung's model or Huxley's. There is no extended 'Mind at Large' beyond our conscious bubble. The unconscious is just the operation of matter and physical information beyond our ken.

Claxton's materialism, while not leaving much if any room for God, transcendence or paranormal phenomena, does provide for a spiritual sense of unity, albeit a radically immanent one. We are one with the cosmos, being not rational souls inserted in the physical world, but integral parts of the material whole. We flow out into the world beyond our skin. To open to the wisdom of the body means opening to its porous nature – accepting that it has no clear edges. Every breath in draws atoms from the world into us, and every breath out expels atoms from one's inside into the outside world. Every learning event draws information in, and every sentence spoken sends it out. Embodied intelligence works with this in adaptive and functional ways. Tools and technologies become seamless parts of systems that include the physical body, while information flows seamlessly inside and outside the body, connecting us intimately with the world and each other.

In the final two chapters, the book discusses whether and how embodied intelligence can be taught, and what it means for education. Why do we make children sit stock still through class, says Claxton, when intelligence benefits from moving around and from gestures? And then we pathologise those kids who want to move around as having an attention deficit disorder! This is such an important message, and one that needs to be echoed throughout the education system, including higher education, where we have also forgotten the power of learning through action. Claxton calls for a New Materialism, which embraces the importance of making, doing and moving in the physical world.

Claxton considers various ways that we can rehabilitate our somatic intelligence – he briefly reviews the effects of biofeedback, mindfulness meditation, exercise, tai chi and dance. I did feel a little short changed that dance only got about half a page of coverage, and exercise only three pages. I felt the book missed out on a chance of extensively exploring the research that is out there on the benefits of exercise, yoga and dance. And given Claxton's expertise on Buddhism, I was hoping for a bit more on spirituality in the book.

Overall, Claxton's basic thesis is important and convincing. We *must* learn to re-engage with our bodies and their extraordinary capacities. Like him, I believe that the whole body is indeed the locus of feeling, memory and thinking. However unlike Claxton I am not a materialist, and I don't share his view that the physical is all there is, when it comes to intelligence and consciousness. I expect that is also true of many readers of the Network Review, given that the Scientific and Medical Network is in large part about exploring alternatives to scientific materialism. But if I was going to read a book that had a philosophically materialistic foundation, it would be this one. It shows just how healthy and wise materialism can be.

The Context of Life

David Lorimer

AFTER LIVES

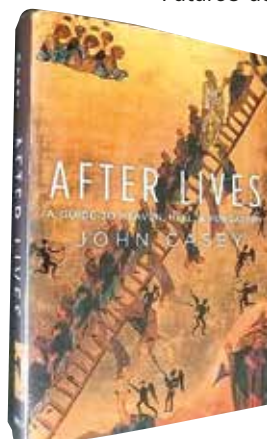
John Casey

Oxford, 2015, 468 pp.,
£19.99, p/b – ISBN 978-
0-19-997503-7

THE MYTH OF THE AFTERLIFE

Edited by Michael
Martin and Keith
Augustine

Rowman and Littlefield,
2015, 675 pp., £54.95,
h/b – ISBN 978-0-8108-
8677-3



AN ATHEIST IN HEAVEN

Paul Davids and Gary E. Schwartz
with John Allison

Yellow Hat Publishing, 2016, 469 pp.,
\$29.95, h/b –
ISBN 978-0-9890242-4-2

The Life after Death Project 2 DVDs, 207 mins

www.lifeafterdeathproject.com

It is unlikely that there will be agreement about the nature of life in relation to a possible afterlife any time soon, as views on this subject depend largely on cultural assumptions and educational background. Faith traditions have their own stories, while modern science eschews both religious and parapsychological sources for different reasons. It is, however, possible, in my view, to draw certain inferences from an evidence base, although again there will be disagreement about exactly what can or cannot be inferred. My own contribution to this debate is summarised in my 1984 book *Survival - Body, Mind and Death in the Light of Psychic Experience*. People will tend to approach any evidence in two ways: sceptics will tend to use the analogy of the leaky bucket, insisting that there is no perfect case and that all are flawed, while those open to the possibility of valid evidence will tend to use the bundle of sticks analogy, arguing that, while each individual case may not be perfect, there is a cumulative evidential effect. My own predilection is for the latter approach.

These three books are very different: the first is a historical and conceptual exploration of the notions of heaven, hell and purgatory; the second makes the case against the afterlife, as the title suggests; while the third is presented as the ultimate evidence for life after death, which no single book can really claim.

John Casey gives a magisterial overview of the Western eschatological tradition – death, judgement, heaven and hell – providing sympathetic and lucid summaries of a vast range of different and at times conflicting sources that is a real pleasure to read. Dark Futures describes the history of hell in

Egypt, Mesopotamia and Israel, Greece and Rome, Christian beginnings, Dante, predestination from Augustine to Calvin and beyond, and finally the decline of hell. Then there is a short chapter on Purgatory before the third part exploring the history of conceptions of heaven, again beginning with Egypt, but also discussing the nature of any putative spiritual body, travelling through Dante to

Renaissance and Reformation heavens and with, surprisingly, a really excellent chapter on Swedenborg.

Any French mediaeval cathedral conveys the powerful message of judgement, heaven and hell, usually on a graphic portal. Theologically, this is a story of sin and redemption, choice and responsibility. The human being is considered as essentially flawed if not depraved, and opinions vary on how we can best be saved. Augustine, Jansen and the Protestants put a huge emphasis on grace, while Pelagius argues the case for human responsibility and the priority of works over grace and faith. Afterlife prospects in early European thought are uninviting, and it is only with the development of the divinity of the soul in Greek thought that things begin to look up. However, this then gives rise to a dualistic view that has plagued philosophy, leading to the modern scientific denial of the soul and its insistence on the fundamental role of brain activity in generating consciousness, as maintained in the second book.

The reader will find many more obscure thinkers covered in the evolution of these ideas, for instance Samuel Richardson's 1660 attack on hell, and the free thinking of Thomas Burnet (1637-1715) arguing against eternal punishment. The trend has been towards a greater universalism of salvation. Casey considers Purgatory as perhaps Rome's happiest inspiration as a halfway house, but it is also true that it gave rise to a huge amount of corruption in the sale of indulgences, reinforcing the power of the Church. However, it also provides an important role for the communion of saints and the idea that the dead are in a sense still with us as well as reinforcing a psychology of repentance.

The section on heaven is equally erudite so that readers come away with a sound understanding of the various doctrines promulgated. This includes the main Protestant thinkers, but also the response from St Francis de Sales and the work of the 17th-century Richard Baxter. One of the first people to deny the immortality of the soul and espouse 'mortalism' was Richard Overton in 1675. Isaac Watts has his own heavenly vision, as does Thomas Burnet already mentioned above. On the sceptical side, Casey could have mentioned the influential essay by David Hume.

Next we come to Swedenborg, with what Casey describes as his 'detailed effrontery'. Having said this, his treatment is very sympathetic, and he recognises Swedenborg as 'a frank, genial man, curiously matter-of-fact in his accounts of the wonders he has experienced' (this was also my own initial impression), which argues in

favour of his being a visionary rather than a charlatan. What originally struck me were the parallels between Swedenborg and more modern spiritualistic sources, which Casey also covers. For Swedenborg, his was an evidence-based approach, drawing on his own wider perception. Casey could also have mentioned Swedenborg's reports of conversations with the Protestant reformers and his criticism of vicarious atonement and predestination discussed elsewhere. Swedenborg was also one of the first people to comment on the problems arising from people not realising they have died. Casey discusses Swedenborg's ideas on conjugal love and marriage in the spiritual world as a representation of the heavenly state.

His treatment of spiritualism and the origins of the Society for Psychical Research is balanced and fair, with an exploration of the impact of the First World War, particularly on Sir Oliver Lodge; however, he could also have mentioned the role of Alfred Russel Wallace. The final chapter reflects that there were a few new ideas about the next life developed in the 20th century, although he could have considered the impact of near death experiences on our ideas last 40 years and the influence of Tibetan Buddhism. Instead, he focuses on theological demythologisation. A consequence of this and secularisation is the loss of a dimension of cosmic moral order relating metaphysics with ethics - and Casey may well be right in concluding that our image of heaven and hell is finally an image of how we judge ourselves.

The Myth of the Afterlife is a massive tome explicitly making the case against life after death with 30 chapters in four parts: empirical arguments for annihilation, conceptual and empirical difficulties for survival, problematic models of the afterlife, and dubious evidence for survival. The use of the word 'dubious' in relation to the final part is clearly tendentious in presupposing the best evidence is only dubious. So the reader enters the book with a clear idea of what to expect in terms of an exposition of extinction instead of survival, and mind - brain dependence rather than independence thesis - what we call the mind or soul is in fact entirely biologically based in the body and brain. The editors see their volume as a vital counterbalance to the vast numbers of books by survival proponents 'that are untempered by adequate consideration of contrary evidence' - the same could be said in reverse for this volume, although the editors have a very thorough grasp of the philosophical terminology as reflected in the introduction by Keith Augustine. His position is that 'the survival evidence that we actually have does not even rise to the level of

requiring us to postulate either survival or superpsi to explain it' - an assertion with which I fundamentally disagree but which he makes on the basis that many psychical researchers are too eager to dismiss conventional - i.e. materialistic - explanations; and he is wrong in stating that mediums never reveal specific information unknown to living persons.

Having said this, the volume does provide readers with a sophisticated analysis of many arguments related to survival. Naturally, it raises the question about causation and correlation, but writers tend to take the view that correlations are sufficiently strong so as to amount to causation. They are naturally critical of the filter hypothesis advanced by William James and others, claiming that it is unfalsifiable and remarking that no one understands its mechanism; however, the same is true of the hard problem formulation - we don't understand how the brain produces consciousness, if indeed it does.

The second part is more philosophical, but again some of the titles of the essays indicate the strong positions of their authors: that survival is metaphysically impossible, that a disembodied afterlife is inconceivable (there may be bodies other than physical), that nonphysical souls violate physical laws and causal closure (causal closure is itself a philosophical assumption), that astral bodies and worlds are implausible, and that our senses reveal the final truth. There are indeed problematic models of the afterlife, as discussed in Part Three, but it is the fourth part that will be most controversial for many readers of this Review. NDEs are classified as hallucinations and while the critiques of Ian Stevenson's work raise important questions, many of these were discussed by Stevenson himself, including possible errors and the difficulty of finding a totally watertight case - again one is back to the leaky bucket and the bundle of sticks. Given the thoroughness with which Stevenson worked, I found the dismissive framing and conclusion pretty insulting: (it) 'is full of serious errors, flaws, gaps, messes and difficulties. It does not correspond to the sort of work required in courses on research methods given to third or fourth year college students.' In this case, the selective engagement in eight pages fails to address the weight and specificity of the case evidence amounting to some 2,400.

A scathing critique of the work of Gary Schwartz provides a good transition into the third book. He is accused of designing an experiment that would guarantee a positive result and conducting his experiments under lax conditions while ignoring

or downplaying valid criticisms: 'the experiment was not scientific and its findings were bogus.' (p. 612) Gary frames his response to these accusations in a broad framework. The atheist in heaven of the title refers to a series of events after the death of Science Fiction luminary Forrest J Ackerman, who had been a lifelong sceptic and atheist. The book and film describe four types of phenomena: physical, synchronistic, information through mediums and communication through computers. The appendix details over 140 of these events, many of which are striking and inexplicable without postulating the survival in some form of Ackerman.

They begin with the appearance of an inexplicable inkblot, which is then forensically analysed, but include weird phenomena associated with computer screens, papers falling down, objects moving and, most extraordinarily, an anomalous insertion into a proofread article in a magazine of the sentence referring to the inkblot - a sentence that then appears again on the following page. Synchronicities occurred to all those working on the case and different mediums produced, blind, significant factual information about Ackerman and his personality. Whether this represents the ultimate evidence for life after death is up to the reader to decide, but the material is striking enough and cannot *in toto* be dismissed in terms of chance. In addition, the filmmaker Paul Davids was initially as sceptical as Ackerman himself. The DVDs bring a human immediacy to the extensive and sometimes less digestible material in the book.

Gary presents a scrupulous approach to parapsychological phenomena based on five criteria: reason and theory, scientific evidence, a community of credible believers, direct personal experience, and responsible sceptical re-evaluation of the first four criteria. He discusses the filter theory and its logic in some detail, showing how correlation, stimulation and removal tests do not justify the assumption that the TV set created the image. He analyses various types of research that support the idea of consciousness beyond death and how this has impacted on his own originally atheistic position. As readers will be aware, many distinguished scientists have supported the idea on the basis of evidence as well as personal experience, which Gary has a great deal. This includes an interesting experimental setup on a computer with a programme enabled to register measurements of light. To this, he adds his experience of the current project and analysis of the important distinction between Type I and Type II scepticism. Type I represents the genuinely open-minded position,

while representatives of Type II are responsible for the manipulation of Wikipedia entries on parapsychology, including apparently damning indictments of Gary's work. Overall, the book is a valuable addition to survival research literature.

In conclusion, I am reminded of an essay on survival by the philosopher CD Broad, where he concludes that he will have to wait and see if his consciousness survives death or, alternatively, wait and not see.

How Grim is the Reaper?

Beata Bishop

THE WORM AT THE CORE - On the Role of Death in Life

Sheldon Solomon, Jeff Greenberg & Tom Pyszczynski

Allen Lane, 2015, 229 pp., £20, h/b - ISBN 978-0-241-21725-2

The title comes from William James, the worm is death, and the central theme and claim of this extraordinary book is the terror of death being the motivation of all human activity. I must admit that my first reaction to this tenet was negative for two reasons: it sounded too sweeping and all-embracing, and the term "terror" seemed exaggerated, but then in recent years that word and its derivatives have acquired a bloody shadow which didn't exist in the early Eighties when the three authors, then young experimental psychologists at the University of Kansas, began to explore the subject.

Their interest was aroused by the work of the maverick academic Ernest Becker who claimed that all human activity is driven by unconscious efforts to deny and somehow neutralise the basic terror of mortality; that, in fact, this terror was the motive power behind the development of art, religion, science, economics and much of human behaviour. Expanding Becker's ideas, the three authors formulated a "Terror Management Theory" which, however, was rejected by the psychological Establishment. Without some hard evidence, they were told, their ideas would not be taken seriously.

They took up the challenge, and thirty years later in this book they present the results of 500 studies and a wealth of additional research supporting their central theme. In Part 1, *Terror Management*, the detailed studies suggest that making people think of their own death immediately changes their behaviour: for instance, judges order harsher punishments in set-up cases, individuals become more hostile towards others whom they consider different from themselves, they show more devotion to charismatic leaders, and greater faith in the existence of God. (Throughout the book religion and

all spiritual strivings are solely mentioned as tools to create emotional well-being and lower death anxiety.)

Part 2, under the heading of *Death Through the Ages*, lists various efforts to achieve literal or symbolic immortality. The range is wide: in the 4th century A.D. the Chinese needed a lot of gold to make an elixir that, they believed, would protect them from physical death. Being short of the stuff, they turned to alchemy, hoping to convert base metals into non-corroding gold. From all we know, neither the gold nor the immortality elixir ever materialised. Yet this ancient attempt seems less bizarre than some of today's equivalent efforts. For example, at the Alcor Life Extension Foundation in Arizona, deep-frozen corpses are kept in liquid nitrogen canisters, awaiting the technological development that will allow them to be brought back to life, however long that will take. At \$200,000 per person, time hardly matters. Those of more limited means may have only their heads and brains preserved for \$80,000, in the hope that at de-frosting a new body will be provided for them.

Symbolic immortality can be built on fame, great and lasting achievements (Keats and Alexander the Great are prime examples), a fertile family line or the acquisition of a huge fortune, which is seen as "a sign of God's benevolent intentions." This chapter takes the reader on a highly readable *tour d'horizon*, bringing together cultural history, psychology, philosophy and much more – indeed so much that the terror of death almost vanishes from sight.

Part 3, *Death in Modern Times*, brings it back with a bang. Human destructiveness and cruelty, from Attila the Hun to Saddam Hussein, is quoted as proof that fighting "the other" strengthens one's own sense of safety; already Thucydides stated that through warfare people strive to overcome "their mortal condition". The "uneasy alliance" between body and soul reminds us that we are physical creatures who will die, so we try to distance ourselves from our bodily nature in many ways, ranging from transformative cosmetics to the mortification of the flesh. Even sex, "the most pleasurable of activities", is linked to the body and therefore to death.

So how are we to live with this awareness? The authors advise us to cultivate self-esteem, become more



aware and accepting of our mortality, and strengthen our sense of death transcendence in non-destructive ways, such as connecting to future generations, passing on our genes, values and possessions and offering them innovations and teaching in vital subjects. Or else we can consider the Epicurean cure (341-270 BC) which asserts that as dead people are devoid of all sensations, their condition is no different from never having existed. Brief but potent advice...

The authors' own attitude to mortality is not stated, but they seem to identify themselves with their physical selves, hence no question of survival of any kind. Total detachment and objectivity are impossible, but, particularly with this subject, a clear personal attitude would be needed. Lacking this, I can't help wondering whether their own fears didn't occasionally carry them away to the detriment of their work's scholarly standard, for instance when they claim that concerns about mortality influence everything, including "what you eat for lunch, how much sunscreen you put on at the beach, whom you voted for in the last election, your attitudes about shopping...whom you love and whom you hate." Having seriously considered my choice of today's lunch and the permanent object of my love, I disagree.

In the final part, claiming the persistence of the terror of death, the authors quote Hamlet's famous line about death as "the undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns". But that is no longer true. Ironically enough in 1975, just before the three authors first met, Raymond Moody's book, "Life After Life", opened up a new era, in which the near-death experiences of clinically dead but resuscitated patients –travellers who did return from that bourn – put an entirely new perspective on physical death and a possible afterlife. Since then an avalanche of important books by eminent authors such as Elisabeth Kuebler-Ross, David Lorimer, Peter Fenwick, Ken Ring and others too numerous to list, has begun to change our individual and collective ideas about death. Over 13 million copies of Dr Moody's pioneering "Life After Life" have been sold worldwide, offering a new focus on physical death, free from terror. In that light, "The Worm at the Core" can be seen as a splendid all-embracing monument to the age-old terror-struck attitude to death, but one that has begun to lose its validity.

Beata Bishop is author of *A Time to Heal*, and is in her 93rd year.

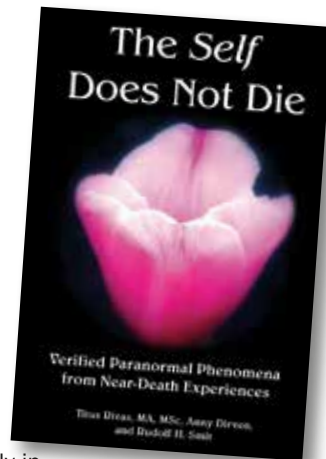
Science Supports the Reality of the Soul

Eben Alexander

THE SELF DOES NOT DIE

Titus Rivas, Annie Dirven and Rudolf H. Smit

IANDS, 2016, 366 pp., no price given, p/b – ISBN 978-0-9975608-0-0



True open-minded skepticism is our greatest ally in trying to better understand the mind-brain connection as it is revealed through the extraordinary lens of near-death experiences (NDEs).

True skeptics will thus greatly appreciate the rich presentation of NDEs in a new landmark book, *The Self Does Not Die*, originally published in the Netherlands in 2013 and recently expanded into an English edition. The authors, Titus Rivas, Anna Dirven and Rudolf H. Smit have gone to great lengths to make an objective analysis over 100 cases of veridical perception during NDEs, when the brain (according to the accepted principles of modern neuroscience) was in no condition to support such conscious experiences. The quality of empirical data and the objective assessment and refutation of possible materialist interpretations make this book a refreshing, and very worthwhile, read.

The authors begin with 14 cases of extrasensory perceptions of the patients' immediate bodily environment. Then they progress through 18 cases of such perceptions beyond the range of the patients' physical environment. Next they describe 36 cases of such perceptions, including the oft-discussed case of Pam Reynolds, during conditions incompatible with any conscious awareness – many of these well-documented cases occurred during cardiac arrest. Four robust cases of telepathy are examined where either the NDEer had a telepathic experience in relation to someone else, or alternatively, where someone had a telepathic awareness of the NDEer. Here they recount the extraordinary case of George Rodonaia, who was declared clinically dead for three days. After-death communications (ADCs) of NDEers with both strangers (5 cases) and with people familiar to them (6 cases) are then shared. Seven observations of NDEers having out-of-body experiences are then reported, including several in which others at a distance perceived the NDEer being out of body, and vice versa. The authors include ten fascinating cases of healing in NDEers that are inexplicable by current medical science (so-called "miraculous healing"), including such well-known cases as Anita Moorjani and

Mellen-Thomas Benedict. Finally, they cover four cases of paranormal psychic abilities, such as after-death communications (ADCs), extrasensory perception (ESP), psychokinesis (PK) and precognitive dreams after NDEs. They conclude by pointing out the materialist explanations for such

phenomena are illogical and inadequate (including extensive discussion of the extreme tactics involved in trying to debunk my book *Proof of Heaven*).

In short, this book goes a long way towards eliminating once and for all the feeble counterclaims of the materialist position which tries to deny, ignore and generally dismiss some of these truly remarkable NDE accounts.

The Self Does Not Die is an important and timely book that offers significant empirical support to the emerging scientific view that consciousness is fundamental in the universe, and that the soul exists and does not depend on the physical brain for its conscious expression.

As one studies the scientific evidence included in this book and recent works on the mind-brain relationship (e.g. *Irreducible Mind* and *Beyond Physicalism*, etc.), it becomes clear that to reach a deeper understanding, we must reject the materialist position. These empirical data refute the production model, which states that the brain produces consciousness out of physical matter. Rather, the filter model (i.e., that the brain serves as a receiver of primordial consciousness) is far more reasonable in accounting for all the available evidence. Sooner or later, the sheer frustration with the ongoing inadequacies of materialist pseudo-explanations will nudge the prevailing western paradigm towards the deeper truth, as it is objectively represented in this remarkable book.

Dr Eben Alexander is a neurosurgeon and author of *Proof of Heaven* and *The Map of Heaven*.

See www.ebenalexander.com and www.eternea.org

Deep Transformation

David Lorimer

DYING TO WAKE UP

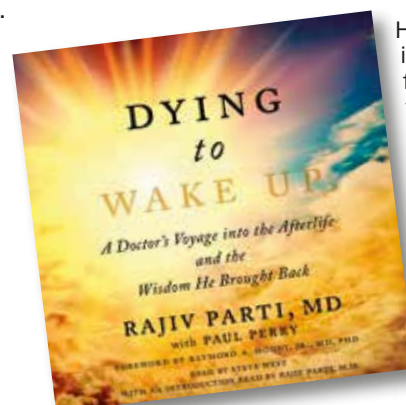
Dr Rajiv Parti with Paul Perry

Hay House, 2016, 222 pp., £10.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78180-726-2

This extraordinary story joins the likes of *Proof of Heaven* by Dr Eben Alexander and *Dying to be Me* by Anita Moorjani as a classic of recent NDE literature and with the same essential message of healing, love and wisdom. It is as if the spiritual world is trying to wake us up to the wider and deeper context of life, as the title of this book suggests. In this particular case, Dr Parti was steeped in materialistic values, with his large mansion and expensive cars, living a high-pressure lifestyle as a successful cardiac anaesthetist. He had effectively sacrificed his health and humanity for material advancement at any cost. The book begins with the poignant story of a patient's NDE, which Parti disregarded in his normal fashion, an experience he himself has after waking up from a very serious seventh operation when he was dying from sepsis and a 105° fever. However, he surprised his surgeon by reporting a joke he had made while Parti was ostensibly unconscious. After his experience, he realises how callous he has been with many of his patients, hurrying them on so that he can check his stock market position.

His journey in the other realms was dramatic. He realises how materialistic and selfish he has been and how he has continued a pattern of pressure and abuse on his eldest son, just as he had experienced and his father before him. He now has an opportunity to break this cycle of anger, and is told that the Universe will take care of him if he is truthful to his own self, God and the Divine. He is taken aback to encounter his father, with whom he had a difficult relationship but he comes to understand better in the light of his own experience. Very unusually, he has memories of two previous lives with connections to his current patterns in terms of abuse and addiction. He learns that these experiences are the raw material of his capacity to change his medical practice to what he calls consciousness-based healing, becoming a healer of the soul.

He receives his most important guidance from what he perceives to be the archangels Michael and Raphael in which he is told that the pure love and intelligence he is experiencing 'is the basic reality, the underlying fabric, of everything in the universe. It is the source



of all creation, the creative force of the universe.' They tell him that enlightenment comes when a person realises that love is everywhere and is the only thing that matters, commenting that 'most don't reach that realisation until they leave the Earth.' Hence the importance of this message for the reader, and it is one emphasised equally by Eben Alexander and Anita Moorjani.

This experience has an immediate and lasting effect on Parti's professional and personal life, and his wife Arpana turns out to be incredibly supportive once she has come to terms with the implications for her family - they downsize the house and get rid of the expensive cars; he resigns his position in the hospital, to the amazement of his colleagues, and begins to construct his new life. On his first day free from hospital commitments, he holds a funeral for his old self and writes a series of three extraordinary letters to God, his father and himself along with a poem about love for his wife. Like Eben, Parti finds that meditation gives him access to a continuing source of guidance, and he articulates seven points of what he calls his Near Death Manifesto, affirming a spiritual view of life.

For him, death proves to be an awakening, and he applies his own principles of forgiveness, love and healing to his relationships, especially with his son, whom he had been pressuring to follow his footsteps into medicine. He also draws a series of five lessons from the light. During this period, he is trying to help his friend Naresh, who has cancer, apply the same insights. Naresh does die in the end, but his death is an opening into a remarkable shared death experience. In the process of the story, Parti has discovered his religion - kindness and love - and his calling as a healer performing what the Indians call *seva*, service with gratitude, work offered to God.

There is one serious error in the book, which I have notified to the publisher so that it can be corrected in future editions. Parti (p. 123) says that Jung had an NDE in 1913, around the time of his break with Freud. It is true to say that Freud regarded spiritual experiences as fantasies, but the experience he refers to took place in 1944, and did indeed lead to an important expansion of Jung's work.

The book conveys an essential and inspiring message, which we can all apply to our lives without having to undergo an NDE ourselves.

In the Liminal Sphere

David Lorimer

HOPE AND GRACE

Monika Renz

Jessica Kingsley, 2016, 192 pp.,
£14.99, p/b –
ISBN 978-178592-030-1

This book follows on from the one I reviewed this time last year – *Death - a Transition*. It is a study of spiritual experiences in severe distress, illness and dying based on a survey of all the patients in the author's care over a one-year period, totalling 251, of whom 135 had one or several spiritual experiences. Significantly, 22% of the 135 died within an hour of conveying such an experience. 56% had less fear, while 53% experienced pain relief and an ordered attitude towards life and death. 50% developed a new attitude towards God/the divine and a new spiritual identity. Interestingly, 44% spontaneously reported all their spiritual experiences, which says a great deal about the quality of spiritual care. As for preceding therapeutic and spiritual interventions, the most important was music at 73% then religious support at 63% and empathy or love at 62%.

The liminal sphere is the sphere of betweenness and transformation where the structures of the ego and its controlling software are dissolved. The hope of the title is defined as the basic human condition and openness into which grace enters, either from without or from within, our innermost being. This can be offered by the caregiver and attained by patient. For the patient, the focus of hope gradually transforms from getting well and experiencing good times, then from the hope of living to the hope of dying well, from the hope for oneself to a hope beyond oneself (p. 51). The quality of presence of the caregiver is critical. According to Monika, they must be willing to endure in an empathic way the powerlessness of their patients as well as engaging with their struggle through nothingness and their remoteness from God - characterised by absence. In her case, this means sensitively choosing the form and timing of any intervention given her background in nursing, theology, psychotherapy and music therapy. The reader cannot fail to be impressed by the variety and timeliness of many of her pastoral and therapeutic interventions with patients, which are described in considerable detail. She also reminds us that we encounter necessarily encounter patients as who we are, so there is an accompanying transformative process in the carer.

Peace and freedom are only found beyond the ego with its characteristic modes of struggle, denial and control. Here there is surrender, letting go,



finding, integrating into a larger sense of wholeness and deeper order. Just as there is a phase of integration, so there comes a time of disintegration that is paradoxically a simultaneous liberation. I was struck by the re-interpretation of the idea of judgement as appreciation for the life lived. This corresponds to 'a God who carries and nurtures me, who is pleased when I reach home, who consoles me and is tender, who is gentle and warm.' I found this such a beautiful and moving image, reminding us that we are ultimately loved and lovable, and able to forgive ourselves. Forgiveness and reconciliation are important themes, since people do not reach peace without going through this process. Bronnie Ware also emphasises this in her book on the five main regrets of the dying, which I reviewed some years ago. She is repeatedly impressed by how difficult it is for ordinary people to forgive themselves, but observes that they nearly all do in the end, reaching peace and an ability to let go. Then they can make their transition.

Ultimately, primordial trust overcomes primordial fear, but the latter needs to be acknowledged in our vulnerability in relationship, whether to fellow human beings or the Divine. For Monika, the question of whether we find our way to a spirituality of relatedness is the fateful question for Western culture. This transcends our tendencies towards self-protection, self-determination and the quest for power. She sees us as part of a whole, 'held within, healed, based on and connected.' On the basis of her research, she concludes that every real spiritual experience affects us personally: 'it shakes us, relativises our ego, and initiates relatedness and maturation.' (p. 130) Truth is ultimately greater than guilt and facilitates a sense of self-reconciliation.

Towards the end of the book, she quotes Karl Rahner's idea that humans are a question into a limitless darkness, raising the question of identity: who am I and who am I meant to be? She reminds us that identity is in fact a relational term and depends on being recognised or seen and loved for who we are, not only by humans, but also by God. Mystically, as St Paul expresses it, this is 'not I, but Christ within me.' The ground of the individual and personal is the universal and transpersonal. When we realise this, we are open to hope, grace, transcendence, love and renewal: a sense of deep connectedness beyond the fear and isolation of the ego - such is the reassuring message of this profound study.

ecology-futures studies

The Internet and the Culture of Freedom

David Lorimer

COMMUNICATION POWER

Manuel Castells

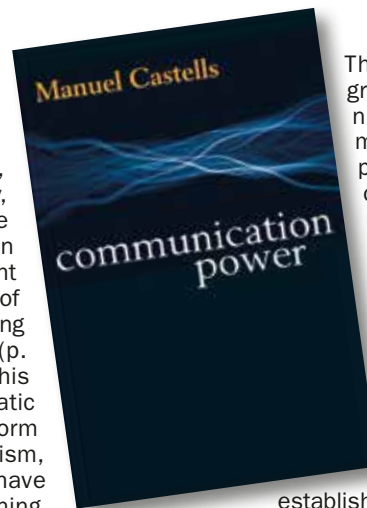
Oxford 2013 (2009), 574 pp., £14.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-19-968193-8

Building on his previous work on the network society, Manuel Castells distils the implications of new communications platforms in relation to the exercise of power in this brilliant and penetrating analysis, with a new introduction to the 2013 edition. There are five extensive chapters: power in the network society, communication in the digital age, networks of minds and power, programming communication networks and finally reprogramming communication networks for social change. The core argument is that 'power relationships, the foundation of the institutions that organise society, are largely constructed in people's minds through communication processes. The shaping of minds is a more decisive and lasting form of domination than the submission of bodies by intimidation or violence.' (p. xix) This communication is mediated through various channels, and the advent of the Internet has deeply modified the ways in which power relationships operate, with the rise of what Castells calls mass self-communication involving self-generation, self-direction and self-selection of information. It is free communication and the culture of freedom generated by the Internet that most directly challenges institutionalised power relationships. In this respect, Castells postulates a dialectic between power and counter power in which forms and processes of communication are decisive in framing their interaction.

There is no doubt that he is correct in saying that the culture of the Internet is freedom, and with this access to information comes a trend towards openness and transparency. Although traditional forms of community are in decline, new forms are generated on the Internet to create what he calls networked individualism that gives everyone the opportunity to introduce new concerns and create new communities. Castells pays special attention to the rise of social network sites as a means of selling free expression and choosing forms of sociability. In his new introduction, he presents a fascinating analysis of WikiLeaks and the control of information. This initiative has provided 'an insider perspective of what governments and corporations actually do while hidden from the view of citizens

and clients.' Then he makes the really crucial point that 'as power is based on the control of information, which requires secrecy, the assertion of free access to information as a constitutional right threatens the very roots of power in the commanding heights of society.' (p. xxxvii) Castells sees this as a decisive democratic practice and a new form of independent journalism, which governments have found deeply threatening, so they have acted together in a vigorous fashion (he discusses policies to control the Internet in Russia and China). To be sure, the practice of secrecy continues 'because it is at the heart of power' but powerful people are now under constant fear of being monitored by autonomous networks independent of their control.

Before considering this in more detail within the political context, it is worth conveying the substance of the third chapter, much of which is based on the work of Antonio Damasio, about the role of emotion and cognition in beliefs and politics. This involves the creation and manipulation of mental images in the brain, and we know that we tend to process events according to previous patterns. Decisions are made both as a result of framed reasoning and from more direct emotional motivations. Frames are neural networks of association accessible through metaphorical connections, so certain frames will activate specific neural networks. In this way, frames can both shape understanding and mobilise action according to the beliefs involved. People also tend to select information according to their cognitive frames. Framing the public mind is largely a media-driven process, which, politically, means highlighting certain aspects of the central issues in such a way as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation or solution. Castells gives a telling illustration by using the manipulation of public opinion with respect to the Iraq war (The Waxman Report contains a searchable database of 237 misleading statements about the reasons for the US war in Iraq made by Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Powell and Rice in 125 separate public appearances). He shows how different frames or narratives were used at different points in the campaign. These agenda-setting frames include the war on terror activating a fear frame, patriotism, self-defence and rescue, while the Pentagon simultaneously had 75 military analysts operating in the media to coordinate the message, many of whom were working with military contractors or lobbying for them.



The chapter on programming communication networks discusses media politics, scandal politics and the crisis of democracy. Castells reminds readers of his thesis that 'power relationships are largely based on the shaping of the human mind by the construction of meaning through image-making.' (p. 193) Ideas are 'images in our brain.'

He has already established that negative images have a more powerful effect on voting intentions than positive images, hence character assassination is a potent weapon in the current era of personality politics, as has been apparent in the recent US Presidential campaign. Castells explains the process of political hit men digging up the dirt then testing the relative damage one can expect through polling companies. On this basis, an advert is created using the two or three most damaging items. This brings us to the politics of scandal, which is a good fit for the inherent role of the media in attracting audiences through broadcasting juicy information to unseat political figures (many cases are documented in an appendix). Scandal politics has the wider fallout of creating a crisis of political legitimacy through a decline of public trust in politics and political institutions. Castells concludes that '*the connection between exposure to political corruption and the decline of political trust can be directly related to the dominance of media politics and the politics of scandal in the conduct of public affairs*' (p. 289, italics in the original)

If this is the downside, there is a strong upside to the advent of digital communication in the '*potential synergy between the rise of mass self-communication and the autonomous capacity of civil societies around the world to shape the process of social change*.' (p. 303, italics in the original) The battle of images and frames now takes place in self-organising multimedia communication networks. Castells presents a lengthy analysis of the emergence of the environmental movement and critics of globalisation as forces in the media while also showing that global warming is a good media for attracting audiences through narratives that raise concern among citizens. The environmental movement has moved beyond reaching out to a mass audience towards stimulating mass citizen participation through the interactive capacity offered by the Internet. This also applies to many other causes championed by online campaigning groups that now have tens of millions of supporters. Further analysis of the digital success

of the 2008 Obama campaign as another example of reprogramming communication networks.

In his conclusion, Castells rues the prevalence of political violence as a form of communication acting on our minds through images of death to instil fear and intimidation. In the US, the war on terror enabled the Patriot Act, and we are daily bombarded with images of violence perpetuating a culture of fear. In the recent US election, nine of the largest ten arms companies gave donations to the Clinton campaign, presumably in order to perpetuate business as usual with proxy wars and covert operations around the world. All this represents the continuing pursuit of narrow self-interest at the expense of the politics of the whole. Interestingly, the globalisation process itself is leading to a resurgence of nationalism, based as it is on the self-interest of corporations and their leaders.

Reading this book gives a vital insight into the nature of changing patterns of power and communication, and, more importantly into what we individually and collectively can do in order to shape a more positive future. The network itself is a metaphor of connectedness, which may enable the rising generation to think and act differently, maintaining a culture of freedom while coordinating for more general social and environmental improvement. And, in order for this to happen, the emotions of outrage and anger have to overcome fear in order to mobilise action for social change, which may well become self-sustaining through enthusiasm.

Symmathesy as Mutual Learning

David Lorimer

SMALL ARCS OF LARGER CIRCLES

Nora Bateson

Triarchy Press, 2016, 211 pp., £15, p/b
– ISBN 978-1-909470-96-5

Readers of this Review will probably be most familiar with the work of Gregory Bateson, but may not be aware that his father William was professor of biology at Cambridge and coined the term genetics in 1906. Then only a few months ago, I reviewed Mary Catherine Bateson's book *Composing a Further Life* - now we have her half sister Nora, a filmmaker as well as an author, continuing the intergenerational family reflections on the pattern that connects, with a foreword by her

daughter. Interestingly, it turns out that the phrase 'the evolution is in the context' comes from William, even though it is often attributed to Gregory.

The book as a whole is a rich feast with poetry, short reflections and more extended pieces introducing the terms transcontextuality and symmathesy. It is a corrective to the excessive emphasis on individualism in the West: '“I” carries the suggestion that I am somehow individual, independent, when interdependence is the law' - even within our own bodies containing over 10 trillion organisms and without which we cannot live. Transcontextuality reminds us that an understanding of living organisms requires more than one context of study if we are to understand their vitality. Perception of the world of things makes them separate, which means that we can assign some form of agency. However, 'when the larger intertwined contexts are in focus, agency is diffused.' This turns out to be a crucial point, as Nora explains in an essay on leadership within the paradox of agency. For her, there is no such thing as an isolated individual and we consequently require a new understanding of leadership based on interdependency, since leadership itself is the product of many contexts. Whatever happens within a system is an expression of the patterns of that entire system, which means there is no blame and everyone is responsible. In my review of the book about Thomas Merton, I think he understands this point. In our current global situation, we can no longer afford to think in singular and linear terms, as solutions cannot come from such a narrow way of thinking.

One danger highlighted by Nora is that our vocabulary may change but our underlying patterns of thinking remain the same - it is easy to think mechanistically about systems or else stress the centrality of oneness when the essential insight is a process of uniting requiring relationality. We often think about the relationship between parts and wholes when

we should be talking about holons and be wary of the exact meaning of these words - diagrams with boxes and arrows make things out of processes. Linear planning in a systems context is an abstract illusion as all the elements are constantly changing both in themselves and in relation to each

other. This is where mutual learning between and within living contexts comes in and is given the name symmathesy. I was so struck by this essay that I sourced it on the Internet and sent it to a number of friends.

Symmathesy is defined in two ways: first as 'an entity formed over time by contextual mutual learning through interaction' (this is what the International Futures Forum would call an integrity), and secondly the process of contextual mutual learning through interaction. In this sense, evolution emerges in interrelationality rather than being the outcome of arrangement and mechanistic function. To live is to learn in a mutual learning context that is inherently complex, and the idea of parts and wholes is misleading in co-evolving systems with multiple contexts. The essay helps readers to see that mutuality is primary rather than agency and individuality. In addition, words are a limited and abstract form of linear exposition that can make for a poverty of description.

Under implications and applications of symmathesy, perhaps education is the most important, but also intractable as it is within our current educational contexts that we learn to think the way we do, largely in linear, specialist and analytical terms. Understanding and interacting with complex living systems is necessary for our survival. As Nora comments, 'as it stands, our "knowledge" often prevents us seeing the interdependencies of our complex world, therefore we disrupt them - to the detriment of our well-being and that of the biosphere we live within.' (p. 190)

We need to become much more aware of how we are making sense of our world in terms of our underlying patterns of thought. When applied to institutions, they 'appear to be equally entwined in the self preserving holding pattern of dysfunction that stymies all attempts to instigate change, even for the survival of our species.' (p. 192) These institutions have their own ecology or totality of patterns of interrelationship that require 'contextual rehabilitation' so that the overarching discourse becomes one of interconnection, interdependency, and interaction through relationship. This point could not be more important as we are still operating within a mental silo of separate nation-states each pursuing their own interests. Whether we know it or not, we are in a mutual process of learning our way into the future where we will inevitably receive feedback on our efforts and hopefully enhance our capacity for creative and adaptive improvisation in the interests of the planet as a whole. This seminal book will give you a new relational lens on life.



Regenerative Logic

David Lorimer

FUTURE FIT

Giles Hutchins (SMN)

Self-published, 2016, 308 pp.,
£17.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-530-153435

I met Giles at a conference of the Laszlo Institute in Italy in July, and realised that I had reviewed his earlier book *The Illusion of Separation* a couple of years ago in these pages. This followed on from his 2012 book *The Nature of Business*, and here he brings these two concerns together in a highly practical manner, providing a brilliant handbook for personal and organisational transformation. Giles has synthesised and organised a great deal of essential thinking, some which he summarises in excellent charts and diagrams so that the reader can gain a clear understanding of the transition from old linear ways of thinking to new systems-based ones. In the course of the book, it becomes very clear that 21st-century companies can no longer afford to use 20th-century logic, also a central concern of the International Futures Forum – see my review of Graham Leicester's book below. Theoretical understanding is no longer enough – it needs to be embodied, which is why Giles's practical exercises, tips, reflective questions and case examples are so useful. In addition, he provides a bullet point executive summary at the beginning of each chapter.

Current turbulence and uncertainty means that a transformation of mind-set is required both personally and organisationally. The danger is represented by what he calls a complexity gap in our leaders' ability to deal with our volatile times. He comments that 'too many of today's organisations find themselves caught up in a top-down, hierarchical, KPI-obsessed, siloed, control-based, defensive and reactive firefighting mind-set.' Nor do we flourish as human beings in such an environment, which surely puts a damper on creativity and keeps under pressure to focus on the immediate task at hand. His new logic is both regenerative and resilient, aligned to service and a sense of real value and deeper purpose. This leads on to his characterisation of the firm of the future, with a particularly helpful chart and diagram on pp. 34-35. A regenerative firm will also be resilient, optimising, adaptive, systems based, values led and life supporting. Each of these characteristics is explained in greater detail, a particular strength of Giles's book and which he applies in a number of chapters.

He sees the overall process in terms of personal and organisational gnosis or inner knowing – this is not a word that one expects to find in a business book, but it is clear that the inner state

of leaders is critical to the way they function. Crucially, leaders need to schedule reflective time into their week if they are going to be able to stand back and regenerate themselves. Too frequently, this is exactly what goes by the board, so things continue on as before. Giles gives exercises for the feelings, breath and body and suggests some significant qualities that we can embody in challenging work environments: gratitude, surrender, trust, courage, humility and reverence.

Organisational gnosis affects both processes within the firm and its outside relationships. Here again, some of the key attributes and qualities might seem surprising: stillness, self-organisation, small steps, social, synchronicity and soulful, but Giles shows these can be implemented in a practical way using processes such as council, deep listening, open space, appreciative inquiry and circles of trust. At the end of this chapter, he uses the seven levels model of Richard Barrett (see article and review elsewhere in this issue) by mapping seven stages of organisational development towards becoming a firm of the future. This means knowing what organisational actions and needs are at each level, with corresponding developmental tasks. Needless to say, very few companies will be operating consistently at the seventh level, but the firm of the future will be advancing in the direction of collaboration and service.

Leadership, as already mentioned, is essential to making this transition of logic, and Giles highlights five important areas for leaders to focus on as well as five qualities of conscious leadership. Such leaders are good listeners, coaches, facilitators and catalysts, operating as convenors and hosts within their organisations and using constructive criticism as a spur to further transformation. The book ends with a reflection on alchemy, showing how the qualities of Yin and Yang need to be finely balanced and embodied in wise action. There is then a series of health check questions for a future-fit organisation as well as details of a corresponding benchmark. Personally and professionally, we are all involved in a transformative process, and this refreshingly straightforward and clearly written book provides an invaluable route map based on the latest thinking in science, psychology, spirituality and business studies.

Strange Attractors

David Lorimer

TRANSFORMATIVE INNOVATION

Graham Leicester

Triarchy Press, 2016, 117 pp., £15, h/b
– ISBN 978-1-911193-00-5

This inspiring book was launched in Edinburgh in April at a reception to mark the 15th anniversary of the International Futures Forum (www.internationalfuturesforum.com) and it represents an excellent summary of many of its key insights into social and learning processes over this period. Transformative innovation represents a 'fundamental shift towards new patterns of viability in tune with our aspirations for the future.' This contrasts with sustaining innovation that fixes the existing system and disruptive innovation that shakes it up. Following the introduction, the book consists of six chapters on knowing, imagining, being, doing, enabling and supporting.

It outlines 10 characteristics of transformative innovation derived from IFF praxis: balance, in terms of operating in both the old and the new world; inspiring and hopeful; informed by a longer term perspective; pioneering a process rooted in discovery and learning; grounded; personally committed with our full self; responsible; revealing hidden resources; maintaining integrity and coherence of means and end; and maintaining a pioneering spirit even in the face of success. At this point, the reader will find a useful analysis of the evolution of a more adaptable way of providing care and support to old people. One tension is the need to measure outcomes on a short-term scale when the effects are slightly longer term and the project is not yet ready to be scaled.

Given our world of boundless connectivity, information overload and rapid change, we need flexible approaches to knowing. Here there are five principles: seeing ourselves as subjects and participants in a relational universe, expanding what we consider to be valid knowledge and therefore our context of learning, respecting a dynamic pattern of relationships and the emerging integrity that it brings about, taking a cyclical view of time enabling us to complete and close processes so as to make space for the new, and moving from fragmentation and separation to wholeness and connection – summarised as holism with focus. Then there are the two loops of fear and love, which the reader will find in my account of our Rome meeting.

Imagination comes next, and here the reader is introduced to what I consider a crucial conceptual tool, the three horizons framework. The first horizon – H1 – represents current dominant



systems and business as usual; the second – H2- is a pattern of transition activities and innovations, some of which may prop up H1, while others enable the transition to the third horizon – H3 - embodying our deeper aspirations for the future. These are represented respectively by the manager, the entrepreneur and the visionary. The beauty of this framework is that it can be used to set up a creative conversation of potential scenarios and patterns without people becoming too attached to a single perspective. H3 provides some imaginative space and may help resolve dilemmas in the present as we seek to attain the best of both worlds. The whole process is encapsulated in one of the 'prompt cards' encouraging us to 'develop a future consciousness to inform the present' (attractors pull from the future).

Being involves the human system and its patterns as we seek to embody a transformative response by bringing together what the IFF calls a creative integrity configured around personal commitment and expressing wholeness and relationship. Its principal axes are being and doing and it moves between autonomy and integration, focus and holism, creating a distinctive culture. Social learning is an iterative process involving action and reflection. Importantly, this is not just an abstract technique, but is embodied in learning from experience – hence the learning journey as an essential component of the IFF process. The chapter on doing also explains Jim Ewing's strategies of Impacto and Implemento, which have been used successfully in a schools' project. This involves a sequence of steps to consider purpose, urgency, destination, success path and commitment, with an emphasis on clarity of purpose that can then be reflected in clarity of communication.

Enabling entails a compelling vision of the third horizon while supporting pioneers trying to implement the process. This also involves a realistic view of policy landscape and new forms of evaluation - how does one flourish in the presence of the old? Finance has its own challenges due to the nature and timing of transformative innovation and the ever present fact of continuous change and evolving contexts. If these insights resonate with your own challenges, then you might like to consult a further set of resources at www.iffpraxis.com.

Finally, we can give ourselves permission to get going, and Graham provides a nice framework for this based originally on Al Gore's reinventing government programme. The permission slip gives us authority and responsibility to help shift our systems towards an aspirational third horizon vision of the future after we have asked ourselves a series of pertinent questions. If we are able to answer yes, then we don't need

to ask for permission, we just need to do it. Pioneers in every field will find this book a rich resource

general

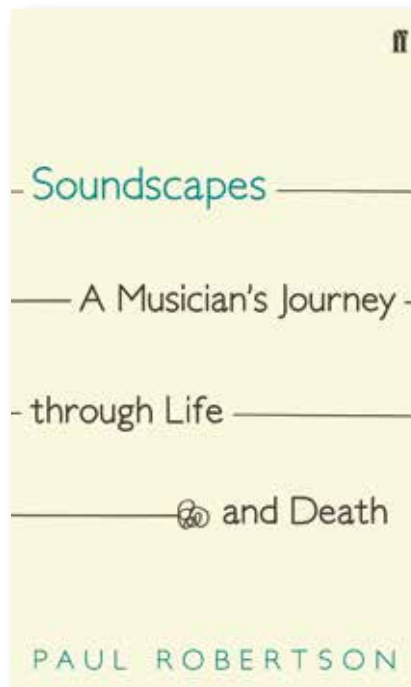
A Musician's Journey through Life and Death

David Lorimer

SOUNDSCAPES

Paul Robertson (SMN), foreword by Dr Peter Fenwick

Faber, 2016, 266 pp., £15.99, h/b – ISBN 978-0-571-33188-8



Many readers will remember Paul at one or more of his appearances on Network platforms. While he had a NESTA Fellowship, he came to Oxford and performed Bach's partita in D minor while a Eurhythmist improvised dancing movements to accompany him - the music was in fact written as dance music. He then played the piece again in a church at a conference in Bath, where he also interviewed Sir John Tavener about the creative process in music. This encounter led to the creation of one of his final works, *Towards Silence*, which Paul was eventually able to perform. However, in the interim, the main artery in his heart ruptured and he nearly died. Meantime, Sir John was also in hospital with a serious heart condition.

Paul describes all this in the book, and the incredibly hard and long road to recovery, literally inch by inch. He was told he would never play the violin again; he did. And most beautifully and poignantly at two more Mystics and Scientists conferences, the last one in 2015. He explained how life had been reduced to its essentials, describing

what he called a second simplicity, which TS Eliot said cost not less than everything; true in Paul's case. In a recent piece from the Sunday Times News Review, shortly after Paul had died, the journalist describes how he had asked his daughter to provide him with a piece of paper on which he wrote down a few words, which were: morality, kindness, simplicity, compassion, forgiveness, empathy, gratitude, patience, understanding, equality. What a list! In common with the message from other near death experiences, we have a recipe for a true and deeply human life, something to which we can all aspire. There is also a tragic element, reflected in the conversation he reports as a young man with one of his mentors Sir Clifford Curzon. He asked him about the significance of music: 'consolation', he said. 'Consolation for what?' asked Paul. 'For life', he replied.

Paul's journey is a remarkable one by any standards. He was brought up in a caravan in Oxford, and his father was a radical Marxist. He encountered the violin at the age of eight, when some free lessons were offered at his school. As soon as he picked the instrument up, he had a strange feeling of familiarity (he later had flashbacks of being on stage as a violinist at a different time and place) and knew immediately that he wanted to become a violinist, which he duly announced to his parents on returning home. He recognised the vast amount of work involved, and devoted himself single-mindedly to perfecting his technique. When it came to the time that he needed a proper instrument that was going to cost £80, his father told him that they did not have that kind of money, but he could try the pools. He filled out card using the fingering of a Mozart piece he was currently working on, and duly won £80! Later, it seems, they had a much more substantial win and were able to move house and buy another as a rental property.

When he meets his first important teacher, Manoug Parikian, he is asked if he wants to become an amateur or professional – 'a professional of course', he replies. He sketches some wonderfully amusing vignettes involving Manoug, who spared no effort and expense in trying to become an English gentleman - some of these incidents literally made me laugh out loud. There are some equally entertaining episodes connected with learning how to take tea with Curzon. Paul has a wonderful eye for the absurd. The reader also learns about his encounters with other musicians such as Heifetz, Brendel, Marriner and Menuhin. His parting from Manoug around the time that he established the Medici Quartet was acrimonious, but it was extraordinary that he suddenly had an impulse, years later, to visit him. It was a happy reunion, and he heard on the radio that Manoug died the next day.

Paul devotes some analysis to the Pythagorean gap as the source of difficulties encountered even by accomplished musicians in trying to play in tune together. This effectively means that perfection is inherently unachievable and yet, for Paul, 'the inescapable flaw at the heart of living and of creativity is the source of depth, integrity and beauty.' (p. 122) During the period of his recovery, he looks back on his time with the quartet and realises how his arrogance and ambition had led him to disregard the needs of his fellow players. There is a searing honesty in his self-appraisal which is a mark of rare integrity. He is convinced that judgement is a key part of dying, and that there is always a moral balance underlying our lives. He feels that our work with others is 'essentially a *moral* exploration by which we learn how best to express our relationship with our true Selves.' (p. 112) For him, this means that human life is primarily defined as a moral force. He concludes (p. 174) that 'throughout the universe, just as in ourselves, there is always a moral consciousness at work; one level reflects an all-knowing consciousness and the other expresses that smaller part we call 'I'. That's the way it is.'

A further important lesson that Paul conveys is the need to surrender and let go. This is most graphically illustrated in his decision to sell his violin. At a musical level, surrender represents being in the flow rather than trying to control things, while more generally he found that being ill was a very powerful way of shedding unnecessary attachments, 'particularly the deep and abiding need for such things as a career, success and public recognition.' (p. 71) Ultimately, this means dying to the ego and letting go of life itself. As Paul puts it: 'as I lay there waiting, I felt myself die – beautifully, ecstatically, transcendently. I saw eternity and shed the whole of myself joyfully in order to become unified with it.' (p. 6)

Another important influence in Paul's life was Dr Francis Roles of The Study Society. For him, consciousness means knowing the truth, while conscience is feeling the truth through the door the heart. Paul describes his presence and his love of truth. Even at their first meeting, Dr Roles tells him that he had everything required to become a complete person, but that he also had an almighty ego, which he would have to learn to let go of. This is the very process described after his illness.

If one of Paul's great loves was Bach, another enormously significant figure is Beethoven, especially his late quartets. The reader already has an idea of Paul's devotion to the highest standards in a story where he describes a preparatory concert before their debut at All Souls, Langham Place. Due to an oversight on timing, the only apparent audience was

three tramps and a dog but Paul insisted on playing. At the end, a man who had been listening comes up and offers his support – Eric Thomson turns out to be a Deputy Director of the Arts Council. Learning the Beethoven quartets is a real odyssey requiring all the players to dig very deep. An unusual auction at the Queen Elizabeth Hall raises £45,000 to subsidise their study of the quartets – they spent three years learning them and two more recording them. Paul provides the reader with some detailed analysis of Opus 130 and 131, remarking how these quartets demand a deep sacrifice on the part of the players, who have to be in a willing state of maximum discomfort to generate the necessary tension. This enables them to convey the precise emotional states carried within the music.

Playing Bach is a different experience altogether – Paul is able to lose himself in the music in a 'wonderful unification of our normally divided sense of Self.' (p. 242) Elsewhere, he writes about becoming locked into the divine mechanism of the universe, and he explains the fascinating work of Professor Helga Thoene on the hidden symbolism of the violin partitas and the way they intertwine with chorales (you can find a summary in the Hilliard Ensemble recording, but do also order the Medici Complete Beethoven Quartets).

Overall, this is a rich, intense and deeply moving as well as instructive journey through music and life, plumbing the depths and rising to the heights of the human condition. I encourage everyone to read the book for themselves and in closing can do no better than repeat his message on that piece of paper: morality, kindness, simplicity, compassion, forgiveness, empathy, gratitude, patience, understanding, equality.

Is This Just for Women?

Gunnel Minett

THE WAY OF THE MYSTERIAL WOMAN - Upgrading How You Live, Love and Lead

Suzanne Andersson and Susan Cannon

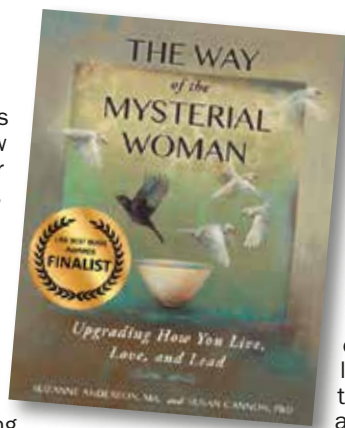
She Writes Press, 2016, 306 pages, paperback, £17.32, ISBN 978-1-63152-081-5 www.shewritespress.com

The authors of this book are both women who have had successful careers running empowerment trainings for women. In the book's blurb, we read that it: "... is for every woman who feels the call to greatness, authenticity, and meaningful living; women who are finally ready to step into their lives with mind, body, heart, and soul fully engaged and awaken their true potential." To achieve this the authors present instructions representing a structured course which

the reader can follow, by themselves, at home. The language of this course is influenced by Jungian alchemy, transformational psychotherapy and Eastern mysticism. The book is aimed at women who are "... characterised by green, socially responsible, and more feminine values... who are seeking to develop more leadership capacity". And the book is dedicated to "women all over the world who are awakening to the Mysterial potential within".

The book delivers its message in a professional and elegant way, using elaborate language, that surely will be appreciated by many readers. Despite this, I found that I had several objections. My main issue is that it speaks only to women. This is true of the general theme and all the exercises are for women. They encourage women to deal with their Yin-Yang polarity issues, mother and father issues, to 'flame' their hero, maiden and crone. All these aspects of the human psyche are described with a feminine focus in the book: I do not regard it as progressive to focus on these as exclusively for women. The authors point out that they are not talking about biological men/women but rather about the feminine/masculine psyche. But despite this clarification in the introduction, the distinction is not kept up throughout the book. It's true that there's still a lot of inequality between men and women, generally to the disadvantage of women. Still, I would argue that we need a fairer way forward, where we recognise the need for both sexes to deal with issues around self-worth and assertiveness etc... We have come a long way in recognising that there are more nuances in gender than a simple male/female divide. There is a whole range of differences between women, from the very timid mother-type to the ruthless political or business leader who just happens to be a woman. The same applies for men. I would have liked the book to make this clearer and to have kept its language such that it would have appealed to both sexes (I am sure many men would recognise themselves in the description of women in the book).

I'd argue that the time has come to focus on feminine/masculine characteristics which we all have, both men and women. Rather than using phrases such as 'empowerment for women' it would have been better to encourage both genders to seek their true self, pursuing the aspects of life which best suit them as individuals. As the book hints, in many countries women's emancipation, despite the best of intentions, has not really meant that women have been able to find their right place in society. Successful business women often have to adopt a masculine lifestyle, sometimes even sacrificing their roles as mothers altogether. Likewise, the sexual liberation of the 1960's failed to create generate a greater respect for beauty of and/or appreciation of the intimacy involved the



sexual act. Indeed, has often resulted in a new kind of suppression for young men and women, who are pressured by their environment into sexual activity with which they are not comfortable. And equally, for many men the 'empowerment of women' has forced them into questioning their male identity. In other words, the pendulum seems to have swung too much in both directions rather than finding its right place. Perhaps it is time that we recognise our male/female differences as well as what we have in common and start working as a 'team'.

The book briefly indicates the (sometimes far from ideal) scenarios for women in different parts of the world along with the authors' vision as to how the ideal world would look. But, mind-changing alone (no matter how fervent and sincere) will not change the environment in which women live. My second issue with this book is therefore the lack of practical suggestions as to how to make women (and men) more 'empowered' in their daily life. By this I mean a discussion of how to deal with the practical day-to-day problems that both men and women often face in modern societies. Foremost among these (for most of us, at least) is child care. Without the help and support of the wider society (something which seems to be eroding on a daily basis) providing a secure and adequate environment in which to successfully raise psychologically healthy children will always be problematic. So, empowering women, even via the most powerful training, will not be effective if the women's life is restricted by having to act alone in providing care and attention for her children. And even in societies with good child care facilities, differences in earning power between men and women have to be evened out if women are going to have a real chance to empower themselves. Above all, if more attention in society is paid to providing good care for future generations, many of the problems described in this book will disappear by themselves*.

My final reservation is that although the book is dedicated to "women all over the world" it comes across as being focused on American women. This is not to say that the exercises would not work for women all over the world. It is more a lack of recognition of difficulties caused by the differences women experiences around the world, and a lack of more practical suggestions for change for women in difficult situations. As it is, the book may be seen by women suppressed by their culture, as too far away from their immediate reality. With the massive differences in attitudes to women in different parts of the world, I would think it is next to impossible to have the same

message for all women. In Europe for instance, where women have a better chance of combining work and motherhood, thanks to proper child care facilities and better rights to take time off work for child care, their need for this type of empowerment is probably less than in the USA. On the other hand, in Asia and Middle East, women's focus is to achieve even the most basic equality before they can start thinking about any form of further empowerment.

Having said all this, I am sure this book has an audience with a number of women (and men) around the world.

*For more on how to change care for future generations see 'Gazing at the Stars' by Dr Steve Minett www.amazon.co.uk/Gazing-at-Stars-Steve-Minett-ebook

Gunnel Minett is author of *Breath and Spirit*.

Co-Creative Living

David Lorimer

QUANTUM BLISS

George S. Mentz

O Books (John Hunt), 2016, 111 pp., £9.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78535-203-4

For some years I have been interested in New Thought and have studied the work of writers such as Ralph Waldo Trine, Thomas Troward, Charles Haanel, Wallace Wattles, Napoleon Hill, Neville Goddard, Earl Nightingale and others. This book by lawyer and global management consultant George Mentz provides a superb summary and practical introduction to this way of thinking and living from inside to outside, recognising the creative power of thought and imagination. My only real quibble is the title, which I suspect was dreamed up by the publishers on the strength of the quantum brand. The subtitle even refers to the quantum mechanics of happiness, abundance and health. There is a mechanics involved, but I'm not convinced that it is quantum mechanics.

The various chapters explain and give practical guidance on inner capacities, spiritual and success exercises, paths to prosperity, laws of success, means of spiritual empowerment and steps to fulfilment. The essential insight is that we are and become what we think and this determines our well-being and spiritual – mental condition. It presupposes that we are microcosms of one Universal Mind with which we can cooperate and co-create. In the course of his exposition, the ideas of many other thinkers are brought to bear including Marcus Aurelius, Emerson, Plato, Aristotle, Meister Eckhart, Lao Tsu and

the Upanishads. If you look around, you will realise that every object you see in your house was once a thought, and that the creative process proceeds from the inside out, from idea to manifestation.

Our inner attitude is critical and also constitutes an implicit form of spiritual practice. Among the most important attributes are faith, focus and gratitude, an openness to possibility and abundance rather than a focus on lack. Feeling also plays a central role as well as a real sense of worth. Hence the importance of our dominant self-concept. Then all this needs to be put into bold, efficient action, not just thought about - which probably involves changing our default settings; that is the hard part, but evidence suggests that an activity pursued for 21 days becomes a new habit. The book combines mental, emotional and spiritual aspects into a synthesis, speaking, for instance, of the need for growth and a higher purpose in tune with the infinite: 'Love is the quality of thought and emotion that will propel us into a state of bliss and achievement. Love is all there is. Focus on the good, the great, the constructive and the beauty of life. See the best in all there is. Look for the good that occurs in the world.' (p. 42)

One chapter lists more than 70 concise laws of success in terms of metaphysics and philosophy. These include laws thought energy, intention, authenticity, regeneration, constructive thought, integrity, empathy, boldness, humility, balance and many others. Readers will find different ones more or less significant in accordance with their own experience. This is followed by a concise summary of spiritual empowerment in a way that can immediately be applied to life. Half measures do not work in this area as we need to be 'a focused person filled with belief' in order to make full use of our capacity. As Napoleon Hill emphasised, definiteness of purpose is key - knowing what you want and dedicating yourself to it. Here Mentz also gives detailed and helpful instructions; as with many self-help books, the real key lies in excellent application rather than just moving onto the next book. He reminds us that it is not only our actions but also our inactions that constitute character. He ends with a series of inspiring quotes from writers through the ages. I particularly appreciated Epicurus – 'not what we have, but what we enjoy constitutes our abundance.' Goethe – 'all truly wise thoughts have been thought already thousands of times; but to make them really ours we must think them over again honestly until they take root in our personal expression.' And Tesla – 'the gift of mental power comes from God, Divine Being, and if we concentrate our minds on that truth, we become in tune with this great power.' A wise, practical and potentially life-changing book

Inspire the World

David Lorimer

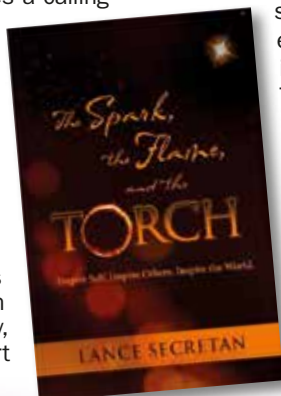
THE SPARK, THE FLAME AND THE TORCH

Lance Secretan

The Secretan Center, 2010, 234 pp., \$29.95, h/b.

Lance Secretan is a well-known leadership speaker and coach in the US. Here he has summarised an integrated body has been teaching for the last 35 years in an accessible and applicable format. The title indicates the format of the book and the sections answer the questions why are we here, how will we inspire and lead (how will we be?), and what will our legacy be, in other words what will we do? Why, be, do.

Lance feels that we have a crisis of inspiration and is devoting himself to addressing this. He reminds us at the beginning, that we experience the world not as it is, but as we are. He sees inspiration as a step beyond leadership in the normal sense and the first step is setting our intentions. This entails having an ambitious vision underpinned by love, growth and a desire to enhance the condition of the world. In order to do this, we need to go beyond our social self and tap into our essential self. As Giles Hutchins also suggests in his book, the inner state or being of the leader is a crucial variable. Lance then guides the reader into defining their destiny, character and personal calling statements, with some inspirational examples to draw on. These are very useful exercises, which I carried out with a group out here in October. He defines a calling as the pursuit of an inspiring vocation, living one's dream in service to others. He quotes Rumi to the effect that we need to remember the deep root of our being, which is what we are here to express, as Richard Barrett also suggests in his book. He presents his own five dynamics system of exploring, exciting, examining, executing and evaluating, all of which is related to the relative intensity of energy, hence commitment. In this context, leaders are called to identify, realise and sustain what he calls the One Dream - interestingly, sustaining this accounts for 70% of the effort required.



The second part enables plants to present his CASTLE - six inspiring ways of being entailing courage, authenticity, service, truthfulness, love and effectiveness. He gives examples of each quality, and I was particularly struck by the encounter between a 31-year-old social worker who was accosted at knifepoint by a teenage boy. By approaching the situation in a totally nonthreatening way, he finishes up having dinner with the boy and finding out more about him. Ironically, he asks him to pay at the end of the meal as it is he who has the wallet. He then gives him \$20, and the boy actually gives up his knife in return. The moral of the story is that if you treat people right you can only hope that they treat you right. Then the punchline: 'it's as simple as it gets in this complicated world.' Another story relates the encounter, years later, between air combatants from the Second World War. In the chapter on effectiveness, Lance reminds us that efficiency is about things and effectiveness is about people. All these qualities are related to each other, as the story of the solo climber John Bachar suggests.

The last part discusses legacy and sharing our wisdom with others, with a quote from Albert Schweitzer about the importance of those who rekindle the inner light when you're feeling discouraged. Here Lance makes a useful distinction between motivation driven by fear and material rewards and inspiration as intrinsic. The first lights a fire under someone, while the second lights a fire within. This is all embodied in what Lance calls values centred leadership involving learning, empathising, listening and delivery. This means enacting shifts from me to you, things to people, broke through to what the Japanese call kaizen (continuous improvement), from weaknesses to strengths and from competition, fear and hostility to love. All this is best achieved through example, which emphasises the importance of personal and professional development. Readers can also follow this book up on his website - www.secretan.com - after the year we have experienced, inspiring and instructive books like this are even more important to read.

Why Less Is More?

10 Minimalist Quotes from the Tao Te Ching:

In dwelling, live close to the ground. In thinking, keep to the simple."

If you want to become full, let yourself be empty."

If you want to be given everything, give everything up."

If you realize that you have enough, you are truly rich."

When there is no desire, all things are at peace."

Be content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you."

In the pursuit of knowledge, every day something is added. In the practice of the Tao, every day something is dropped."

The Master's power is like this. He lets all things come and go effortlessly, without desire. He never expects results; thus he is never disappointed. He is never disappointed; thus his spirit never grows old."

I have just three things to teach: simplicity, patience, compassion. These three are your greatest treasures."

The Master has no possessions. The more he does for others, the happier he is. The more he gives to others, the wealthier he is."