Einstein and Bergson were both public figures. It is easy to forget how famous Bergson was before the First World War – when he gave a public lecture in New York it was said that he was responsible for one of the city's largest ever traffic jams. Einstein became a much more substantial media figure later in his career, but it is interesting to note that they both took political stances – Bergson tried to persuade the American president to enter World War I sooner, while Einstein is famous for his antinuclear campaigning, along with Russell. The split described can also be seen in the contrast between continental and analytical philosophy, and between those like Bergson who took psychical research seriously and those who dismissed it out of hand. In this connection, it was interesting that there is no mention of non-locality in relation to the speed of light. The word is not in the index, nor is John Stewart Bell, and yet non-locality has something to contribute to the debate. In the Postface, the author discusses the changing views of Ilya Prigogine to Bergson, who found him sympathetic in his explanation of aspects of temporal development that had been unexplained by Einstein. Prigogine was critical of Einstein's views about the arrow of time as an illusion, since it left no real space for creativity and novelty as explained by Bergson. Reading this book makes one realise how widely the implications of this debate were felt, and that they are still relevant to the relationship between science and philosophy today.

Darwin's Unfinished Symphony

Kevin Laland

Princeton 2017, 450 pp., £27.95, h/b.

This is a very impressive interdisciplinary work about cultural evolution that draws on the author's research over a 30-year period about the ways in which culture drives the development of the human mind, addressing the fundamental question about how evolutionary processes have resulted in our unique human heritage. It covers social learning across many species in terms of imitation and copying, showing how 'the learned and transmitted activities of our ancestors shaped our intellect through accelerating cycles of evolutionary feedback.' In other words, culture has been a fundamental driving force mediated by its co-evolution with genes. In this respect, I was surprised not to find any mention of epigenetics in the index, as this deals with gene expression shaped by lifestyle and therefore culture. It also seemed to me that the author has not fully absorbed the implications of Gaia theory articulated by Lovelock and Margulis where organisms and environment are closely intertwined rather than the latter exerting selection pressure on the former to adapt in certain specific ways. This systems way of thinking has yet to permeate biology.

The two parts address the foundations of culture in terms of copying, imitation, innovation and creativity, then evolution of the mind, the need for accuracy in social transmission, the origins of language and the foundations of cooperation. There is a fascinating chapter on the evolutionary roots of the arts, especially rhythm and dance. We have enormous adaptive plasticity, which we are now coming to appreciate also in relation to the brain. The argument for the culture drive hypothesis is entirely convincing in my view, and nicely illustrated in a diagram on page 129 where one can appreciate the feedback loop between high fidelity copying and the evolution of larger brains. Agricultural settlement is another key staging post enabling the development of civilisation and more specific shaping of the environment to human use. This effectively creates a congenial niche as well as an upsurge in innovation and greatly increased population; as we know, however, each advance brings its own corresponding challenges. Settlements provide new opportunities for cooperation - including trade - but also for rivalries. In our current situation, it has become crucial to enhance our capacity for cooperation on a larger scale beyond the nation state. These thoughts were developed by Kropotkin and others in terms of mutual aid, a feature also emphasised by Margulis and more recently by Elisabet Sahtouris. The author remarks that the scale and complexity of human cooperation is unprecedented, but we now need to take things to the next stage, and this book provides the necessary evolutionary background and understanding.

Spiritual Science in the 21st Century

Yeshayahu Ben-Aharon

Temple Lodge Press 2017, 297 pp., £22.50/ p/b.

Ben-Aharon is a spiritual scientist, philosopher and social activist living in Israel, who is also the co-founder of the Global Network for Social Threefolding. The book consists of 13 lectures given in the arts of the world from 1997 to 2012 on a wide variety of topics: spiritual science in contemporary philosophy, changing self-love into world thinking, the working of Christ in apocalyptic conditions, Israeli civil society and the global melting pot of the clash of civilisations, the global initiation of humanity and education. The author is exceptionally well informed across a number of disciplines, and an important consideration is the spiritualisation of thinking, taking as a point of departure Steiner's Philosophy of Freedom, ultimately representing not analysis but transformation, and wrestling with the riddle of spiritual nature of the human being in relation to the problem of immortality. The author shows himself a realist in political terms and has no illusions about the current world order with its pragmatic power-seeking. However, he has faith in the ultimate power of love and talks about a spiritual rather than technological singularity when we finally identify with our higher nature. In addition, we can transcend narrow nationalism by embracing our identity as global citizens and transform our educational systems so that people take more responsibility for our collective future. A stimulating volume.

The Mystery of Emerging Form

Yvan Rioux (SMN)

Temple Lodge 2017, 188 pp., £16.99, p/b.

This book builds on the work of Rudolf Steiner, and especially his Calendar of the Soul, where the constellations of the Zodiac are illustrated by Imma von Eckhardstein and reproduced here. Trained in biology, Yvan's perspective is very different from the objectifying gaze of modern science and draws on two important concepts from Aristotle: his *hylomorphism*, where 'beings and things (*ousia*) are compounds of matter and form emerging out of nature's rhythms' (and our own perception); then *entelechy*, the active spirit directing matter into form. In this book, spirit is 'a conscious intelligent activity or intention that makes the fabric of the kingdoms of nature.' (p. 3) This same creative intention works within us, coordinated by what the author calls a rhythmic purpose resonating with the Zodiac constellations. Each of the 12 chapters follows a similar structure, unfolding from simple to more complex and self-conscious life forms. Perceptually, the formative force is not behind the form, but, according to Goethe, 'comes into view through manifestation', even if our limited senses cannot grasp it as a whole. This is a subtle journey of sequences of unfolding forms all expressing the one life.

MEDICINE-HEALTH

Spiritual and Religious Competencies in Clinical Practice

Cassandra Vieten, PhD and Shelley Scammell PsyD

New Harbinger Publications 2017, 229 pp., $49.95, p/b.

The last 20 years have seen considerable developments in the relationship between spirituality and health and in spiritual literacy for clinicians – the existence of the special interest group in spirituality and psychiatry within the Royal College of Psychiatry is indicative of this phenomenon. Although the Christian background of the US is somewhat different to that of Europe, the 16 research-based guidelines about how to navigate the spiritual and religious domains of clients' lives are equally applicable. A survey of 300 psychologists revealed that 80% of them thought that psychologists should receive training in spiritual and religious competencies, while 70% of them said that they had no such training. The rationale for such training is very strong, especially as clients wish to address such issues and that spirituality and religion are links to psychological well-being.

The three parts divide the 16 competencies into attitudes, knowledge, and skills, the most important of which is demonstrating empathy, respect and appreciation for clients. Psychologists also need to understand the increasing spiritual and religious diversity

among their clients, and can be considerably challenged by beliefs that they personally find uncongenial, as some of the case histories demonstrate. It is here that becoming more self-aware about your own beliefs and their role in therapeutic relationships is critical. Other important areas include knowing the difference between spirituality and psychopathology, eliciting spiritual resources, knowledge of legal and ethical issues, ways of taking a spiritual history and acknowledging your own limits. This is essential reading for mental health professionals, but is also accessible to the general reader. The book also contains provisional training guidelines and a list of resources related to specific competencies.

Common Sense about Health

Dr Peter Mansfield (SMN)

Scholars' Press 2017, 214 pp., 39.90, p/b.

Peter is a physician of rare integrity and moral courage, who has never hesitated to set out his views and enter into controversies where necessary, while at the same time providing exemplary avenues for the cultivation of real health rather than the management of disease - the focus of much modern medicine. He was inspired by the Peckham Experiment in community health of the late 1930s as well as other pioneers in natural health. Here he sets out his own philosophy of health as well as resources and a variety of recommended approaches. He explains his four axioms: the relationship between essence and substance or principle and form, wholes and wholeness, affinity, relationship and order, and health and creation. From this he derives an overall dynamic of the creation of larger wholes as critical to health. The reverse of this is the emergence of unease, disease then disorder and a state of diminished vitality.

Providing the enabling conditions for the creation and maintenance of health is therefore his main aim, which he has achieved through the Templegarth Club and Good HealthKeeping (www.goodhealthkeeping.co.uk). The book then covers a number of resources for health, including sunlight, air, water, food, cleansing, and also adventure, purpose, belief and sleep. Then the final section summarises the contributions of various traditions of medicine, including homeopathic, anthroposophical and Chinese, along with the role of water treatments and manipulative therapies. This is full of good practical advice, and I commend Peter's approach as a refreshingly frank distillation of his views and experience.

Paleo in a Nutshell

Geoff Bond

SquareOne publishers 2017, 168 pp., $15.95, p/b.

Geoff Bond originally qualified in applied sciences and has written extensively on living in harmony with nature and embodying 'the lifestyle that nature designed for us in Palaeolithic times.' He has read widely, as well as studying tribal societies. It is evident, as Sir Robert McCarrison observed a hundred years ago, that the modern refined diet is strongly correlated with the diseases of civilisation, which were absent in the Hunza people he studied. So in order to recover our health, we need to review our lifestyles and learn from these long-lived people. Geoff's approach is based on the hunter gatherer, who ate 75% plant and 25% animal matter as well as taking a lot of exercise. He stresses the importance of an alkalising diet rich in micronutrients and fibre, which is low in sodium and high in potassium.

His chapter on how things went wrong explains the problems with cereals, potatoes, sugar, dairy and beans. He produces his own pyramid based on these insights and gives an owner's manual as an overall guide, dealing in detail with 12 separate food groups, giving colour coding to desirable and undesirable foods. He then explains how to adopt this way of eating so we are no longer so dependent for fuel on carbohydrates. Overall, this means replacing grains, legumes and sugars with leafy greens, vegetables, fruits and nuts. This involves a fundamental review for most people, but the potential benefits for a healthy lifespan are priceless. Geoff helps by providing recipes and resources (his own website is www.thebondeffect.com). Based on my reading of many different approaches, it seems more important to avoid refined and processed foods as the positive benefits of individual approaches are less clear. I also wondered about how the Ayurvedic approach might square with this, with its three types of vata, kapha and pitta requiring different kinds of nutrients. Having said that, I think it is certainly worthwhile to move in the Paleo direction, especially from a public health angle. This is an excellent introduction.

A Most Clarifying Battle

Landis M. F. Vance

O Books 2017, 127 pp., £9.99, p/b.

The late Landis Vance was a chaplain, scientist and educator who examined research into illness, suffering and spirituality, and movingly articulates her own rollercoaster experience of cancer where the treatments as a whole took a huge toll, with cytotoxic chemotherapy nearly killing her on more than one occasion. She depicts 'the inner landscape of suffering' and the loss of control that often results from the patient – medical system interaction. Even in the face of such suffering, one can still live a full life, even though full of challenges to one's habitual way of functioning and relationships with friends and family. This is particularly the case when the cancer extends over five or more years. The journal entries in the second part bring this vividly to life, with repeated CT scans and a rhythm of remission and relapse, hope and fear, leading to the realisation that one may achieve healing without a cure. Sometimes, treatment options are agonising as one has to make a decision while fearing the consequences. Readers will be inspired by the courage, persistence and tenacity of the author, as well as by her lucidity and compassion.

Network Medicine

Edited by Joseph Loscalzo, Albert-Laszlo Barabasi and Edwin K. Silverman

Harvard 2017, 436 pp., £33.95, h/b.

Subtitled 'complex systems in human disease and therapeutics', this volume builds on big data, genomics and quantitative approaches to network-based analysis. The book goes beyond the model of identifying singular molecular defects as the cause of disease to a consideration of the inherent complexity of human diseases, a lack of understanding of which has led to inappropriate treatments with adverse side-effects. The new network medicine embraces this complexity at many levels but stops short of considering the role of the mind in influencing molecular processes. Chapters include coverage of epigenetics, metabolomics, microbiomics, systems pharmacology and systems approaches to clinical trials. The number of elements and levels of complexity are mind-boggling and this book provides an excellent technical introduction to the field for specialists rather than the general reader.

Where God and Medicine Meet

Neale Donald Walsch and Brit Cooper MD

Rainbow Ridge Books 2016, 186 pp., $16.95, p/b.

Neale Donald Walsch is well known for his Conversations with God series, and here he is in dialogue with a young doctor who was also one of his students. The dialogues consider human life, the body and health in a wider framework, integrating the physical with the spiritual; then the second part is a series of questions and answers on a number of topics including dementia, prescriptions, death and spiritual healing. Overall, the book is a timely reminder of some of the core messages of Conversations with God: that life is primarily a spiritual experience of being, that we are here to help and heal each other in a spirit of Oneness, that what you resist persists, that gratitude is a powerful policy, and that life goes in cycles, renewing and expressing itself in new forms. Quality of life is more important than quantity, and we need to tune in to our soul agenda beyond our immediate physical preoccupations.

PHILOSOPHY-SPIRITUALITY

Science and Religion – an Impossible Dialogue

Yves Gingras

Polity Press 2017, 249 pp., £27.95, p/b.

As the subtitle suggests, this book questions the fashionable emphasis on dialogue between science and religion by arguing that they are social institutions giving rise to incompatible ways of knowing and rooted in different methodologies and forms of knowledge. It is both a historical and sociological study going back to Copernicus and Galileo and building on the work of Durkheim on the growing autonomy of science. The author's fundamental position is that the methodological naturalism of science excludes any entity transcending nature given that 'all sciences must explain the world by natural principles, immanent to nature.' (p. 165) So there can be no supernatural causes, and the world has been justly disenchanted by the autonomisation of natural science - God has moved from the centre to the periphery. The perspective of institutions is indeed important, as they constitute shifting power relationships, and the author is certainly correct in his analysis that the Church still hangs onto epistemological and ontological power and authority, diminishing though it is. Science, however, also uses its corresponding power to exclude unorthodox and heretical views.

An important issue concerns the limits of science, which the author sees as the limits of our current horizon. He seems to share the view of Peter Atkins in the limitless power of science to explain everything in natural terms, including consciousness. The author traces the recent emergence of a new phase of science – religion dialogue, much of which has been supported by the John Templeton Foundation; this is critically discussed at length (p. 153 ff.) in terms of both prizes and programmes. Readers should note that American views on evolution are not reproduced in Europe. Many well-known books and thinkers are reviewed in the chapter on 'dialogue' between science and religion, along with the political implications of the Templeton Prize, for instance in the case of Martin Rees. The final chapter pits belief versus science, and in his conclusion - betting on reason - he does admit that methodological naturalism as the basis of science cannot itself be demonstrated even if he regards it as a good bet. He sees this as validated by the consequences and results it produces, although reason need not be confined to naturalistic premises when it can in fact operate on a wider philosophical basis than argued here.

Dawkins' God

Alister McGrath

Wiley Blackwell 2015 (2004), 192 pp., £15.99, p/b.

Alister McGrath is the professor of science and religion at Oxford, author of more than 20 books and trained both as a theologian and biophysicist. This is probably the most intelligent, comprehensive and articulate book addressing the extensive writings of Richard Dawkins on God and atheism. The author expresses his admiration for Dawkins as a scientific populariser, but also his dismay as he gradually evolves into crusading atheist fighting the straw man of blind faith as he defines it. McGrath's knowledge of Darwinism and theology is exceptionally thorough, so he is able to describe the rise of Darwinism as a scientific theory and the selfish gene view introduced by Dawkins in 1976. Then there are chapters on faith in relation to evidence, proof and rationality in both science and religion, the blind watchmaker and the question of design, Dawkins' use of the meme cultural Darwinism, and finally a critical analysis of his book *The God Delusion*. He shows that Dawkins has caricatured faith in a way unrecognisable to sophisticated theologians, that science itself has limits and that it does not necessarily lead inexorably to atheism or even agnosticism. The inventor of this term, TH Huxley, insisted that 'the God question could not be settled on the basis of the scientific method', hence his anti-dogmatic position. Anyone wishing seriously to engage with the new atheism should read this very thorough book.

Primates and Philosophers

Frans de Waal et al

Princeton 2017, 209 pp., $17.95, p/b.

This fascinating book by one of the leading primatologists examines the biological foundations of morality as it grows out of primate sociality while remaining within a framework of random natural selection. After an editorial introduction, Frans de Waal provides the main essay, which is followed by four commentaries and a response by de Waal. His case is based on extensive field observation and takes the broad view that humans are basically good, corresponding to the theology of Matthew Fox of original blessing as opposed to the orthodox view of original sin. The biological equivalent of this is what de Waal calls the Veneer Theory espoused by TH Huxley, Richard Dawkins and others and expressed philosophically by Thomas Hobbes: that we are basically selfish and that altruism is a veneer. It becomes apparent from the commentaries that this thesis is somewhat overstated, but it does capture an important point set out in a table on page 22.

De Waal acknowledges the pioneering contributions of Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* and the work of Edward Westermarck. He sees empathy as an evolutionary mechanism found in primates and favouring the survival of both individuals and the group. This is in the first instance empathy as a form of emotional contagion, but can in humans develop into sympathy and of course a much more complex moral system where we aspire to expand the circle of morality beyond our immediate kin. In philosophy, these ideas were developed by Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith in the 18th century. In his comment, Peter Singer distinguishes between the proposition that human nature is inherently social and shares patterns of behaviour with other social mammals and the idea, which he does not defend, of human ethics deriving entirely from nature and social mammals. In the final part, de Waal modulates his view and provides a useful table of three levels of morality, comprising moral sentiments, social pressure, and judgement and reasoning, while continuing to advance his case that human morality elaborates upon pre-existing biological tendencies. This is an informative and accessible discussion to an important topic.

Pandeism – an Anthology

Edited by Knujon Mapson

iff Books (John Hunt) 2017, 462 pp., £19.99, p/b.

Few readers will have heard of the term 'pandeism', the proposition that the Creator of our Universe created by becoming our Universe, but this extensive anthology fills the gap. The three parts cover fundamentals of pandeism, its philosophical implications and some criticism and analysis from other views. The editor provides a brief history, in which many familiar names such as Newton, Leibniz and Spinoza appear. Elaborating on the basic definition, Encyclopaedia Britannica notes that pandeism 'attempted to unite aspects of Deism with pantheism. Since God becomes the universe in the act of creation, 'there is no theological need to posit any special relationship between God and creation; rather, God is the universe and not a transcendent entity which created and subsequently governs it.' In other words, God expresses him/herself through conscious lifeforms and is therefore immanent rather than transcendent. This corresponds to Whitehead's notion of the consequent or evolutionary nature of God as opposed to the transcendent. There are also parallels with New Thought and the idea of an omnipresent universal mind, and there is a contribution from William Walter Atkinson (1862-1932).

There are many good analytical essays in this volume, which require some philosophical background on the part of the reader. Bernardo Kastrup provides an interesting idealist slant, while Alan Dawe gives a proof of the pandeist theorem that if God exists, then God is identical to the Universe. Mapson argues that theism requires more assumptions than pandeism, while Dan Dana, arguing from a scientistic perspective, finds even pandeism unparsimonious. Zoltan Istvan takes an upbeat view of transhumanism in contrast to what he calls 'deathism', supporting technological enhancement of human biology. Apart from one reference, love is conspicuous by its absence, and experience of the divine as love is the basis of mystical theism. A stimulating collection articulating an interesting viewpoint.

Heretics!

Steven Nadler and Ben Nadler

Princeton 2017, 179 pp., £18.95, p/b.

Set out in a highly original cartoon strip form, this book tells the story of the birth of modern philosophy and political freedom in the 17th century, featuring not only the best-known characters like Galileo, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Leibniz and Newton, but also less well-known contributors like the Jansenist Arnauld, Henry More, Lady Anne Conway and Elizabeth of Bohemia. All these people challenged existing religious and political authority, as well as each other, and the narrative format provides not only a commentary but also typical exchanges between these philosophers. Ancient ways of making sense of the world are discarded in favour of natural philosophy and the emergence of materialism that has come to dominate modern thinking. Most of the key books were on the Inquisition index, and many of these leading thinkers were exiled or persecuted. The book moves around Europe with specific dates and encounters, finishing in Geneva with Voltaire in 1755. The author could have mentioned his *Philosophical Letters* of 1734, which resulted from his exile in London and studying of Newton. Voltaire praises the English virtue of toleration and attacked the Church for holding up the progress of knowledge. Not surprisingly, the occult side of Newton is not mentioned, and the emphasis on reason and evidence needs to extend beyond the materialistic approach of our time, otherwise the new orthodoxy just gives rise to a new form of heresy. Having said that, this is an entertaining and informative read.

Sabarthez – Berceau de l'Humanite

Ritman 2012, 287 pp, 20, p/b.

A historic event took place recently at St Felix en Lauragais near Toulouse. In this small town a congress was arranged in 1167, presided over by the Bogomil bishop from Constantinople, Nicetas. A number of people decided to hold a commemorative 850th anniversary bringing together mainly French and Bulgarians, but also some Dutch people including Joost Ritman, the founder of the Ritman Library of philosophy and esotericism in Amsterdam. This contains 30,000 volumes, and is a tremendous resource to scholars in the field. The library arranged an exhibition in Tarascon sur Ariege in 2012, and this book is the accompanying illustrated volume in French and Spanish. The reason for the title referring to the cradle of humanity is the existence of a number of prehistoric caves dating back to before 10,000 BC. It might have been more accurate to say a cradle of Europe, but the other association is with the Cathars, who retreated there after the fall of Montsegur in 1244. The most interesting caves are off the beaten track and were researched by a number of scholars, including Antonin Gadal (1877-1962).

The book contains many fascinating articles, some autobiographical, others on the history of the region and aspects of the more esoteric stream in Catharism. These include women in the spiritual tradition of Christianity, the Bogomils as a spiritual influence in Europe, the relationship of Cathars and Troubadours to other traditions and Cathars and the origins of Protestantism. There is an emphasis on gnosis and the idea of a church of love, which is still very much alive among some locals. Gadal also relates to the real story of Rosicrucianism as a triple alliance of light. The neo-Bogomil teaching of Peter Deunov also features, as does the history of druidism in the area. It is a richly illustrated and informative book for those who read either French or Spanish.

Teilhard de Chardin on Love

Louis M. Savary and Patricia H. Berne

Paulist Press 2017, 234 pp., £20.99, p/b.

This is an extensive book explaining Teilhard's philosophy and practice of love, which he prophesied would eventually be harnessed as an energy. In the foreword, Ilia Delio sees a death of love associated with modernity and its impersonal approach. In the Teilhardian view, love is the core relational energy of evolution towards more being and greater fullness based on attraction and connection. The authors summarise this as the Law of Attraction – Connection – Complexity - Consciousness as repeating stages in life. There is a gradual shift from a focus on knowledge to one on love based on the premise that God is indeed Love. The second practical part gives more detailed advice and exercises for committed partners, parents and children, friendship and teams. This culminates in a theology of love and what they call omega love. This is a mystical Christian path where one becomes more acutely aware of the personal contribution we can make. There are, however, many more accessible stages of development described in the book.

The Unbearable Wholeness of Being

Ilia Delio

Orbis Books 2013, 230 pp., £17.99, p/b.

This book takes up the themes of the previous one using the thought of Teilhard de Chardin as a springboard. The author is a Senior Fellow in Science and Religion at Georgetown University and is exceptionally well informed in scientific, philosophical and theological terms. She begins by analysing the decentring process following the demise of mediaeval theology and the rise of a mechanistic universe. Her discussion of wholeness and nature includes the work of David Bohm on the implicate order, as well as systems biology and holons as we try to go beyond the mechanistic metaphor. Her vision is a journey towards wholeness and love and she argues that we need a new evolutionary vision of God, quoting not only Teilhard but also Paul Tillich and Raimon Panikkar. Her theology is more traditional with respect to the cross as a symbol of kenosis (emptying), vulnerability and transformation. Perhaps the most important insight is her analysis of the breakdown between knowing and loving, also extensively discussed by Seyyed Hossein Nasr in his seminal Gifford Lectures, *Knowledge and the Sacred*. She would like to see this link reforged, and defines wisdom as knowledge deepened by love. This is an inspiring vision quite at odds with the impersonal and mechanistic prospect of trans-humanism with its emphasis on manipulation and control and a transition from the I-Thou relationship (Martin Buber) to the I-Phone link. The intimacy of I-Thou is surely of a different and vastly more significant order. It is a worthy and inspiring goal to reconnect love with knowledge in the pursuit of wisdom.

Spiritualise your Life

Allan Armstrong (SMN)

Imagier Publishing 2017, 198 pp., £12.50, p/b.

With the publication of so much eclectic work in the field of spirituality, it is refreshing to have a clear statement of the essential disciplines of spiritual life relating to traditional Christianity. This path requires real dedication and is a lifelong process of 'patient ferment'. The first part gives a different theoretical and practical slant on meditation, beginning with the chemistry of stress and the need for techniques of relaxation, then moving on to the nature of concentration, conceptualisation and controlled imagining. All this is simply and lucidly explained, with excellent practical step-by-step guidelines. Next comes the art of this kind of meditation itself, beginning with reflection on the day's events in relation to what Allan calls the transient self, with a focus on mind, imagination and will at various levels. The second part covers the nature of prayer, helpfully explaining its various forms, especially the importance of interior prayer for our personal development and in relation to the cultivation of virtues. Allan devotes a chapter to the beatitudes and to contemplative reading or *lectio divina*, with its four stages *of lectio, meditation, oratio* and *contemplatio*. He also explains the stages of the Devotio Moderna method and the daily rhythm of prayer. Finally, he selects some themes for meditation consisting of well-known passages from the Bible. Allan has distilled over 40 years of practice into this guide for spiritual practice, and anyone wishing to deepen their knowledge of Christian meditation and contemplation should read this book.

Instant Presence

Enza Vita

Watkins 2017, 178 pp., £10.99, p/b – www.enzavita.com

The author of this illuminating and very direct book is an Italian living in Australia, who publishes the InnerSelf newspaper and website. She understands spiritual enlightenment as an ever present reality available to us, one which we fail to realise since the 'searching for "it" outside myself had separated me from the very thing I was seeking' - in other words the sense of separation inherent in the ego is itself the obstacle to be set aside rather than overcome: 'ego just means the identification with a

separate entity. Awareness is what we are. Ego is what we believe we are.' (p. 85 - a brilliant formulation) In a normal state of consciousness, we find ourselves in a dualistic impasse, a trance of separation. We just need to realise that 'you are the awake, boundless, omnipresent consciousness that is right here, right now.' (p. 7) She distinguishes awareness as timeless and eternal, which gives birth to consciousness as the background for the appearance of the body-mind. Being awake is our natural state of being, and it is important to note that 'awakening arises through the mind, not from the mind.' (p. 71)

Striving and orientation towards the future are additional forms of separation, so Enza recommends 'no practice practice': real meditation lies in letting go of control: 'we are just resting in what is happening moment by moment.' (p. 83) Being present in the moment means that living well is also learning to die, every day, every moment. This means simply being as we are, being present with what is already present. It also means paying attention rather than reading books, including this one! One story in the book made me laugh out loud: a king is given a gift of two falcons. He arranges for them to be trained, and while one makes great progress, the other cannot be moved from its branch. Finally, a farmer is brought in, and the next day when asked by the King how he had made the bird fly, he simply replied that he had cut off the branch on which the bird was sitting! So Enza reminds us that we are born to fly, rather than spending our lives sitting on a branch.

The Buddhist Voyage beyond Death

Ven Master Hsin Tao

Cambridge Scholars 2017, 150 pp., £52.99, h/b

I imagine that few readers will have heard of the work and teaching of the Chinese Buddhist monk Hsin Tao, but this book is a real jewel. Born in 1948, Hsin Tao put himself through an intensive training, including two years in a cave and meditating in a graveyard. This is not for the fainthearted. The fundamental truths of Buddhism are clearly articulated – suffering, emptiness, impermanence - but also the cultivation and promotion of self-less-ness and goodness. Life and death alternate as we are reborn in new though impermanent forms with opportunities for further transformation: 'death and rebirth is one thing. Death itself means the rebirth of life'. (p. 39) Hsin Tao translates some teachings into modern metaphors, for instance the memory matrix and the idea that death is a change of channel. It is this memory matrix that is reborn, and we are constantly sowing new seeds as thoughts as we create and recreate ourselves. Individual lives are like files or folders.

He has a very interesting teaching on time and space, which he says appear different at first sight but in the end are not so different: 'space is unmoving time and time is moving space.' We can easily get caught up looking at changes in time, 'rather than looking at the stillness of space, an unmoving space…. which is also emptiness.' This sense of emptiness and spaciousness seems to correspond to pure consciousness. The first part is devoted to deathless spirituality, then the second to death and dying, and the third to the creative now. Some of the valuable teaching about death and dying is given in the form of a dialogue, along with the lessons in detachment that we will have to undergo. Hsin Tao emphasises the importance of preparing for death, which few of us address. In his view, meditation is a key preparatory practice that can also bring us to a state where our mind is more ordered and less fluctuating. This means that we will be able to face death with greater equanimity. The ultimate development is that of the bodhisattva embracing all sentient beings. This is precious teaching for our time.

The Magdalene

Lars Muhl

Watkins 2016, 244 pp., £8.99, p/b.

This is volume 2 of the Grail trilogy reviewed as *The O Manuscript* in the summer issue of 2015. While I would urge you to read the whole book about Lars' initiation in the landscape of Montsegur, this volume is specially concerned with Mary Magdalene. Lars vividly recreates her putative initiation and training in Egypt, building on what we know from the Gnostic Gospels and the Therapeutae in Alexandria. This parallels the continuing gripping story of his own spiritual development, but its fundamental message is the power of the sacred feminine, also associated with sacred sexuality and holy union, which is depicted towards the end of the book in the intimate relationship between the Magdalene and Jesus. This itself is a further form of initiation, and the recovery of sacred sexuality in the West would be enormously significant in psychological and cultural terms. It also means men and women working together, as also represented historically by the Cathars and still present in this area as people walk the path of love - see also my review of Sabarthez above.

Stress and Freedom

Peter Sloterdijk

Polity 2017, 60 pp., £9.99, p/b.

I reviewed Peter Sloterdijk's book on self-formation in the last issue, and here he takes a historical view of the concept of freedom from ancient Greece to the present era. He argues that political communities arise 'in response to a form of anxiety or stress' and applies this to the Greek polis with its concept of *eleutheria*. Central to the book is a discussion of Rousseau's *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, which I read while studying French in the 1970s. His was a 'felt existence' expressed by the modern individual as a subject free of stress in the natural world. This situation makes him useless in a utilitarian sense and a forerunner of loafing, which is no use to society as a whole. Sloterdijk further argues that the notion of reality is a construct of modernity by defenders of objectivity, reminding readers that the solitary Rousseau was also the author of *The Social Contract* and the notion of general will. For Sloterdijk, the origin of freedom lies in noble disposition, generosity and liberality in the sense of sympathy. This is a highly original reading of the genealogy of freedom.

The Happiness Philosophers

Bart Schultz

Princeton 2017, 437 pp., £32.95, h/b.

The last 20 years have seen the rise of positive psychology and virtue ethics as well as the development of a scholarly industry around happiness, for instance in the work of Richard Layard. This philosophical biography vividly describes the lives and works of the great utilitarians whose maxim was the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The author brings to life the personalities of these pioneers, most of whom were passionate social reformers as well as philosophers: William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, then finally - and perhaps more surprisingly - Henry Sidgwick. The author explains that 'the great classical utilitarians were fascinating people, brilliant and complex, and as intrinsically interesting as great artists. Inspired, weird, provocative and controversial, they were neither as complacent nor as naive as their followers – or their critics.' In addition, they were all concerned with philosophy as the art of living as well as penetrating exploration into the central issues of life. One can read about Bentham's articulation of the many simple pleasures of life, and about the extraordinary education and capacity of John Stuart Mill, who began studying Greek at the age of three and by the age of nine was reading in the original Virgil, Cicero, Euclid, Newton, Sophocles and Euripides. At 13 he was reading Plato's dialogues, again in the original, along with several Latin books of logic. He writes how his mental culture was fundamentally shaped by the approach of Socrates in terms of probing, precision and analysis. Later in the chapter, one also comes to appreciate the enormous contribution of Harriet Taylor, Mill's wife.

Schultz is also the author of a biography of Henry Sidgwick, and this provides the longest chapter, perhaps the one of most interest to readers here. Sidgwick made his reputation with his *Methods of Ethics* and held the Knightsbridge chair of philosophy at Cambridge, subsequently occupied by CD Broad. He was one of the earliest figures to resign his college fellowship because he could not subscribe to the 39 Articles of the Anglican Church, and his whole approach is one of radical doubt, also applied to his pioneering work in psychical research. He was the founding president of the SPR and was married to the formidable Eleanor Balfour, sister of Prime Minister Arthur Balfour and the first Mistress of Newnham College. The author devotes considerable space to Sidgwick's involvement in psychical research, describing his relationships with other pioneers such as Myers, who was also a fellow of Trinity

College. Although others were convinced by the same lines of evidence, Sidgwick was ultimately unpersuaded by the evidence for personal survival, which led him to scepticism about the foundations of ethics and caused him great despair. While not agreeing with this conclusion myself, I can certainly respect the extraordinary intellectual integrity displayed by Sidgwick and his openness to unpopular avenues of research mostly ignored by his successors. This book deserves to be widely read by the intellectual successors of these 19th-century pioneers.

Ultimate Questions

Bryan Magee

Princeton 2017, 132 pp., £10.95, p/b.

Bryan Magee has had a long and distinguished career as a philosopher, music and theatre critic and BBC broadcaster, where he hosted a series on central questions in philosophy. Now in his 80s, this is his philosophical testament reflecting on the human predicament and the limits of knowledge. It is clearly and fluently written from a broadly humanist perspective that rejects transcendence and sees in religion an unjustified evasion. His position is a questioning and radical agnosticism, where he wonders if we actually have the equipment to go beyond a limited sensory understanding. He shows no sign of being acquainted with the literature of mysticism and survival of consciousness and, although he has a sense that consciousness transcends the material world, this does not affect his view of death most probably as oblivion.

Movingly, he experiences the prospect of death in terms of grief and loss, summarising his view as: 'I know that I have a persisting self for as long as I am in this world, but I am unable to fathom its inner nature, and I have no idea what happens to it when I die.' (p. 119) Magee's horizons are an illusory security of faith on the one hand and a full acknowledgement of ignorance on the other, but without considering the possibility of gnosis as a deeper way of knowing. He speculates that even when we depart from the world we will be in the same state of ignorance and uncertainty, which is not consistent with the survival literature (for instance as studied by CD Broad – see also Private Dowding below). I don't personally see this as 'grasping at the supernatural' but rather as a way of extending our knowledge and reducing our ignorance. Nevertheless, this is a moving and profound reflection on life.

Mirror, Mirror – The Uses and Abuses of Self-love

Simon Blackburn

Princeton 2014 209 pp., $19.95, p/b.

This subtle and erudite study explores the history and nature of self-love, showing that narcissism, vanity, pride and self-esteem are more complex than they seem, and in fact have numerous good and bad forms. As Blackburn ironically puts it, everyone deplores narcissism, especially in others. The fundamental theme is how we position ourselves among others in the social world. He explores hubris, self-esteem, pride, respect, temptation, sincerity and authenticity, drawing on a vast range of reading including Erasmus, Cicero, Rousseau, Hume, Kant and particularly Adam Smith with his work on moral sentiments and empathy. He shows how modern advertising such as L'Oreal's slogan 'because you're worth it' in fact implies that we are not worth it until we buy their product and enhance ourselves in the process. This tour of the social self necessarily leaves readers more self-aware as well as better informed and greatly entertained in the process.

PSYCHOLOGY-CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

A Psychohistory of Metaphors

Brian J. McVeigh

Lexington Books 2017, 233 pp., £52.95, h/b.

Subtitled 'envisioning time, space and self through the centuries', this is an extraordinarily interesting book building on the work of Julian Jaynes about the emergence of interiority or what the author calls 'the inward turn'. We think in terms of metaphors, images, mentalities and frames, which all depend on visualisation and spatialisation, regardless of form. For the author, the transition from what he calls a cosmic to a scopic worldview in modern times is central. He coins the terms 'introcosm' and 'introscopic' (think of telescope and microscope) to characterise the inner world of these worldviews. Time goes from cyclical to linear, which also entails the emergence of the idea of progress and future. Soul is now understood as mind, qualities are quantified, while our instruments open up new spaces. Interestingly, the development of perspective is also understood as a form of interiorisation, although associated with geometry and measurement.

It is characteristic of modernity to question authority with its unshackling and emancipatory ethos that saw the rise of capitalism, science, technology, industrialism, national statism, market forces, democracy, bourgeois lifestyle and civil society. The self is redefined in terms of conscious interiority involving self-authorisation, self-narratisation, self-autonomy, individuation and self-reflexivity. This emergence is fascinatingly paralleled by the appearance of words with the self prefix from the 16th century onwards. For instance, self-love appears in 1563, self-knowledge in 1621, self-interest in 1649 self-esteem in 1657 and self-determination in 1683. We have to wait until 1775 for self-important and 1795 for self-respect. It would be fascinating to know if parallel concepts emerge concurrently in different European languages. The scope of the book is very wide in dealing with well-known and less well-known figures in the history of psychology (e.g. Fechner, although there is little coverage of William James). Towards the end, the author considers the therapeutic turn and forms of self-idolatry in various forms of narcissistic display. Given the nature of conscious interiority, the author might have extended his analysis to mystics who take this process to the next stage, while also finding the root of the self in the universal, for instance in Teilhard or Thomas Merton. There is also no mention of the cultural contribution of Iain McGilchrist. The book is nevertheless a significant contribution to our understanding or psychohistory.

Living from the Centre Within

Michele Rae

Paragon House 2017, 196 pp., $16.95, p/b.

Michele Rae is a transformational coach trained in a wide range of disciplines who was also a minister. In this book she synthesises many aspects of neuroscience, mind-body science and consciousness studies into an evolutionary path of co-creation, living from the calm centre within. She distinguishes three main levels of consciousness: I am Individual, I am Interconnected and I am Infinite. This also provides the progressive structure of the book as a journey from our present condition of consciousness to a more illuminated state. Each chapter contains an invitation to practice along with some questions for reflection. The author has a good grasp of the key qualities of the old and emerging paradigms (see diagram on page 24). Readers must first accept the invitation to the transformational journey with its accompanying practices - including nonviolent communication - and expanded self-awareness. The author provides useful summaries of the three states in terms of qualities and leadership style. The book is accessible, informed and practical.

Love and the Evolution of Consciousness

Karen L. Rivers

Lindisfarne Books 2016, 323 pp., $28, p/b.

This profound book is inspired by the work of Rudolf Steiner and the less well-known Valentin Tomberg, the anonymous author of the seminal *Meditations on the Tarot*, which I read at the recommendation of Bede Griffiths. It is a map for the development of selfless love through a process of inner transformation and purification, which also represents redirection of human interest from the self-centred to the community centre. As a psycho-spiritual text, it engages fully with the shadow, here called the double, using the terminology of Steiner and incorporating his two aspects of evil characterised by Lucifer and Ahriman representing respectively the opposing forces of egotism, then hardness of heart and materialism. In this general context, the role of evil is to bring good to development. Following chapters on these aspects and their

transformation, there is a long discussion of the karmic double web of destiny involving thinking, feeling and willing, then a key chapter on, and forgiveness. There are helpful charts (e.g. pp. 158-9) enabling readers to understand the process more deeply. As Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee observes, the shadow teaches us the lesson of humility: 'having experienced the depths of our own darkness we can never judge another person, nor can we be frightened by the darkness.' The appendices discuss the 10 Commandments of Moses, the eightfold path of the Buddha and the nine Beatitudes of Christ, as well as quoting the Golden Rule in different traditions. The last appendix is the most important: a meditation course for inner development involving a weekly cycle over a number of months as a way of really internalising heart thinking and undertaking the metamorphosis of the will through the path of love. This is the fruit of a lifetime of thought and practice that should be widely read.

Find and Follow your Inner Compass

Barbara Berger

O Books 2017, 105 pp., £8.99, p/b.

This practical book has a simple message, that we should tune into our Inner Compass and pay attention to our emotions as a link to the Universal Intelligence. We instantly know whether or not we are in the flow and aligned with our deeper sense of purpose. When we go against this by failing to trust our emotional sense of the situation, things often go badly wrong. In a world when we are brought up to seek outer approval rather than follow the inner compass, we can easily be motivated by pleasing other people and from a fear of disapproval. The author shows us how to manage this so that we become self-referred rather than other-referred. Interestingly, she relates this to democracy in remarking that parents need to realise that each child has a right to be who they are, with their own link to the Great Universal Intelligence. Indeed, as she points out, our evolution depends on it since pioneers always listen to and act on this Inner Compass.

The Psychic and the Spiritual

John White

White Crow Books 2017, 154 pp., £11.99, p/b.

John White has a long career as an author and educator, and was director of education for the Institute of Noetic Sciences in the 1970s. He is the author of 18 books on a wide variety of topics. Here he brings together 15 essays on understanding the difference between the psychic and the spiritual. Perhaps the fundamental point is that 'psychic development is not the same as spiritual growth', and indeed many spiritual traditions specifically discourage psychic development for this reason. The author knew many leading psychics and thinkers personally, including Uri Geller and Andrija Puharich, and writes authoritatively throughout these essays; he is not afraid to admit where he has made a few mistakes. Some chapters in the second part also look at meditation and mysticism, and it is a useful observation that the goal of mysticism is not goodness as such, but self transcendence, while also recognising the value of virtuous conduct. A wise and considered book.

Mindfulness and Education

Edited by Tamara Ditrich, Royce Wiles and Bill Lovegrove

Cambridge Scholars 2017, 341 pp, £57.99, h/b.

This volume is the outcome of a conference on mindfulness, education and transformation held in Australia in 2014, and as such mainly reflects work in the southern hemisphere. There are 12 chapters in three parts: conceptualisations and research about mindfulness, mindfulness and settings, and mindfulness in tertiary and related settings. One important theme is the secularisation of mindfulness by abstracting it from its original Buddhist context, which implies the development of compassion and a corresponding ethical framework. In the West, mindfulness is often associated with a therapeutic context. Some chapters are more directly concerned with a critical review of evidence, while others integrate mindfulness with local traditions and practices. There is an interesting article on the impact of teachers meditating in a school setting where results seem to indicate a transformative effect not only within the teachers, but also in the school community. In the university context, mindfulness can help students with emotional regulation, self-efficacy, decentring (detaching from one's thoughts) and deautomatisation of reflex behaviour patterns, also associated with self-control and corresponding to Buddhist equanimity. This is an important volume for anyone interested in the relationship between mindfulness and education.

Before Consciousness

Edited by Zdravko Radman

Imprint Academic 2017, 339 pp., £19.95.

This is an authoritative volume on the role of the non-conscious in relation to consciousness as the prior basis from which mentality germinates and which is critical to our understanding of the mind as a whole - the non-conscious is ontogenically prior in evolution. Much of the philosophy of mind is in fact a philosophy of the conscious mind and is as such 'conscious-centred'. It is interesting to reflect that just as the vast majority of matter in the universe is dark, so our consciousness is like the tip of an iceberg with the rest underwater. The first part covers relationships between conscious and unconscious aspects of the mind, the second the role of the non-conscious in perception, decisions and thinking, while the third is devoted to the unconscious sophistication of skills in terms of habits and skills, with a particularly interesting chapter on the role of the non-conscious in sport performance, which could equally be applied to the arts. Personally, I am a much better putter on the golf course if I leave things to my non-conscious aspect, although paradoxically, the thought of avoiding a bunker frequently means that you finish up in it! This volume is a valuable addition to the literature on the wider nature of the mind and consciousness.

ECOLOGY-FUTURES STUDIES

Money Changes Everything

William N Goetzman

Princeton 2017, 600 pp., £14.95, p/b.

Subtitled 'how the development of finance over thousands of years enabled the growth of civilisation', this is a fascinating book of magisterial scope, which must surely be the definitive history of the topic, beginning as it does with the Sumerians and bringing the analysis right up-to-date. The first two parts look at the history of finance in Europe and China, with extensive coverage of Athens and Rome. The book enables the reader to think about finance in a new way, as enabling value to be moved backwards and forwards in time (think of mortgages) as well as a means of mitigating risk, allocating resources and fostering growth. Finance represents a system of thought and quantification. One comes to appreciate the critical nature of finance in relation to cities, which is also reinforced by the nature of contracts and law. It is quite startling to see a 10-year growth plan for a dairy herd showing expected future profits dating from 2400 BC. The establishment and maintenance of Roman Empire required a complex system of finance, and it was also very interesting to learn how closely wealth and political access were linked – senators had to have very considerable private means in order to be eligible for office.

The chapter on China shows the regressive effect of bureaucracy, which arguably prevented a corresponding industrial revolution to that which occurred in Europe, partly because of the fragmentation of political power - a parallel argument can be made for the Enlightenment (see my review of Joel Mokyr's book on the culture of growth on p. 70 of the last issue). The third and fourth parts are devoted to the more recent history of finance in Europe, beginning with the Templars, and the emergence of global markets. While financial innovations have developed to solve economic problems of time and geography, they have inevitably engendered new challenges, as we have seen only too clearly in the last decade. There is an excellent discussion of the importance of Fibonacci (see also my review of Keith Devlin's book on p. 61 of the last issue) and the discovery of chance and working out of probabilities. The emergence of corporations, for instance the East India companies, is related to exploration, and the operation of markets is described, including history of various bubbles. The tremendous value of this book lies in its broad historical sweep that enables readers to understand the present in the light of past history.

Ethics for a Full World

Tormod V. Burkey

Polity Press 2017, 179 pp., £12.99, p/b.

This brilliant and concise book is essential reading in facing the global problematique and galvanising the necessary political action. The main title highlights a key theme, that the global emergencies facing the planet are symptoms of a common problem, namely that the world is full, with humanity having already exceeded several planetary boundaries. This is an unprecedented situation and the implicit ethic is one of anthropocentrism, while the author calls for a biocentric ethic reflected in the subtitle: can animal lovers save the world? He argues that the world needs to be saved *from* humanity rather than *for* humanity. He asks why we are not acting to save the world and, interestingly, draws on the work of the behaviourist BF Skinner who noted that, from an evolutionary point of view, we are programmed to react to the immediate rather than the remote. From a planetary perspective, we have to do better than putting health warnings on cigarette packets.

Overall, the pace of change and the complex interdependencies of our ecological system have exceeded our ability to cope and we drift along with business as usual, making the best of a bad job. Our institutions and political systems are not fit for purpose, and politicians on a five-year electoral cycle have no incentive to fix things before a disaster supervenes. Our current practices are in fact robbing our children of a sustainable future, yet individually we are mostly too busy (in my case writing reviews like this) to prioritise the necessary cooperation that is the only real hope, and that can now be mediated via the Internet. Indeed, many petition sites bring huge numbers of people together in a common cause. The final chapter describes a possible process for we can translate ideas into effective action, outlining all the necessary components. As the author points out, 'largely, we know what needs to be done, but have no idea how to get humanity to do it… political systems are geared so that no major changes will occur.' This is especially dangerous when applied to irreversible tipping points. This is a passionate, galvanising and compelling call to informed action.

Systemic Crises of Global Climate Change

Edited by Phoebe Godfrey and Denise Torres

Routledge 2016, 332 pp., £110, h/b – ebook £27.99.

Subtitled 'intersections of race, class and gender', this is an edited volume of 49 international, interdisciplinary contributions on climate justice and inequity. The contributions are not simply essays, but include pictures and poems as ways of conveying the issues. The distinctive intersectionality approach uses the social categories of race, gender and class of the subtitle to deepen analysis of social issues. Hence, in the foreword Jacqui Patterson recalls her experience of working with women in sub-Saharan Africa who experienced sexual assault as a result of climate-forced migration brought about by drought or resource wars. She characterises climate change as 'a manifestation of the convergence of historic global patterns of domination, extraction and oppression' emerging from the history of capitalist colonisation where natural resources were acquired and exploited, resulting in the impoverishment of the many and enormous wealth among the few. She gives coal as a specific example with huge casualties due to black lung disease and vast annual subsidies for an industry central to global warming.

The book is structured in five parts, beginning with chaos and going through the four elements as symbolic of the underlying issues. Reading the essays and poems gives the reader a powerful and different lens, especially on the assumed primacy of hegemonic masculinity represented by capitalism. The metaphors continue with the use of the term Anthropocene as an extension of the Western paradigm exemplified in colonial conquest in this arresting passage referring to metaphors of 'white, masculine, sexual domination of a dark, feminine (sometimes promiscuous, sometimes virginal) and forced to give way to the thrust of (white, male, phallic) penetration, including military invasion, occupation, and resource exploitation.' (p. 25) One can appreciate the parallels here with the masculine scientific revolution bringing about a mechanistic world picture based on separation from and mastery of nature as the feminine. Another essay explores whiteness, masculinity and the conservative media denials of climate change and sexism - just look at the White House. The female body is highlighted in relation to reproductive rights and population questions, while R.D.K. Herman draws on Hawaiian culture to contrast indigenous and more feminine worldviews with masculine dissection, analysis, mastery and conflict. (p. 90) All this points to the necessity of profound systemic change, which Chris Williams argues involves building organised resistance in every workplace, community, school and farm across the world fighting for social justice and equality for all. This is represented by the element fire involving mobilisation, heat and transformation. The book sends a powerful message of theory and praxis, scholarship and activism in its structural and intersectional analysis of global climate change.

The Global Energy Trap and a Way Out

Frank Parkinson (SMN)

Matador Books 2017, 257 pp., £10, p/b.

This important book not only provides a clear account of the energy and climate crisis, but also an interesting and quite feasible solution to it. Modern industrial civilisation is built on energy derived from fossil fuels, which is driving unsustainable global warming that threatens further and more extreme disruption of the global climate. We cannot in fact afford to use all the fossil fuels still in the ground if we are to contain temperature rise. The exponential rise in population over the last century has been permitted the existence of cheap and abundant energy also applied to agriculture, so we now face overpopulation, potentially catastrophic climate change, exhaustion of mineral resources, food and water shortages, peak oil and energy shortage – this last problem is likely to become particularly acute in the UK, where one third of energy generation capacity will be lost between 2012 and 2020. All these challenges are clearly explained in the first part, where the author also analyses the geopolitical aspects of oil in relation to the Middle East. He is sceptical about the capacity of wind to plug the gap, as its unreliability and lack of storage potential means that there has to be a central backup. We need a revolution in energy storage.

The rest of the book explains Frank's ideas for addressing the global energy trap. Already in 1897, Tesla was emphasising the need to evolve means for obtaining energy from inexhaustible stores using perfect methods that do not involve consumption and waste. He thought that the realisation of this idea was close, but he came up against the interests of the oil and energy industry, who favoured macrogeneration and centralised distribution in order to maximise their profits. The fact that Tesla's ideas were not pursued is tragic. Frank puts forward two radical microgeneration concepts, the E-Plus house that generates more than consumes, along with what he calls K-gen as a meta-system using collection, conversion, concentration, conservation, and control to achieve a very smart grid. He explains the various components in some detail, and the scheme looks extremely promising if only it were taken seriously, which he points out is really a question of imagination, motivation and mobilisation of human effort. There are increasing signs that these global challenges are being taken more seriously, but, as argued in many books reviewed on these pages, our current mind set, time horizon and institutions are quite inadequate to the scale the challenge. Books like this serve to raise awareness and clarify ideas about potential effective policies and actions.

Mental Penguins

Ivelin Sardamov

iff Books (John Hunt) 2017, 224 pp., £14.99, p/b.

Subtitled 'the never-ending education crisis and the false promise of the information age', this important study explores the social and educational consequences of digital immersion for modified brain structure and intellectual capacity. The author teaches political science at the American University in Bulgaria and has trawled both neuroscience and educational theory in developing the view that we need to bring back a focus on what he calls 'deep reading' as the way of developing an integral understanding of a particular discipline. Many students arrive at University having never read a whole book, as extracted information is available on the Internet as a shortcut in writing essays. Digital immersion and multitasking are

associated with unrelenting overstimulation, resulting in 'continual partial attention' rather than the sustained attention required for deep reading or true listening. This also happens at meetings, as I am sure readers will recognise, as people check emails while participating.

This situation is in fact nothing short of an addiction and its academic implications are just beginning to emerge more clearly, although the issue goes back to the work of Marshall McLuhan on TV (larger screens and HD lead to further overstimulation and desensitisation). Reading proficiency has correspondingly declined, and 40% of incoming first-year students at American colleges have to take at least one remedial class in reading, writing or maths. Given the work of Iain McGilchrist, who endorses the book, it is interesting that the author writes about the chronic overengagement of the analytic network - left hemisphere - and the corresponding withering of the intuitive network - right hemisphere. The result is that many students are caught in concrete thinking detached from any larger frame of reference. As mentioned above, the author's prescription is deep and intensive reading - what he calls reading-centred learning starting in elementary school and leading to an expanding personal frame of reference. He explains how he encourages his students along these lines and reflects that Huxley rather than Orwell was right in speaking about our almost infinite appetite for distractions, and fearing that there would be no reason to ban books as no one would want to read one. This book is essential reading for education departments around the world and anyone concerned with the future of education and the development of our children.

Profits and Sustainability

Geoffrey Jones

Oxford 2016, 442 pp., £30, h/b.

This engaging and authoritative history of green entrepreneurship shows that its origins go far further back than most readers will realise, to the mid-19th century. The author traces the often eccentric lives and ideas of green pioneers in organic food, vegetarianism and energy, including Rudolf Steiner, who impacted food, agriculture, medicine and design. Wind energy in its modern form goes back to the 1850s, and by the end of the First World War Denmark had 250 electricity producing wind turbines, while the first solar company was formed in 1892. The book proceeds chronologically through the 1930s to 1950s, then to the rise of green business in the 1970s, including recycling and ecotourism. Since the 1980s, the growth of green businesses has been accompanied by a major shift in attitudes towards the natural environment and a corresponding proliferation of green institutions and certifying agencies. Another chapter is devoted to green finance, such as the Triodos Bank, and government initiatives, then the features and limits of corporate environmentalism. Many of the original green entrepreneurs were motivated by romanticism, but they were also the historical originators of a sustainable world for the future. Reverting to the title, the author concludes that profits and sustainability have been hard to reconcile but the whole process has brought into the foreground the need to address major ecological issues and redirect policy, especially in relation to food, agriculture and energy.

Rethinking the Oceans

James Alix Michel

Paragon 2017, 227 pp., $24.95, p/b.

This book is unusual in being written by the serving president of the Seychelles, who is passionately involved in promoting the idea of in blue economy based on the sustainability of the oceans. Politically, he represents the Small Island Developing States, many of whom are vulnerable to sea level rise resulting from climate change. The book is exceptionally well informed both theoretically and practically, and contains many beautiful small photographs to illustrate the text. Michel is fully aware of the challenges facing the oceans in terms of overfishing, waste and specific exploitation of species such as whales. He also points out the growing pressure on our land resources and, as an island dweller, turns very naturally towards the sea. Coastal regions potentially under threat not only represent ports and fishermen, but also widespread tourism, not to mention the fact that many major cities are situated on the coast. Michel's love of the sea and dedication to the cause of the blue economy shines throughout the book with his optimistic outlook. However, he does not underestimate the challenges of the sustainability transition, although it will clearly take more than inspiring rhetoric to shift the entrenched interests within our current system.

DEATH AND DYING

The Transformative Power of Near-Death Experiences

Dr Penny Sartori and Kelly Walsh

Watkins 2017, 256 pp., £10.99, p/b.

I read the manuscript of this remarkable collection of transformative near death experiences a few months ago and found it a powerful and transformational read. The many different accounts converge on some key themes of self-love, acceptance, forgiveness and renewal. Underlying all this is the realisation of Oneness and deep interconnectedness characteristic of love. This is exactly the experience and message of the well-known books by Anita Moorjani and Eben Alexander, both of whom endorse the book. There is a foreword by Mick Collins, whose new book I have also endorsed and who sees the content of this book as a love letter from God. Then there is a profound prologue by Neale Donald Walsch: his own experience converges with the core message of the book: 'I am not my body, I'm totally loved and absolutely perfect just as I am, I am one with everything, and everything is really simple. The reality of an interpenetrating spiritual world shines through the narratives and we are reminded that a deep intuitive knowledge is available to all of us. Ultimately, this involves a re-identification with a deeper aspect of the self and the realisation that there is no separation between us. Although such messages have appeared in previous books, including my own *Whole in One* and *Lessons from the Light* by Kenneth Ring and Evelyn Elsaesser, the appearance of this book is particularly timely view of the widespread search for meaning. Readers cannot fail to be deeply touched by these narratives.

What Happens When We Die?

Margarete van den Brink and Hans Stolp

Temple Lodge Press 2017, 144 pp., £10.99, p/b.

This is a very well informed book meshing the understanding of Steiner with modern death and near-death studies, also by bringing in a Gnostic perspective. In addition, it is based on the personal experience of the authors, although it is not always clear which voice is speaking in the first person. Historically, they see the loss of the category of spirit and the reduction of the human being to soul and body as a regrettable development in A.D. 869, and describe seven steps to the world of light in the post-mortem state. They see the purpose of life as the greatest possible manifestation of the higher self with its consciousness, love and wisdom. They then outline their understanding of the path through the spirit realms, ultimately leading to a cyclical process of ascent and descent. The context of the life review is the question: what have you done with your life? The final chapters are devoted to the connection between the dead and the living and the ways in which the living can provide spiritual nourishment for those who have passed on. This all amounts to essential knowledge missing in the churches, who need to reconnect with people's experience. On a personal level they see as important the development of gratitude, trust and openness to the future. A profound reflection of life and death.

Jesus and the Near-Death Experience

Roy Hill

White Crow Books 2017, 218 pp., £11.99, p/b.

This book follows up the author's earlier work on psychology and the near death experience, focusing this time on encounters with Jesus during the NDE. He also brings in two other perspectives: a little-known book by Julian of Norwich, called *Showings*, which she recounts what would now be called an NDE and written in 1393; and the gnostic gospels - especially those of Thomas and Philip - where Christ is known in the centre of our being. To this he adds his own revelatory experiences and perspective as forms of divine communication leading to

spiritual discovery that is shared with the reader. The all-pervasiveness of love and light is a central theme, also reflected in Julian of Norwich. She asked about the Lord's meaning and receives the response: know it well, love was his meaning. Who reveals it to you? Love. What did he reveal to you? Love. Why did he reveal it to you? For love. Remain in this, and you will know more of the same.' As with other books in the field, transformation is of the essence, and sometimes the questions are disarmingly direct. How have you helped others? What did you learn in this life? In what way did you give of yourself? We are told that God evaluates the human heart, and on page 139 there is a comprehensive list of themes related to spiritual transformation, which again the seasoned reader will recognise from other sources. It is significant that Gandhi is quoted as saying that Christianity has yet to be lived in its essence, although many saints have done just this. The point is both emulation but also in terms of one's unique personality and circumstances.

Quand les Défunts Viennent à Nous

Evelyn Elsaesser (SMN)

Editions Exergue 2017, 225 pp., 18, p/b.

Evelyn has been involved in research into the near death experiences for more than 25 years, and in this important study she addresses what has come to known as after death communications, which gives us another angle on death, dying and the survival of consciousness. It is full of illuminating case histories and builds up a detailed account of their phenomenology and impact. Because of her background, Evelyn is able to situate these in a wider context, and includes interviews with other specialists on the consequences of ADCs for the grieving process, all of which has wider educational implications. She discusses parallels between the various experiences surrounding death. In considering the authenticity of such experiences, Evelyn points out that this is not an isolated phenomenon and that different types of experiences are arguably consistent and self-reinforcing. It also seems that not only can the living help those who have passed on, but the reverse also applies. The relationships continue to evolve, but take on a different form. This book is sure to be translated into English in due course, and I will let readers know. In the meantime, francophones can learn a great deal from this careful and considered study.

Private Dowding

Wellesley Tudor Pole

White Crow Books 2012 (1917), 91 pp., £11.99, p/b.

Readers can learn more about the remarkable life of Wellesley Tudor Pole in the main review section. This book originates from his time as an officer during World War I when he found himself communicating with a recently killed soldier, Thomas Dowding. There was huge interest in mediumship during that period, with so many young men being killed, including Raymond Lodge, the son of the physicist Sir Oliver Lodge, resulting in a highly evidential account. This book describes Dowding's death and experiences in the immediate aftermath in a vivid manner and contains a number of lessons about life, for instance the need to love deeply, 'love God by pouring yourself away. Love your fellows by giving them all you possess of light and truth.' This involves the emptying of one's self of self. A second series of communications occurs two years later, and there is an instructive chapter on the passing of Major P. Readers may also be interested in *Writing on the Ground,* one of WTP's final works on his perception of the life of Jesus, elements of history including Atlantis, key questions for human life and his reflections on the Baha'i faith, especially his encounter with Abdu'l Baha. It finishes with the reflection 'the more love we reflect and share with one another, the greater will be the supplier available to us.'

GENERAL

#republic

Cass R. Sunstein

Princeton 2017, 310 pp., £24.95, h/b.

Harvard law professor and bestselling author of *Nudge* has produced another game changing book about divided democracy in the age of social media. Although his thesis of fragmentation and polarisation is best illustrated by his chapter on polarisation entrepreneurs on terrorist sites, he argues convincingly that the issues are far more widespread, and affect us all. He quotes John Stuart Mill, writing in 1848, that it is essential for us to be exposed to people and ideas dissimilar to ourselves, what Sunstein calls competing perspectives. Facebook holds out the prospect of the Daily Me newsfeed based on filtering one's preferences and views, but this process creates 'echo chambers' of self similarity and group identity based on like-mindedness. This can be a self-reinforcing process as we become less open to arguments from a different perspective. Sunstein gives the telling example of the polarising issues of GMOs and climate change, where the dominant scientific position on the former is mainly espoused by Republicans, while on the latter it is by Democrats.

This shows how prior ideological commitments tend to shape our views, with, as David Hume observed, reason being the slave of our passions and reflecting our confirmation bias. The author draws an important distinction between our roles as citizens and consumers in relation to free speech and free choice. His proposals encourage a commitment to public forums and democratic deliberation or deliberative democracy, where we are exposed to opposing viewpoints and serendipitous encounters in order to encourage us out of our self-created information cocoons. As Benjamin Franklin observed when referring to the American Constitution, its status as a republic must be carefully guarded and nurtured. As the author's colleague Lawrence Lessig remarks, we need a public informed enough to govern itself in order to uphold democratic ideals. Essential reading for our time.

The Paradox of our National Security Complex

Richard Otto

Chronos Books (John Hunt) 2017, 359 pp., $32.95, p/b.

This is a chilling and well-informed book, written by an attorney, about how secrecy and security diminish liberty in the US and threaten their democratic republic. The author uses the term 'national security complex' for what Eisenhower initially called the military-industrial complex. It describes the evolution of this system, then other chapters discuss JFK's quest for peace, the controversy surrounding his assassination and the role of dissenters in uncovering government secrets. As the author points out, annual military expenditure in the US is of the order of $1 trillion, along with a significant proportion of the research budget also devoted to military projects, representing a significant diversion of labour and financial resources to maintain and even enlarge this colossal war machine. Furthermore, the US is the leading exporter of military hardware and weaponry used by governments to oppress their people and bomb their neighbours. Paradoxically, the corresponding escalation in global violence produces not only the refugee crisis we are witnessing, but also brings further insecurity in its wake. The author is surely correct in saying that the pursuit of the politics of power and empire building have led to the sacrifice of their image as a defender of liberty.

American exceptionalism seems able to overlook the barbaric track record of the CIA, which, since the 1950s, has been involved in sabotage, covert paramilitary operations, assassinations and murders, kidnapping, overthrowing of legitimate governments and dissemination of propaganda. A former director called it the department of dirty tricks, and it is based on secrecy, and almost complete lack of oversight and the notion of 'plausible deniability', for instance in false flag operations. It is nothing less than an official criminal organisation, and no overall assessment of American foreign policy should omit the CIA and associated agencies such as the NSA in its consideration of the nature of the US government. It has infiltrated the powerbase, and hawks are hugely influential in formulating government policy. It is clear from the author's analysis that JFK was pursuing a foreign policy deeply uncongenial to these people, who then orchestrated not only his assassination, but also framed the cover story of the lone assassin used as a basis for the Warren Commission. Forensically, it is clear that the six bullets came from four different locations and three different directions. The use of the term conspiracy theory is invoked to debunk other approaches, not only in this instance, but also in relation to 9/11, which the author does not cover. I refer readers to the forensic books on this topic written by

theologian David Ray Griffin, also reviewed in these pages. The author quotes the slave activist Frederick Douglass as saying that 'power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and never will.' So one may agree with the author that the CIA must be reformed into an intelligence gathering agency as originally intended by President Truman in 1947, and that its clandestine operations should be terminated, although one cannot see this happening within the existing power structures. Such a deep reform would require a revolution of human consciousness and a commitment to implement a new vision; this can only come from the grassroots, but I regarded as a moral imperative at least to articulate such thoughts.

Face and Mask – A Double History

Hans Belting

Princeton 2017, 270 pp., £37.95, h/b.

This ground breaking interdisciplinary study is the first cultural history and anthropology of the face across the centuries, between cultures and in the media. It begins with an analysis of the relationship between face and mask (one is reminded of masks in Greek theatre as persona - sounding through) as well as roles as masks, whether in theatre or real life. The mask appears to have originated in cults, while the portrait conveys the face as representation, so that, in a sense, the portrait itself is a mask. In this respect, the author's discussion of van Eyck, Rembrandt and Francis Bacon is fascinating. More recently, faces are used as icons, for example Mao, Marilyn Monroe and Einstein. Once again, there is an element of mask, while the face cannot finally be portrayed in its dynamic movement.

Face Value

Alexander Todorov

Princeton 2017, 327 pp., £27.95, h/b,

This book is a nice complement to the one above with its extensive reporting on studies about the face, with an emphasis on the irresistible influence of first impressions, based on neuroscientific findings. We all makes snap decisions based on these first impressions, which can underlie important decisions such as who to vote for. Using composite faces shown in various different but similar frames - a morphing continuum, and we tend to associate particular features with dominance, criminality, attractiveness, competence and trustworthiness. Readers can conduct their own experiments while reading the book to see if they agree that personality can be read from faces - this has its own dedicated brain area. The author also makes the interesting observation that, from most of our evolutionary history, we have lived in small groups where we do not have to rely on appearance information to draw inferences about character. At any rate, readers will emerge with greater self-awareness from this study, even if we all continue to trust first impressions.

Temenos Academy Review 2016

Temenos 2016, 284 pp., no price given, p/b.

The annual Temenos Academy Review is always a feast of wisdom, and this year is no exception. It provides about 20 articles on a wide variety of topics, then some extensive book reviews along with a few poems and icons. Among the articles that struck me were Shelley and the India of Imagination by Kathleen Raine, whose letters to Robert Graves are also featured. Then Reimagining the Grail Quest: the Grail of Compassion. This is a journey of seeking, which is about finding ourselves as well as understanding that we are part of something larger in terms of moving from isolation to belonging. We transform through seeing ourselves in the other and by the opening the heart. The article on the icon tradition takes up some of the same themes, culminating in transfiguration. One understands that making an icon is a form of prayer. Joseph Milne provides an analysis of David Abram's critique of Plato, while another highlight is Grevel Lindop writing about Raimundo Panikkar and his beautiful being as well as exquisite scholarship. Reflecting on the Church, Panikkar he thinks there is much to be forgiven in its history, but remarks that forgiveness demands repentance. There are also appreciations for the late Suheil Bushrui, the editor of the speeches of the Prince of Wales.

Heav'nly Tidings from the Afric Muse

Richard Kigel

Paragon House, 2017, 577 pp., $27.95, p/b

This is an eye-opening biography of Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784), who arrived in the US at the age of around seven in 1761 as a slave on a ship where 25 of the 96 passengers died en route. She began writing poetry in her teens, and published her first book at the age of 20. She is called the poet laureate of the American Revolution and was a literary sensation in her day, not only as a black American, but also as a woman. Significantly, a large group of distinguished men had to provide an attestation that she was indeed in the author of these sublime works, especially as racism was rife even among thinkers like Hume and Kant. A judgement by Lord Mansfield in England changed the status of slaves and rippled out into the colonies. Slavery was much less widespread in Boston than in the South. Wheatley was also a pioneer in the emancipation movement and wrote eloquently about freedom. In 2003, statues were unveiled in Boston not only for Phillis but also Abigail Adams and Lucy Stone. As well as learning in detail about the life of this remarkable woman, the reader gains a great deal of background information on this revolutionary epoch.

My Heart is too Big for my Pacemaker

Shane Jagger

Beshara 2017, 31 pp., no price given, p/b

This short of book of poems is written by a long-term resident of the Sufi centre at Chisholm House in the Scottish Borders. The poems are all short and direct with a beautiful evocative tone and simplicity of language. I can do no better than quote one here and find space for one or two others elsewhere in this issue:

EARLY

Sweet calmness in the early hours
before dawn
Black Velvet sky is starless tonight
and an air of comfort enfolds the
possibility of a glorious day
my mind once again at rest
Soon these hours will pass
and the hum of busy comings and
goings of the day will begin
This time is magical
before the fray, peace fills the room
sweet calmness in the early hours
before dawn
A precious gift

ALSO RECEIVED:

Unsolved!

The History and Mystery of the World's Greatest Ciphers from Ancient Egypt to Online Secret Societies *(also contains a chapter on ciphers from beyond the grave)*

Craig P. Bauer

Princeton 2017, 620 pp., $35, h/b.

Three Stones Make a Wall – the Story of Archaeology

Eric H. Cline

Princeton 2017, 455 pp., £27.95, h/b.

Morning Homilies IV

Pope Francis

Orbis Books 2017, 149 pp., £14.99, p/b.

Your Behaviour – Understanding and Changing the Things You Do

Richard H. Pfau

Paragon House 2017, 384 pp., $24.95, p/b.

Emotional Rescue

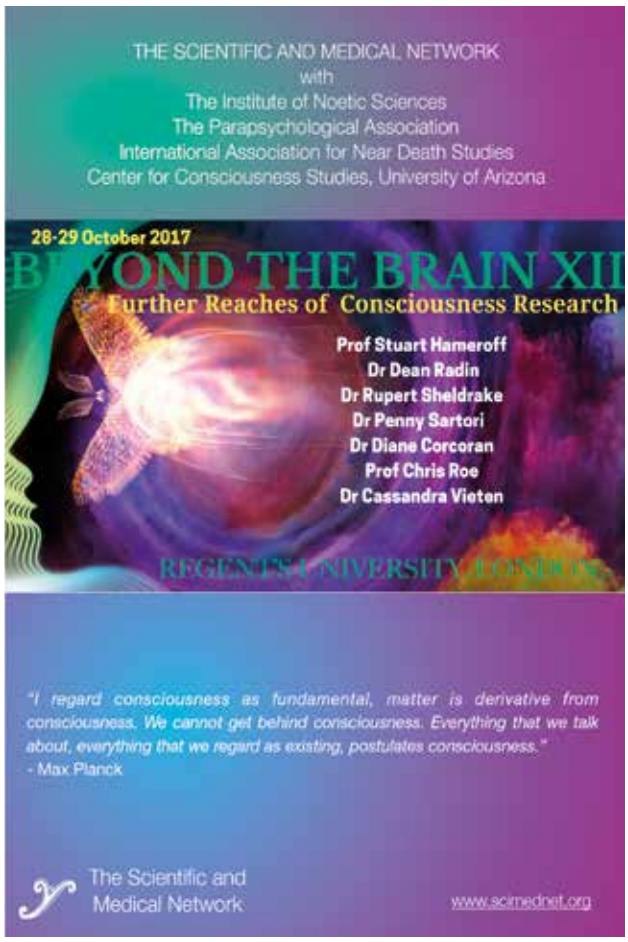
Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche

Tarcher Perigee 2017, 253 pp., $15, p/b.

We Know All About You – the story of surveillance in Britain and America

Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones

Oxford 2017, 290 pp., £18.99, h/b.



Seneca on Time and Life

It is not that we have a short time to live, but that we waste a lot of it. Life is long enough, and a sufficiently generous amount has been given to us for the highest achievements if it were all well invested. But when it is wasted in heedless luxury and spent on no good activity, we are forced at last by death's final constraint to realise that it has passed away before we knew it was passing. So it is: we are not given a short life but we make it short, and we are not ill-supplied but wasteful of it… Life is long if you know how to use it.

You are living as if destined to live for ever; your own frailty never occurs to you; you don't notice how much time has already passed, but squander it as though you had a full and overflowing supply — though all the while that very day which you are devoting to somebody or something may be your last. You act like mortals in all that you fear, and like immortals in all that you desire… How late it is to begin really to live just when life must end! How stupid to forget our mortality, and put off sensible plans to our fiftieth and sixtieth years, aiming to begin life from a point at which few have arrived!